



Appendix 1:

Contingency Plan (Exams)

& Exam Escalation Process

2021/22

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Reviewed by	
J. Rhodes, Exams Officer, September 2021	
Date of next review	September 2022

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Purpose of the Plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Brownhill Learning Community. By outlining actions/procedures to be followed in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the **Ofqual** Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland which provides guidance in the publication What schools and colleges and other Centre's should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted and the **JCQ** Joint Contingency Plan in the event of widespread disruption to the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This plan also confirms Brownhill Learning Community is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2021-22* that the centre *has in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence.*

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	K. Connolly
Exams officer line manager (Senior leader)	S. Jackson
Exams officer	J. Rhodes
ALS lead/SENCo	C. Holden
Senior leader(s)	L. Coe, K. Liptrot

Possible causes of potential disruption to the exam process

1. Exams/Data Manager extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning...

- annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered
- annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
- sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained

Entries...

- awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff
- candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment
- awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred

Pre-exams...

- approval for Access Arrangements not applied for to the awarding body
- room bookings not made e.g. Sports Hall and classrooms
- exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
- candidates not briefed on exam timetables and JCQ/awarding body information for candidates
- exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions
- internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators

Exam time...

- exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies
- required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
- candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies
- Results and post-results
- access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
- the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions:

- Annual exams plan to be produced as soon as the assessment calendar is available, to incorporate all internal assessment key tasks, dates & deadlines alongside external exam information.
- Centre Manager and School Business Manager to appoint temporary co-ordinator to cover an extended absence, ensuring the team is managed and all key tasks are met
- Procedure manuals are available which cover all exam processes
- CPD cross training within the Admin team to ensure all areas of the exams processes and deadlines can be met
- Assistance and advice available from EDIT and Rochdale Schools' Exam Officers.

2. Head of Centre or SLT Member with oversight of exam administration absent

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the overall management and administration of the whole exam process not undertaken.

Before examinations (Planning)

In the event of the absence of the head of centre or the member of senior leadership with oversight of examination administration, responsibility for implementing JCQ regulations and requirements relating to activity prior to examinations will be escalated to **J. Rhodes, Exams Officer working with a nominated SLT Member.**

To support understanding of the regulations and requirements, the following JCQ publications will be referenced:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres
- Instructions for conducting examinations
- Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments
- Instructions for conducting coursework
- Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments
- Suspected Malpractice – Policies and Procedures
- A guide to the special consideration process
-

Main duties and responsibilities relate to:

- Centre status
- Confidentiality
- Communication
- Recruitment, selection and training of staff
- Internal governance arrangements
- Delivery of qualifications
- Public liability
- Conflicts of interest
- Controlled assessments, coursework and non-examination assessments
- Security of assessment materials
- National Centre Number Register
- Centre inspections
Additional JCQ publication for reference: Centre Inspection Service Changes
- Policies
Specific JCQ publications for reference:
 - General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5)
 - Instructions for conducting examinations (section 25)
 - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (section 5)
- Personal data, freedom of information and copyright
Additional JCQ publication for reference:
 - Information for candidates – Privacy Notice

Before examinations (Entries and Pre-exams)

In the event of the absence of the head of centre or the member of senior leadership with oversight of examination administration, responsibility for implementing JCQ regulations and requirements relating to entries and exam preparation will be escalated to **J. Rhodes, Exams Officer and C. Holden, SENCO for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments working with a nominated SLT member where necessary**

To support understanding of the regulations and requirements, sections of relevant JCQ publications will be specifically referenced including:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5)
- Instructions for conducting examinations (sections 1-15)
- Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (sections 6-8)

Main duties and responsibilities relate to:

- Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (**C. Holden, SENCO**)
- Entries

Additional JCQ publications for reference:

- Key dates in the examination cycle
- Guidance Notes for Transferred Candidates
- Alternative Site guidance notes
- Guidance notes for overnight supervision of candidates with a timetable variation

- Centre assessed work

Additional JCQ publication for reference:

- Guidance Notes – Centre Consortium Arrangements

- Candidate information

Additional JCQ publications for reference:

- Information for candidates documents
- Exam Room Posters

During examinations (Exam time)

In the event of the absence of the head of centre or the member of senior leadership with oversight of examination administration, responsibility for implementing JCQ regulations and requirements relating to during exam time will be escalated to **J. Rhodes, Exams Officer working with a nominated SLT member where necessary**.

To support understanding of the regulations and requirements, sections of relevant JCQ publications will be specifically referenced including:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres (sections 3, 5)
- Instructions for conducting examinations (sections 16-30)
- Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (section 8)
- A guide to the special consideration process (sections 2-7)

Main duties and responsibilities relate to:

- Conducting examinations and assessments
Additional JCQ publication for reference:
 - Guidance Notes – Very Late Arrival
- Malpractice
- Retention of candidates' work

After examinations (Results and Post-Results)

In the event of the absence of the head of centre or the member of senior leadership with oversight of examination administration, responsibility for implementing JCQ regulations and requirements relating to after examinations will be escalated to **J. Rhodes, Exams Officer working with a nominated SLT member as necessary.**

To support understanding of the regulations and requirements, sections of relevant JCQ publications will be specifically referenced including:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5)

Main duties and responsibilities relate to:

- Results
Additional JCQ publication for reference:
 - Release of Results notice
- Post-results services and appeals
Additional JCQ publications for reference:
 - Post-Results Services: *Information and guidance to centres*
 - JCQ Appeals Booklet (A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes)
- Certificates

Centre actions:

- Another member of SLT to deputise and support where required working with J. Rhodes, Exams Officer and Catherine Holden, SENCO – actions outlined as above in Point 2.

3. SENCO extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning...

- candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements
- centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010
- evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated

Pre-exams...

- approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body
- modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
- staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained
- medical evidence not provided to Exams

Exam time...

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions:

- Use alternative suitably qualified assessor to carry out assessments
- Exam Manager to be conversant with the procedures for requesting approval with individual awarding bodies and arranging candidate support
- SENCO's assistant to advise

4. Curriculum Lead/Teacher extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the Exams and Data Manager on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the Exams and Data Manager on time; resulting in: candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines

Centre actions:

Contact relevant Curriculum Lead/Teachers for required information

5. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

- BLC Staff act as Invigilators – external Invigilators are not recruited
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

Centre actions:

- Contact another invigilator in the first instance to cover absence on the day
- Training is compulsory for invigilators each year to ensure all are up to date with JCQ changes for the current year
- School support staff would be used to cover any shortfall or absence of invigilators

6. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Exams and Data Manager unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days
- Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time

Centre actions:

- Priority would be given to exams and classes moved to make suitable rooms available
- Consideration would be given to using alternative accommodation with agreement from awarding bodies and completion of appropriate change of venue forms

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS system/internet failure at final entry deadline
- MIS system failure during exams preparation
- MIS system/internet failure during online exams/assessments
- MIS system failure/internet at results release time

Centre actions:

- School Network Manager to take the lead
- Contact MIS provider for assistance
- Contact awarding body to discuss alternative ways to submit data or request extension to deadline
- As an alternative to using school MIS access awarding body secure site to produce provisional statement of results and results data
- Contact awarding body to discuss options if failure with IT during online tests

8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Refer to 'Emergency Evacuation Procedure'

9. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam - centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning

Centre actions:

- Provide alternative on-line learning methods during extended closure
- Provide additional teaching time to cover lost time
- May consider sitting exams in an alternative series.

10. Centre unable to open as normal during the examination period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations
- In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

Centre actions:

- Contact awarding bodies in the first instance for advice
- Communicate information via the school website, text messaging, school email
- If possible open an area of the site for exam candidates only
- Apply for Special Consideration for candidates where they meet the minimum requirement and were unable to sit the exams

Refer to... www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

11. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis - centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Centre actions:

- Liaise with candidates and awarding bodies to whether the exams can be sat at an alternative venue
- Communicate information via the school website, text messaging, student email
- Where possible on-demand on-screen exams would be re-scheduled for an alternative date or venue
- Apply for Special Consideration for candidates where they meet the minimum requirement and were unable to sit the exams

12. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of the examinations

Centre actions:

- Download papers from awarding bodies secure systems, copy sufficient number and store under secure conditions
- If unable to access secure systems request the awarding body to email a copy

13. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions:

- Contact awarding bodies in the first instance for advice
- Where possible parcels should be taken to an Express Post Office or Parcel Force depot who accept Parcel Force packages or
- Ensure scripts are kept in secure storage and arrange an alternative collection date

14. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked
- Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

Centre actions:

- Contact the awarding bodies for advice
- Provide where possible other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as agreed with the awarding bodies to generate marks
- Where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.

15. Centre unable to distribute results online as normal

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates or to facilitate post-results services

Centre actions:

- Use alternative venue to access results and process post results services
- Arrange an alternative collection venue
- Communicate alternative arrangements to candidates using the school website, text messaging or student email

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

1. Contingency planning

You should prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans. When drafting contingency plans, you should consider the following guidance:

1.1 Covid specific guidance:

- [Guidance for schools Covid-19](#) from the Department for Education in England (subject to frequent updates as the situation changes)
- [Responsibility for autumn GCSE, AS and A level exam series](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Action for FE Colleges](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Public health guidance to support autumn exams](#) from the Department for Education
- [Education and childcare: coronavirus](#) from Welsh Government
- [Covid-19 - guidance for school and educational settings](#) from Department of Education in Northern Ireland

1.2 General contingency guidance

- [Emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Exceptional closure days](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [Checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [School closures](#) from NI Direct
- [Opening schools in extremely bad weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [Procedures for handling bomb threats](#) from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

2. Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises.

You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- the exam or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control

See also:

- [JCO Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#)

3. Steps you should take

3.1 Exam planning

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

3.2 In the event of disruption

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
5. In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's [Centre emergency evacuation procedure](#).
6. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

3.3 After the exam

1. Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
4. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

4. Steps the awarding organisation should take

4.1 Exam planning

1. Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

4.2 In the event of disruption

- Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
- Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
- Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
- Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
- Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

4.3 After the exam

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

5. If any students miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption, you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration.

Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects.

See also:

- [JCO's guidance on special considerations](#)

The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales and [CCEA](#) in Northern Ireland, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.

The [Department for Education](#) in England, the [Department of Education](#) in Northern Ireland and the [Welsh Government](#) will inform the relevant government ministers as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption; and ensure that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.

Awarding organisations will alert the [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service](#) (UCAS) and the [Central Applications Office](#) (CAO) about any impact of the disruption on their deadlines and liaise regarding student progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

7. Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations / assessments

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education should continue in 2020/21 with schools remaining open and that examinations and assessments will go ahead in both autumn 2020 and summer 2021.

As education is devolved, in the event of any widespread sustained national disruption to examinations or assessments, national government departments will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a public announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for exam timetables.

We will update this page as necessary should national disruption occur with any further relevant links.

(Ofqual guidance extract above taken directly from the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted (updated 01 October 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>)

15.1 The qualification regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

Further information may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

15.2 In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.

15.3 Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

15.4 In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate a 'contingency day' for examinations, summer 2022. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

The designation of a 'contingency day' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2022, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.

Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading arrangements. Centres must therefore ensure candidates and parents are aware of this contingency arrangement so that they may take it into account when making their plans for the summer. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course.

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2021-2022 <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, Contingency planning)

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

General Regulations for Approved Centres www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Guidance notes for transferred candidates www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Instructions for Conducting Examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations

A guide to the special consideration process www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption; Coronavirus (COVID-19)

www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings

Opening and closing maintained schools www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service>

Wales

School closures – examinations gov.wales/school-closures-examinations

Opening schools in extremely bad weather: guidance for Schools gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days

Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools

National Counter Terrorism Security Office

Checklist for managing bomb threats www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats