Ringwood School

Exam Contingency Policy

Policy Name	Exam Contingency Plan (with resilience arrangements)
Date	October 2026
Author	Exams Officer / Assistant Headteacher – Data and Outcomes
Created on	March 2024
Authorised By	Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for exams
Statutory, regulatory and / or contractual considerations	JCQ
Review Frequency	Annual
Review Date	October 2027
Rationale for Policy	**Purpose:** The policy sets out the actions to be taken in the event of significant disruption to any part of the examinations cycle at Ringwood School. 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. This plan confirms that Ringwood School is compliant with the most current JCQ regulation and 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. The Examination Contingency Plan must be available for inspection purposes. https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

	The Head of Centre (Headteacher) is responsible to the awarding bodies for making sure all examinations/assessments are carried out according to the instructions, and the qualification specifications issued by the awarding bodies. For operational purposes, the Examinations Officer has delegated responsibility to act as the Head of Centre for day to day running of the examinations cycle.

Resilience arrangements:

For all subjects with an exam component, Ringwood School will ensure that all students sit a minimum of one set of mock exams in exam conditions before their external exams and the papers are retained. This would enable an alternative way of giving grades, should there be national disruption to exams. We gather evidence which assesses students on a wide range of content, similar to that which they will expect in their summer exam. Assessments should therefore normally take place in the final year of study but normally before February half term.

Students are made aware that any assessment evidence collected and retained under this guidance would be used to determine grades only in the unlikely situation that exams and formal assessment could not go ahead.

Maintaining Cyber Security (see also separate Cyber Security Policy)

We ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:

a) providing training for authorised staff through Secure Schools on the importance of creating strong unique passwords and keeping all account details secret;

b) providing training for staff on awareness of all types of social engineering/ phishing attempts through the Secure Schools platform

c) enabling additional security settings wherever possible,

d) updating any passwords that may have been exposed; e) setting up secure account recovery options;

g) monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required;

h) ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document Guidance for centres on cyber security: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

i) reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding bod

When the plan would be triggered:

In the event of a disruption to the centre's examination system e.g. where the head of centre, exams officer or SENCO is absent at a critical time, school closure for unforeseen reasons, adverse weather, a cyber attack and any other event that disrupts exams.

In the absence of the Examinations Officer, the Data Team would deputise and put into place the recommended actions below, overseen by the Assistant Head with responsibility for Exams.

It is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to ensure that members of the Data team are knowledgeable in the examinations cycle, are sufficiently trained, informed and able to cover in the Examination Officer's absence. This includes communication between all stakeholders at the centre (teachers, support staff, subject and senior leaders), candidates, parents and the public.

Where necessary, communication to parents and students would be done using Arbor to send text messages or emails and / or the school website.

Key documents

The latest versions of all relevant JCQ documents can be found hard copy in the office.

Because secure access is required for each exam board, members of the data team are registered and have access to the main exam boards

The latest timetables, master forms and letters are saved in the Exams area on Sharepoint

A series of checklists can be found in \\ringwood\school\admin\ExamAdmin\Check lists

Possible scenarios and responses

For all scenarios the exams officer would liaise closely with the relevant Awarding Body

1. **Examinations officer absence – long or short term absence**

Possible impact	Exam cycle is disrupted
Recommended Actions	Calendar of tasks with deadlines is placed in shared network area and accessible by the exams and logistics team Check lists are shared to list the actions on the morning of an exam, during an exam and post an exam to ensure all duties can be carried out and the centre remains JCQ compliant. Ensure that data team is sufficiently informed to continue with exam cycle: in year training of members of the data team in ensure results can be accessed and downloaded. Software to allow results to be downloaded is installed on PC of another member of the data team. Data team to be trained and practised in downloading results on Results Days Liaise with other local centres if necessary for expertise
Success criteria	Successful completion of exam cycle with no effect on students' access to exams

2. Head of Centre or the member of LT with responsibility for examinations is absent

Possible Impact	Results Days are disrupted; exam cycle is disrupted
Recommended actions	Ensure that exams team / data team / teaching colleagues are sufficiently informed to continue to roll out exams cycle / results days without interruption; if AH with responsibility is absent, HT deputises; if HT is absent, AH deputises; if both are absent, DH deputises Log ins are shared to enable any necessary sign offs to be carried out without issue
Success Criteria	Successful completion of exams cycle with centre remaining JCQ compliant / results days with no effect on students' access to exams or results.

3. **SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle**

Possible impact	Candidates not tested/assessed to identify possible access arrangement requirements Evidence of need not collated Failure to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010
Recommended Actions	SENCo deputy or HLTA with responsibility for EAA and / or SEN support administrator to liaise with Exam Officer
Success criteria	All students provided with correct access arrangements/support

4. **Teaching Staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle**

Possible impact	Late entries, incomplete non examination assessment tasks, internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body deadlines
Recommended Actions	Line Manager and Exam Officer to liaise with existing staff;
Success criteria	Candidates given full support, Awarding Body deadlines are met

5. **Invigilators – lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence**

Possible impact	Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams, invigilator shortage on peak days, invigilator absence on day of exam
Recommended Actions	Line Manager and Exam Officer to liaise with support staff; Members of LT and 6 key members of support staff to undergo training / refresher training as invigilators so they can step in if necessary
Success criteria	Little or no disruption to candidates

6. **Exam Rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice but centre remains open**

Possible impact	Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time
Recommended Actions	Head of centre to arrange emergency contingency timetable including potentially closing to other year groups to make classrooms available; Consideration given to altering the start time of the exam in order to create capacity
Success criteria	Little or no disruption to candidates

7. **Failure of IT systems**

Possible impact	MIS system failure: at final entry deadline, during exam preparation, results release time
Recommended Actions	Network manager to be available. Liaise with exam boards
Success criteria	Little or no disruption to candidates

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

Possible impact	Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) due to serious incident resulting in delay to exam start or during exam
Recommended Actions	Exam officer to liaise with Head of Centre, awarding bodies informed and advice taken re alternative venues if necessary and options for candidates– *see Emergency Evacuation Policy*
Success criteria	Awarding bodies apply special consideration for candidates affected if relevant Exam is able to take place

9. Disruption of teaching time - centre closed for an extended period

Possible impact	Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning
Recommended Actions	Headteacher, Governors, SLT to take necessary action
Success criteria	Candidates given opportunity at alternative site

10. Candidates unable to sit examinations at centre due to crisis – centre remains open

Possible impact	Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal
Recommended Actions	Exam Officer to liaise with Head of Centre and to inform awarding bodies Arrangement for candidates to sit exam at The Burgate School, Fordingbridge. (HT David Povey) Use of Arbor to send text message to all parents / carers and use of website / social media to reinforce information; Utilising of 3 school minibuses if necessary to transport any students who are unable to reach alternative venue, (3 members of LT can drive the mini buses) Potentially altering the start time of the exam, in line with ICE Awarding bodies informed
Success criteria	Candidates able to sit examinations at alternative venue

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

Possible impact	Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations (including centre being unavailable for examinations owing to unforeseen emergency) meaning exams may be delayed or disrupted
Recommended Actions	Exam Officer to liaise with Head of Centre and to inform awarding bodies and take their advice Actions as above for Point 9.

	The Burgate School to securely store exam papers, if the centre is not accessible to store papers. The JCQ Centre Inspection Service to be notified immediately.
Success criteria	Candidates able to sit examinations at alternative venue

11.Severe weather

Possible impact	Staff and students unable to access centre on exam days
Recommended Actions	As above for point 9
Success criteria	Completion of exam or opportunity to sit at next exam series

12. Assessment - candidate evidence is not available to be marked due to fire and/or damage

Possible impact	Large scale damage and or destruction of assessments/scripts before it can be marked
Recommended Actions	Exam Officer to liaise with Headteacher and awarding bodies as to appropriate action, liaise with candidates and parents. Awarding bodies generate marks from other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement
Success criteria	Centre marks are generated and award can take place

13. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

Possible impact	Centre is unable to access or mange the distribution of results, or facilitate post-result services
Recommended Actions	Exam Officer to liaise with Headteacher and awarding bodies as to appropriate action, arrange to access results at alternative site or via electronic means Candidates and parents to be kept informed via normal school communication channels, such as Arbor, website and social media
Success criteria	Centre marks are generated from existing assessment materials and award can take place

14. National Contingency Day

Possible impact	Students choose not be available for the reschedule exams for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration
Recommended Actions	To publicise the date of Contingency Day and Contingency sessions to students, parents and carers at information Evenings plus in written communications in the months leading up to the exam season

Success Criteria	Candidates available and sit exams at re-scheduled time slot

15. A cyber attack on the school ICT systems means data regarding examination entries, candidates or results is compromised

Possible impact	Sensitive data is shared illegally Exam related data is inaccessible
Recommended Actions	To liaise with the school's data company Judicium as to next steps and any mitigating actions which the school can take. With advice from Judicium, communicate data breach with all relevant parties, together with any relevant information victims should take to reduce potential damage / to mitigate the breach; For seating plans and exams registered to be printed out weekly For papers of EAA information to be held and stored securely
Success Criteria	For any breach to be contained and limited as quickly as possible; For all affected parties to be informed so that mitigating action can be taken as quickly as possible

16. The school's internet access or use of ICT internal / external systems is compromised or unavailable over the period leading up to and during results being issued by exam boards, due to accidental damage or other system failure.

Possible impact	Results may not be able to be downloaded to school; Results may not be able to published easily / emailed to students
Recommended Actions	For ICT network manager to work with data and exams team to help resolve the problem; For ICT network manager to work with all appropriate external providers to identify and resolve the problem

	For the school to investigate whether an alternative venue can be used and appropriate hardware moved across to an alternative venue if issue is with school's network For the school to liaise with the exam board to help resolve the problem For the school to liaise with any HE and FE providers to help students to progress to next steps
Success Criteria	All students received results on the correct date and could progress without interruption to their next steps

17. Succession arrangements for members of staff involved in examination and assessment administration

Possible impact	Lack of knowledge transferred about compliant delivering of exam season and results
Recommended Actions	Ensure that Data Manager is also trained on exam result software Ensure that Data Manager and Assistant Headteacher are trained on the running of an external exam
Success Criteria	Exam cycle continues without interruption and with compliance to JCQ regulations

Further Guidance

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

General regulations for approved centres

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

Guidance on *alternative site* arrangements

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms

Guidance on *transferred candidate* arrangements

https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/entries

Instructions for conducting examinations

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations

A guide to the special consideration process

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance