



SKEGNESS ACADEMY

Exam Contingency

2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
April 2025	
Date of next review	April 2026

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Claudio Gissendorf
Exams officer line manager (Deputy Principal)	Charlotte Dunn
Exams officer	Sophie Wale
ALS lead/SENCo	Lorna Coates-Metheringham

Contents

Key staff involved in contingency planning.....	2
Purpose of the plan	4
Possible causes of disruption to the exam process.....	4
1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle).....	4
2. ALS lead/SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	5
3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	6
4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence	6
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice	7
6. Failure of IT systems	7
7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down).....	7
8. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centre closed for an extended period	7
9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open	8
10. Centre unable to open as normal during the examination period.....	8
11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers	9
12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts	9
13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked	9
14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services.....	9
Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning	11
Ofqual	11
7. Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations / assessments	12
JCQ	12
GOV.UK.....	13
Wales.....	13
Northern Ireland	13
National Counter Terrorism Security Office	14

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Skegness Academy. 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** 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 in the event of widespread disruption to the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- This plan also confirms Skegness Academy is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, General Regulations for Approved Centres 2025-26) 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 should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning

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

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*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- PA to the Principal to be trained in order to deputise for the Exams Officer
- In the event of an extended absence of the Exams Officer, PA to Principal to deputise
- Key tasks as listed above are understood
- Deputy Principal to assist in tasks which involve Arbor and/or A2C
- Exam Boards to be kept informed of developments
- Exams Officer to ensure essential information is available to the Head & SLT
- Annual membership to The Exams Office <https://www.theexamsoffice.org/>
- Examinations Procedures – resources to support processes include: Exam Officers Annual Handbook, Exams Calendar, Annual Exams Plan, Exam day checklist
- Exams Officer to ensure the Exams policies and procedures are up to date at all times
- Invigilation training for new staff to be completed
- Exam boards websites can be accessed by staff and students for exam dates, deadlines etc.
- PA to Principal and Deputy Principal have access to spare keys to exams office and secure storage.
- Papers are set out in the secure storage in date order. Removal and opening of exam papers must be witnessed by a second person, forms on clipboard in secure storage.
- Refer to 'What to do on exam day' in Exams Planning folder in the Exams Office.
- Deputy Principal with Examinations responsibility (or nominated person) to oversee dispatching of scripts aided by an experience invigilator.
- Deputy Principal with Examinations responsibility (or nominated person) to oversee the dispatch of results to candidates ensuring that access to results are available.
- Deputy Principal with Examinations responsibility (or nominated person) to oversee the facilitation of the post results services.

2. ALS lead/SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning

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

Pre-exams

- *approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body*
- *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

- Principal to appoint an experienced member of the SEN team as acting SENCo as soon as possible.
- Deputy Principal and Exams Officer to be closely involved with the access arrangements in order be able to support co-ordination if required
- Testing and Assessments continue to be carried out by qualified members of the SEND team.

- Applications for Access Arrangements to be made in conjunction with the Exams Officer.
- Senior members of the SEND team to be fully up to date with JCQ Regulations
- Check documentation with Exams Officer
- Exams officer to ensure exam room arrangements are sorted

3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams 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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Adjust the timetable as far as is practicable to ensure subject specialist teachers are teaching examination groups
- Head to appoint acting CD or subject teacher/specialist supply staff, as required
- Head of Department to liaise with Exams Officer over deadlines etc.
- The Exams Officer will closely monitor the key tasks undertaken by teaching staff and will liaise with the Head of Centre and other centre staff regarding entry information.
- The Head of Centre will monitor the progress of nonexamination tasks, coursework marks and internal assessment marks and ensure steps are put in place to complete these and inform candidates of these within the appropriate timescales.
- Awarding bodies will be informed of any potential issues as soon as possible.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Officer to ensure appropriate number of invigilators are trained to cover all exams and backups available at short notice.
- Review numbers at least quarterly.
- Ensure all invigilators training is up to date – Invigilators folder in Exams Office for latest details.
- Support or other teaching staff undertake training as backup
- If an invigilator does not turn up for any reason a member of SLT will stand in for them.

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Pre-planning is essential. Exam rooms are allocated well in advance of the examinations window by Exams Officer in consultation with the Vice Principal.
- Use alternative spaces in school where appropriate
- Reseat examinations, if possible to reduce the number of rooms required
- Invigilators/ School staff will assist the Exams Officer in maintaining the security of exam papers should a venue be changed a very short notice.
- Exams Officer to ensure that any late-notice rooms comply with regulations as set out in the JCQ ICE book.

6. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Ensure IT Support is quickly accessible during exam season (online exams) and results days
- Contact examination boards if necessary
- Exams Officer able to access exam boards secure sites externally

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Invigilators, SLT, and Exams Officer to ensure emergency evacuation plan is followed, maintaining the integrity of the exam
- Candidates to be held separately, avoiding contact with other pupils, and ensuring that they do not talk to one another; candidates will be relocated to another of our venues wherever possible
- Exam boards to be advised as appropriate

Lockdown

- Please see the separate Lockdown Policy (Exams), available on the school website

8. 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

- The centre to communicate with parents, carers, students and staff about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.
- Principal/SLT to prioritise teaching venues on site for students in exam years if possible
- Exams Officer to inform exam boards of developments
- Consider use of alternative venues

9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- Correct documentation is completed
- The centre to communicate with parents, carers, staff and candidates regarding solutions to the issue
- Consider use of alternative venues.

10. Centre unable 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 unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption
- School will always remain open for examination candidates unless a situation means that it is unsafe for anyone to enter the building.
- Exams Officer to inform each awarding organisation which examinations are affected as soon as possible
- Centre to communicate with parents, carers, candidates and staff regarding alternative arrangements
- Alternative accommodation is sought as quickly as possible

11. 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

- Frequent checks of deliveries of examination papers are made
- Examination Boards are contacted immediately if papers are not delivered by the expected date and act on advice provided by Examinations Boards
- If awarding organisations provide electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.
- Examination officer to ensure handling and access to copies when received, made and stored is kept under secure conditions using passwords and encrypted online storage.

12. Disruption to the transportation of 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

- Exams Officer to communicate with relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible to resolve the issue.
- Scripts to be stored securely according to JCQ regulations until transport is confirmed.
- If alternative secure delivery options are advised, proof of postage is obtained
- The centre will not make their own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations

13. 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

- EO contacts SLT responsible for exams
- Examination Board instructions are distributed to the Exams Officer, Head of Centre, Assistant Headteacher, Subject department, Parents and Pupils
- The awarding organisations can be asked to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement, as defined by the awarding organisations in consultation with the regulators
- It is the responsibility of the head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students and their parents or carers

14. 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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Unable to access results - Exams Officer will contact awarding bodies regarding alternative options (e.g.,download results from awarding body secure websites)
- Unable to distribute results - the centre will communicate with parents, carers, students and CDs with details of alternative arrangements (e.g. alternative site). Information also to be posted on the school website and communicated to reception staff/porters/ school office.
- Alternative arrangements for post-results services to be communicated to parents, carers, students, CDs, reception staff, school office.

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

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

1. Contingency planning

You should prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments as part of your emergency planning and make sure your staff are aware of these plans.

When drafting contingency plans, you should consider the following guidance:

1.1 General contingency guidance

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

2. Disruption to assessments or exams

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

You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

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

See also:

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

3. Steps you should take

3.1 Exam planning

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

3.2 In the event of disruption

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

3.3 After the exam

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

4. Steps the awarding organisation should take

4.1 Exam planning

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

4.2 In the event of disruption

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

4.3 After the exam

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

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

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

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

See also:

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

6. Wider communications

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

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

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

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

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

In the event of widespread sustained national disruption, the 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.

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education should continue in 2022/23 with schools remaining open and that examinations and assessments will go ahead in both autumn 2022 and summer 2023.

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

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

(Ofqual guidance extract above taken directly from the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted (updated 01 October 2020)

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

JCQ

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

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

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

15.3 Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to

ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

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

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate a 'contingency day' for examinations, summer 2026. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

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

In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 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 contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.

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

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2025-26 <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, Contingency planning)

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

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

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

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

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

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

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings

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

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service>

Wales

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

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

Northern Ireland

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

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

School closures www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-closures

National Counter Terrorism Security Office

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