



Lakelands
Academy

CONTINGENCY PLAN

2025-2026

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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 Lakelands Academy. 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 (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment). Exam system contingency plan: English, 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 Lakelands Academy'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 SENDCo 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 Lakelands Academy 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.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at 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 and trained

Entries

- awarding bodies not being informed of 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

- exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
- candidates not briefed on exam timetables and 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:

Members of the administration team to assume responsibility for the above tasks with the support of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

2. SENDCo 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
- 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

Exam time

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions:

The Teaching Assistants, Examinations Officer to work with SLT to identify students where applications for access arrangements may be required. The employment of outside agencies/professionals may be required.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- *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*
- *Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines*

Centre actions:

The Assistant Head and the Examinations Officer to liaise with acting Faculty Leader and/or SLT, if necessary, to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to. Where this is not possible, the EO will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body and act upon advice received.

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*

Centre actions:

The Examinations Officer will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained in a timely fashion.

The Examinations Officer will be aware of the school staff available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days.

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 expected incident at exam time*

Centre actions:

The Examinations Officer will organise rooming for examinations before the Easter holidays ensuring sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately.

In the event of a room not being available at very short notice, sufficient staff will be made available to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced. The SLT will work with the Examinations Officer at all times during such emergencies.

6. Cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- *MIS system is affected by a cyber-attack*

Centre actions:

- Network Manager/IT department to back up data
- The backups are held offline
- Systems for restoring services and recovering data from the backups are tested and reliable
- Contact the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)
- Contact the local law enforcement and Action Fraud
- Inform the DfE by emailing: securityenquires@education.gov.uk

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*

Centre actions:

The Examinations Officer, in consultation with the SLT, will make entries from another venue direct to the Awarding Bodies. Results may also be accessed directly from the Awarding Bodies. At all times during the system failure the Examination Officer will liaise with the Awarding Bodies to minimise disruption and costs incurred.

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 results in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams

Centre actions:

SLT to manage all such incidents

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 support time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning.

Centre actions:

Where this is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of centres to prepare students, as usual, for examinations. In the case of modular course, centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series. Centres should have plans to facilitate alternative methods of learning,

The Assistant Head/Examinations Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Bodies to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action.

10. Candidates 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:

The Assistant Head/Examinations Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Bodies to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action.

11. Centre may not be able to open as normal during the examination period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre may not be able to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

The centre will inform the awarding organisations of the examinations that will be affected due to centre being unable to open.

Alternative Provision to be provided: Mr Ranjit Chatterjee-Ellesmere College, Ellesmere, Shropshire SY12 9AB

Use of sports hall and adjoining rooms within the sports hall. Ellesmere College will provide additional rooms throughout the school for students needing separate invigilation. Lakelands Academy will provide exam desks and chairs.

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

Centre actions:

Awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Centre would need to ensure that copies are received, made and store under secure conditions and should have plans in place to facilitate such an action. Awarding organisations would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances. As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date.

13. Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examinations scripts/assessment evidence

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, centres should seek advice from awarding organisations and should not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body. For any examinations where centres make their arrangements for transportation, centres should investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations*
- Centres to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

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:

The Assistant Head/ Examinations Officer will contact the Awarding Bodies to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given

Awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments base on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations. 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 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

Centre actions:

The Assistant Head/Examinations Officer will contact the Awarding Bodies to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given

Distribution of results – centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations.

Centre to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site

Centre to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation

Centre to make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location

Centre to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible.

*Information taken from the *Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

Cyber Security Standards for schools and colleges

Cyber crime and cyber security: guide for education provides

DfE Cyber Security Guidance – March 2023

Ofqual

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

Contingency planning

Awarding organisations are required to establish, maintain and comply with an up-to-date detailed written contingency plan, to mitigate any incident they have identified may occur. This includes having

communication plans for external parties (Qfqual General Conditions of Recognition A6). Schools and colleges should also be prepared for possible disruption to exams and assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

General contingency guidance

- Emergency planning and response from the Department for Education in England
- Handling strike action in schools from the Department for Education in English
- School organisation: local-authority maintained schools from the Department for Education in England

Disruption to assessment 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 organisations 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

You may also wish to see the JCQ's notice to centres on exam contingency plans and JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for qualifications within its scope.

Steps you should take

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.

In the event of disruption

- Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions
- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open
- 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
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure'
- Communicate with parents, cares and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable of to the venue
- Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable

After the exam

- 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
- Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date
- Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions

- 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

Steps the awarding organisation should take

Exam planning

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

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 events 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

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

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 organisations 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

- JCQ's guidance on special consideration

Wider communications

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

The Department of 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 Services (UCAS) and the Central Applications Officer (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.

Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations or assessments

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.

(Ofqual guidance extract above taken directly from the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland – What schools and colleges and other centre should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted. Update 2nd March 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>)

JCQ

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 or 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>

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 All centres must have 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 SENDCo 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 owing to an unforeseen emergency.

All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the examination contingency 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 'contingency sessions' for examinations, summer 2026. This is consistent with the qualifications 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 'contingency sessions' 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 2026, 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 last 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 the contingency arrangements so that they may take them into account when making their plans for the summer.

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from Instructions for conducting examinations 2025-2026 <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

JCQ notice – Preparing for disruption to examinations 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; www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-reponse-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings

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>

National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free Web Check and Mail Check services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to **all UK schools**. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the NCSC website.

The Department of Education has been asking centers to review **National Cyber Security Centre advice** following increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports centers in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the Department is reminding centers to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.

For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

1. Further ransomware attacks on UK education by cyber criminals – [NCSC.GOV.UK](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk)
2. Mitigating malware and ransomware attacks
3. Offline backups in an online world
4. Backing up your data
5. Practical resources to help schools improve their cyber security
6. Building Resilience: Ransomware, the risks to schools and ways to prevent it
7. School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defenses – [NCSC.GOV.UK](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk)