



# Exams Contingency Plan

**Approved On/By:**

Finance, Staffing and Premises Committee 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026

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**Next Review Due By:**

Spring Term 2027

**Monitoring & Review:**

Annually

**Staff Member(S)**

A Lee

**Responsible:**



## Exams Contingency Plan

Centre name	Hodge Hill College
Centre number	20125
Date plan first created	12/03/2026
Current plan approved by	A Lee
Current plan reviewed by	A Lee
Date of review	12/03/2026
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## Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name
Head of centre	Mrs Hannah Herrmann
Senior leader(s)	Mrs Lisa Millington
Exams officer	Mr Ajay Lee
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Ms Cheryl Southern
Other staff (if applicable)	Mr Zeeshan Naqvi

This plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that contingency planning at Hodge Hill College is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examination and assessment process.

By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on processes at Hodge Hill College.

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

This plan details how Hodge Hill College complies with the JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (5.3 *Centre management*) by having in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually by a member of the senior leadership team and communicated within the centre:

- a contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery

## Contingency arrangements

The centre **must** have an up to date written contingency plan.

The contingency plan **must** cover all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery. Senior leaders **must** have robust contingency arrangements in place that will minimise the risk to examination/assessment administration and delivery and any adverse impact on candidates. The plan **must** cover the following scenarios:

- the head of centre, relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration, SENCo (or equivalent role), examinations officer or any other key staff essential to the examination process being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle
- the potential impact of other events such as flooding which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable
- potential issues with the centre's IT systems

As part of the contingency plan the centre **must** identify an alternative site or alternative sites which can be used if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address. Larger centres may require more than one potential alternative site or different sites for different year groups.

The centre **must** have at least one senior member of staff (senior designated contact) who is available to manage emergency requests from awarding bodies that are results related during the summer holidays. However, a number of contacts can be provided to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

The centre **must** ensure where candidates' work is produced electronically it is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up via the Cloud. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks. (GR 3.17-19)

## Operating across more than one centre

The head of centre will also ensure that 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

## National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The head of centre will ensure that the centre completes the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year (even if there are no changes to centre details) which includes providing senior designated contact details (this might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). These must be the contact details of someone who can be reached in an emergency if the centre is closed over the summer and who can mobilise resources to respond to the issue. (GR 5.3)

## Head of centre/senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Where the head of centre/senior leader may be absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle, main duties and responsibilities will be escalated in accordance with the centre's written escalation process.

## Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

### 1. Exams 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 post-results services

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

#### The centre will:

- Exams assistant is trained in key aspects of the exams administration process including MIS requirements.
- Exams Assistant has access to exam papers and all required equipment.
- Senior Invigilator is trained in key aspects of exams administration including exam script dispatch.
- Data & Resources apprentice can be made available to assist with exams administration if required.

## **2. SENCo (or equivalent role) 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

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Deputy SENCo trained in all exams requirements
- Exams officer would liaise with Deputy SENCo in order to proceed with testing and processing of access arrangements on schedule

### **3. Teaching staff (or other key staff essential to the examination process) 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 (including controlled assessment and coursework) 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
- Exams officer would liaise with SLT regarding who is standing in for absent teacher, so that no deadlines are missed

### **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

- Exam invigilator vacancy advertised continually on school website and local media
- Exam Officer to raise any potential shortages with SLT in Autumn term, allowing for additional recruitment to take place ahead of summer exams
- Pastoral staff to undertake invigilation training in spring term, so that they can be used as emergency invigilators if numbers are short on exams day
- Exams assistant trained as senior invigilator so that she can stand in if a senior invigilator is absent at last minute

## 5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venue(s) 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

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, make use of other available rooms within the centre, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, move to alternative venue, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- **Alternative site(s)** details:  
Hodge Hill Primary School
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- **Communication** details:
- Candidates/Parents/Carers will be provided with a letter and verbally informed of any changes to exam venue/rooms
- ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

Other centre actions:

- Liaise with SLT ahead of main exams period if the entries exceed current centre capacity
- Put plan in action ahead of time
- In case of emergency incident at exam time, liaise with local schools to arrange for use of exam space

## 6. Cyber security

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Where any incidents might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery, such as a cyber-attack

## Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Seeking/following awarding body guidance/instructions
- Promptly reporting any incidents to the relevant awarding body/bodies which might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery such as a cyber-attack
- Where candidates produce work electronically, ensuring their work is backed-up regularly and stored securely on the centre's IT system / Ensuring protection of the candidates' work from corruption and considering the risks and implications of any cyber-attack
- Following and regularly reviewing National Cyber Security Centre advice for support in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work / Using the NCSC's free Web Check and Mail Check services to help protect from cyber-attacks
- Communicating with parents/carers and students and keeping them informed regarding solutions to the disruption (and detail on the method(s) of communication)
- Applying for special consideration for candidates
- Prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams when planned Entering candidates for the next available exam series (where available)

## **7. Failure of IT systems**

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

- IT system corruption affecting candidates' work
- MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation
- MIS/IT system failure at results release time

## Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Seeking/following awarding body guidance/instructions
- ICTS staff are always on standby for on-screen tests in case of issues.
- Where candidates produce work electronically, ensuring their work is backed-up regularly and stored securely on the centre's IT system.
- Communicating with parents/carers and students and keeping them informed regarding solutions to the disruption (and detail on the method(s) of communication)
- Applying for special consideration for candidates
- Prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams when planned
- Entering candidates for the next available exam series (where available)

## **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

## Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- refer to and invoke its (exams) emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (or its (exams) lockdown policy)
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

Other centre actions:

- Seeking/following awarding body guidance/instructions Invoking actions as detailed in statutory guidance /Taking advice/instructions from relevant local or national agencies
- Prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams when planned
- Entering candidates for the next available exam series (where available)

### **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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- facilitate alternative methods of learning
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning
- **Communication** details:
  - Candidates/Parents/Carers will be provided with a letter and verbally informed (via telephone) of any disruption of teaching time in the weeks leading up to an exam
- take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available
- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date

Other centre actions:

- Applying for special consideration for candidates
- Entering candidates for the next available exam series (where available)

### **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 because of a crisis

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations (referencing the JCQ document *Preparing for disruption to examinations*)
- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if a candidate misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- **Communication** details:
- Candidates/Parents/Carers will be provided with a letter and verbally informed (via telephone)
- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

### **11. Centre may not be able to open for examinations**

(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 listed above

The centre will:

- focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations
- take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre is able to open
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions (This could include implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal)
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- **Alternative site(s)** details: Hodge Hill Primary School
- **Communication** details: Candidates/Parents/Carers will be provided with a letter and verbally informed (via telephone) of any disruption of teaching time in the weeks leading up to an exam
- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

## **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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network and will ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- understand that as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

## **13. Delay in collection arrangements for completed examination scripts**

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, seek advice from the relevant awarding organisations and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation
- for any examinations where the centre makes its own arrangements for transportation, investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until as close to the collection time as possible

## **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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding body
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

## **15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency) or facilitate post-results services**

### 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- make arrangements to access its results at an alternative venue/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- make arrangements to coordinate access to post-results services from an alternative venue
- **Alternative site(s)** details: Hodge Hill Primary School
- make arrangements to make post-results requests at an alternative location
- contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post-results requests are not possible
- inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services
- **Communication** details: Candidates/Parents/Carers will be provided with a letter and verbally informed (via telephone)

## **Changes 2025/2026**

(Changed) Under heading **Contingency arrangements** slight change of wording to reflect GR 3.17-19.

(Changed) Under heading **National Centre Number Register and other information requirements** slight change of wording to reflect GR 5.3.

(Changed) Heading **Head of centre/senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle.**

(Changed) Heading **3. Teaching staff** (or other key staff essential to the examination process) **extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle**

(Changed) Heading **6. Cyber security** and amended criteria for implementation of the plan.

(Changed) Heading **11. Centre may not be able to open for examinations**

(Updated) Under heading below **Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning**, relevant links and information has been updated and outdated links/information removed.