

Exam Contingency Plan

2023/24

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Mr A Hammersley (Head teacher)	
Signed:	
Date of next review	April 2025

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Mr A Hammersley
Exams officer line manager (Senior leader)	Mr P Cairns
Exams officer	Mrs B Monk
SENCo	Mrs K Keane
SLT member(s)	Mr P Cairns
	Mrs L Wood
	Mr S Porter
	Mr J Haworth
	Mrs J Cairns

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Academy@Worden. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked 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 (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the publication *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted* and the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2023).

This plan also confirms Academy@Worden's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) 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 where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The head of centre will also ensure that Academy@Worden as a contingency to enable the prompt handling of urgent issues only, responds to the awarding bodies' request for information regarding the contact details of a senior member of staff (which might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). This will ensure that any urgent matters which might adversely affect candidates which arise outside of term time, and which potentially put qualification awards at risk, can be addressed by awarding bodies with the support of that member of staff. Heads of centre should ensure that this member of staff has the necessary authority to mobilise resources to provide this support, which might include resolving issues within the centre itself.

Head of centre absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Please see the escalation process in the Exam Policy.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at a critical stage of the exam 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

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

- invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams
- exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
- candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
- confidential 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, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
- candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking 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

Academy@Worden actions to mitigate the impact of the Exam Officer extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Planning

- Under the guidance of the Deputy head teacher, a nominated person will distribute by email to HOF's their intention for entries ie. exam board, codes, pupils being entered.
- Key date calendars will be downloaded from all exam board websites, deadlines will be highlighted and SLT informed.
- All invigilators will be contacted, and it will be ensured that there are a sufficient amount of people to invigilate all of the GCSE examinations. If necessary, more will be recruited and trained as per JCQ guidelines.

Entries

- Estimated entries will be submitted to the relevant exam boards for the subjects that require them.
- The Deputy head will distribute mark sheets with entry details to all Head of faculty to ascertain which pupils will be entered for which exam and which tier.
- Deputy head will be aware of all deadlines and will ensure that all staff return entry lists, amended if needed before the deadline has passed.

Pre-exams

- Once all entries have been submitted, the Deputy head will print a GCSE timetable. From this, room planning, invigilators and exam timetabling can be made. Once pre-exam materials arrive at the centre the Deputy head will ensure that materials have been logged and allocated to subject leaders on the date stated by the exam board.
- Exam and assessment work will be kept in in the secure facility.
- Head of faculty's will be aware of the deadline for internal assessment marks. The Deputy head will ensure that all relevant data is submitted by the deadline, ready for moderation.

Exam time

- Exams will take place following specific instructions from awarding bodies and following JCQ guidelines.
- Pupils that require special arrangements, scribes and readers will be placed in appropriate rooms.
- All rooms will be sign posted and equipped accordingly following JCQ guidelines.
- Invigilators will be provided with attendance registers, exam checklists and exam logs to ensure all guidelines are being followed and that any indiscretions can be noted.
- Invigilators will be briefed prior to exams on reporting any incidents to the Deputy head, who will deal with them following JCQ guidelines.
- Invigilators must ensure all papers are collected once exam has finished and handed to Deputy head to be packed, sealed and complete necessary paper work ready to be collected. This time will have previously been arranged. Packed papers will be left in main office ready for the collection time.
- If exam papers are not collected, the Deputy head must be informed so Parcel Force can be contacted. Uncollected papers must be locked away in secure facility overnight.

Results and post results

- The Deputy head will ensure all pupils and staff are aware of the date results are released and the information for candidates to collect them on results day.
- The Deputy head will liaise with the IT manager to ensure that all patches are in place in order for results to be downloaded successfully. Results and information will be printed ready for candidates to pick up on results day.

2. ALS Lead/SENCo extended absence at a critical stage of 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
- centre-delegated arrangements not put in place
- modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
- staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained

Exam time

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Academy@Worden actions to mitigate the impact SENCo extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle.

Planning

- The Deputy head will ask all staff to identify any pupils from Y9 who they believe could potentially require access arrangements. Staff will be emailed the application for access arrangements to be

completed showing any evidence they have regarding pupils. This will be passed on to the SENCo/TA's for the pupils to be tested.

Pre-exams

- Once all the data has been received the SENCO will complete form 8 with all the necessary information so access arrangements can be applied for before the deadline date passes. The Deputy head is aware of all deadline dates.
- Any pupils requiring modified papers will be identified and the papers ordered in time on the access arrangements site, before the deadline date passes.
- TA's/invigilators will be up to date in their training for readers/scribes, any new members of staff will require the specific training, and this will be organised by the SENCO.
- All pupils requiring access arrangements for exams will have separate rooms pre-booked and the relevant number of staff allocated. This will be part of the planning in section 1.

3. Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late/late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies
- Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled
- Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines

Academy@Worden actions to mitigate the impact of Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

- The exams officer will ensure all teaching staff have the necessary entry information.
- Any staff who are absent, their entries will be passed on to the HOF's and they will oversee this.
- Staff will be given a deadline for the entries to be passed on to the exam officer in order for them to enter all pupils within the allotted time as to not incur any late fees.
- Internal assessments marks - all staff will know all deadline dates for marks to be passed to the exam officer in order for them to be submitted on time and posted to the moderator/examiner.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

Academy@Worden actions to mitigate the impact of lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence.

- All invigilators will attend yearly meetings/training days, in order for the exam officer to make sure any changes can be passed on to all invigilators.
- Any shortage of invigilators will be assessed, and any recruitment will be done well in advance of any exam season. The exam officer will liaise with the Business Manager for advert and job description.
- All invigilators will be notified of the exam dates and know that if any shortage of staff on peak exam dates, they can be notified to come in a short notice. The exam officer has all contact numbers on file.
- As above any invigilator absence on the day of an exam, the exam officer will ask the Business Manager to contact the list of invigilators to make sure the absence will be covered. They will make sure the exam officer is kept up to date and that the exam will be covered.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Exams officer 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

Academy@Worden actions to mitigate the impact of lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice.

- The exam officer will plan well in advance and will be able to identify and problems with lack of rooms for the exam season. This will be passed on to SLT who will be able to make adjustments to timetabling of rooms in order for all exams to take place causing no disruption to exams.
- If an unexpected incident happens and the centre will not be able to hold any exams. The exams officer has been in touch with St Mary's Community Centre who will be on standby if school was unable to hold exams. The exams officer and senior leaders will transport chairs/tables and exam facilities to the. All pupils will be transported to and from the new centre.

6. Cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery.

Academy@Worden actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption.

- Data is backed up onsite and offsite.
- The MIS system has a real time replication on site which means downtime is limited to a couple of hours. The main server is in 35M.

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS system failure during exams preparation
- MIS system failure at results release time
- Power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen test

Academy@Worden actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption.

- MIS is backed up onsite and offsite.
- The MIS system has a real time replication on site which means downtime is limited to a couple of hours. The main server is in 35M.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Academy@Worden actions to mitigate the impact of Emergency evacuation of the exam room

- All members of staff will follow the Lockdown procedure policy which can be found in The Exams policy folder, School website and R-drive.

9. Disruption of teaching time – 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

Academy@Worden actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption.

- SLT will contact LCC to inform them of the closure of school. SLT will look into hiring a local conference centre or link with another local high school in order to cause least disruption to all pupils.
- Parents will be contacted informing them of any closures by synergy message/website or local radio. Once a new centre is organised, SLT will meet with all parents keeping them informed of updates.
- SLT must ensure alternate methods of learning are in place on Teams and students are prepared for examinations.

10. Candidates may not be able to take examinations – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates may not be able to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SLT/Exams officer will contact exam boards informing them of candidates being unable to take exams due to an unexpected event.
- Exam boards will need to advise the centre the procedure they need to set in place regarding exams not being able to go ahead.
- Pupils and parents will be kept informed of any notifications.

11. Centre may not be able to open as normal during the exams period

(including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Academy@Worden actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SLT/Exam officer to notify all exam boards regarding the centre not be able to open due unexpected event. SLT to find alternative accommodation.
- See section 9 regarding alternative arrangements (hire a conference centre or link with a local school).
- Exams officer will need to make sure all papers are kept secure and if necessary to print off from exam website.
- Inform JCQ by submitting the alternative site form online, using the centre admin portal (CAP)
- South Ribble Borough Council conference facilities/contact other high schools or primary schools for hire of the hall/sports hall facilities/Leyland leisure centre/St Mary's community centre

12. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

Academy@Worden actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption in the distribution of examination papers

- The exam officer has the GCSE timetable printed off and knows in advance from all exam boards when papers are likely to be distributed.
- The exam officer will have an exam papers log sheet and will note all papers when they arrive.
- The exam officer will contact the exam boards regarding the papers not being received, exam boards will need to make sure any other centres have had the same problem as this would cause all papers to be disqualified and new papers would need to be produced.
- If the papers have not been received on the day of the exam, the exams officer will log on to the secure website of the exam board and print off the exam papers.

13. Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessments evidence

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Where the examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, the exams officer will contact the yellow label service to see if there was an issue why the examinations hadn't been collected at their allotted time. The exams officer would also seek advice from the awarding organisation and inform them of the delay.
- The papers must be kept in the secure storage until a decision has been made to how they will be transported to the awarding body.
- If there was an issue with the collection of the papers the exams officer would inform the awarding body and would take the exam papers to the local post office and arrange for them to be sent from there. The exams officer would receive a proof of postage.

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 the awarding organisations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- In the event of any destruction of completed scripts or assessment evidence before it has been marked, the head of the centre must inform the necessary exam board.

- The exam board will inform the head of what action is needed to be taken. Assessment marks can be submitted and the relevant paperwork for lost coursework from the JCQ website can be completed and sent to the exam board.
- The awarding organisation to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations. Where marks cannot be generated by awarding bodies candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.
- The centre will investigate how this has happened and report all findings to the exam board.

15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services

(including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

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

Academy@Worden actions to mitigate the impact of the centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services

- The centre will notify all exam boards informing them of the alternative arrangements the centre has put into place to download and print off the exam results.
- If there is an IT malfunction MIS is backed up onsite and offsite. The MIS system has a real time replication on site which means downtime is limited to a couple of hours.
- The Deputy head and exam officer hold all secure website passwords so will be able to access from other sources.
- If the centre is unable to open, SLT will organise another venue and pupils/parents/staff will be notified in advance of the changes. Or if SLT are unable to organise another venue, results will be sent securely on synergy.