



St Augustine's CE High School

Examinations Contingency Plan

We are committed to ensuring that all students have equitable access to examinations, even in the event of unexpected disruptions. By planning for various scenarios, we aim to minimize any potential challenges and maintain the integrity of the examination process. Our approach reflects a commitment to transparency, clear communication and the well-being of all students, ensuring that every candidate has the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in a fair and secure environment.

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: January 2026
Last reviewed on:	January 20265	
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St Augustine's Federated Schools have consciously considered how this policy may affect people who share protected characteristics and have due regard for those whose identity is protected under the Equality Act 2010.

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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 St. Augustine's 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.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by scenarios contained in the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

This plan complies with JCQ general regulations (section 5) in that:

The centre agrees to “have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle;”

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

I. 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 and trained

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

- 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:

- Deputy Head (Curriculum) to appoint a suitable Deputy Examinations Officer as rapidly as possible, who will follow procedures and practices within the Examinations Officer remit.
- Exams Officer to ensure essential information is available to Deputy Head (Curriculum)
- Exams Officer to ensure Exam Cycle, policies and procedures are always up to date
- Additional IT Support sourced
- Senior Invigilator used to support centre exam routines.
- Deputy Head (Curriculum) to liaise with IT Manager/external support to manage entries.
- Senior Invigilator to liaise with Deputy Head (Curriculum) regarding exam time issues and results.

2. SENCO extended absence at key point in 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*
 - a) candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements
 - b) evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated
- *Pre-exams*
 - a) approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body
 - b) modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
 - c) staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained
- *Exam time*
 - a) access arrangement candidate supports not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions:

- The centre will appoint a suitable Deputy SENCO as rapidly as possible, who will follow procedures and practices within the SENCO remit?
- Exams Officer to ensure essential information is available to Deputy Head (Curriculum)
- Exams Officer to ensure Exam Cycle, policies and procedures are always up to date

3. Teaching staff extended absence at key point in 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:*
 - a) *candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late*
 - b) *late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies*
- *Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines*

Centre actions:

- Deputy Head (Curriculum) and Exams Officer to ensure departmental continuity by requesting an alternative member of the department/in school takes responsibility for the actions above.



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:

- Examinations Officer to ensure that recruitment and training of invigilators is done well in advance of time.
- Examinations Officer to work with agencies to ensure a list of suitable candidates is available.
- Examinations Officer to ensure that capacity is never exceeded on any one day.
- Examinations Officer to review training procedures regularly and put in place additional training as required.
- Examinations Officer to ensure a specific Exams Day Contingency Plan is in place
- Examinations Officer to ensure a specific Emergency Evacuation Plan is in place
- Examinations Officer to ensure an Incident Log is in place.
- Exams Officer and Senior Invigilator to cover absences as needed

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Exam's 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:

- Exam rooming is planned prior to exam windows.
- In an emergency the **Sports Hall/Drama & Dance Studio** to be utilised for examination purposes or rooms in the LS Department.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Where it is identified that a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of the delivery of examinations

Centre actions:

- Promptly reporting any incidents to the relevant awarding body/bodies which might compromise any aspect of assessment.
- Exams Officer will work with IT and contact the relevant Awarding Body to seek further guidance.
- Senior Leaders will monitor the situation and take any action required as directed by the Awarding Bodies.
- 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
- Containment may include isolating/closing a compromised section of the network
- Attempt to recover any losses and limit the damage
- Identify any affected data and notify organisations as appropriate
- Back up SIMS database as per schedule
- Keep network security up to date
- Ensure the Exams & Data Manager has access to awarding body sites from home.
- Inform other organisations if we have access to their systems to prevent any unauthorised access.

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:

- Examinations Officer to contact in-house IT department/External IT support
- Exams Officer and IT Manager to liaise with Examination Boards as appropriate.

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:

- Refer to and invoke its 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 emergency evacuation procedure' (or its (exams) lockdown policy)
- 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

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning.

Centre actions:

- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.
- Alternative venues to be sourced with priority for students with imminent exams.



- Examinations Officer to advise the Examination Boards as appropriate.
- In extreme circumstances advise candidates they may need to sit exams in the next available series.

10. 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:

- Consideration would be given on an individual basis as to why they were unable to attend the examination centre.
- Special Consideration may be applied for to the appropriate Exam Boards for those affected.

11. Centre unable/at risk of not being 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)

**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.*

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable/at risk of not being able to open as normal for scheduled examination(s)

Centre actions:

- 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 (CAP))
- 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
- Centre to explore alternative local venues.
- 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 to the appropriate Exam Boards.
- Exams Officer to liaise with Head of Centre and to inform awarding bodies.



12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions:

- The centre to communicate with relevant Exam Boards at the outset to resolve the issue.
- Alternative transport should only be used with the agreement of the relevant Exam Boards.
- Scripts must be stored securely until such time transport is confirmed.
- 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. 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

Centre actions:

- 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.
- The Exam Boards may generate candidate marks for the affected assessments based on other evidence, as defined by the Exam Boards and the regulators.
- It may be necessary for the candidates to retake the assessment at the next available
- opportunity.

14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

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:

- Centre to contact awarding organisations about alternative options.
- Arrange to access results at an alternative site.
- Inform staff, students and parents as soon as possible of the change in distribution of results.

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

Contingency Days: Awarding bodies have agreed national contingency days for the summer exam series. Candidates must be available on these dates in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system. For the **Summer 2026** exams, the contingency day is

Wednesday, 24 June 2026



Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

This plan is informed by the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations (Effective from 1 September 2023)**.

This plan also confirms St. Augustine's CE High School'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 staff absence.

This plan also confirms St. Augustine's CE High School's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) that the centre has in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle.

- www.ofqual.gov.uk
- www.jcq.org.uk
- www.gov.uk
- [JCQ: A guide to the special consideration process](#)
- [JCQ: Instructions for conducting examinations](#)
- [JCQ: Instructions for handling scripts](#)
- [DfE guidance on dealing with disruption to teaching and learning](#)
- [DfE guidance on school closures](#)
- [DENI guidance on exceptional closure of schools due to adverse weather](#)
- [DENI checklist for principals when considering opening or closure of school](#)
- [NI Direct advice on school closures](#)

