

Exams Contingency Plan

2026 - 2027

‘Because Children Deserve Better’

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1. Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Katie Lockwood (Kirklees) Cheryl Lotherington (Leeds)
Senior leader(s)	Craig McElhatton, Danielle Augustine, Oliver Roberts (Kirklees) Nicole McLaughlin, Ryan McGee (Leeds)
Data and Exams Manager	Gemma Baston (Kirklees and Leeds)
SENCo	Erica Strickland, Mark Lee (Kirklees) Jayne Theodorou, Keira Carnie (Leeds)

2. Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examination and assessment process at The Pivot Academy Kirklees and The Pivot Academy Leeds East. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our processes.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) 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, and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidance, which prepares for disruption to examinations.

In accordance with the current JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, The Pivot Academy Kirklees and The Pivot Academy Leeds East have an up to date written contingency plan. This contingency plan is reviewed annually and covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery.

There is a separate Cyber Security Policy which is reviewed annually and is available for inspection. This policy details preventative measures, incident response procedures, business continuity arrangements and data recovery processes.

3. Contingency arrangements

This contingency plan covers all aspects of examination, assessment administration and delivery. Pivot has robust contingency arrangements in place that aim to minimise the risk to examination, assessment administration and delivery and any adverse impact on candidates.

As part of the contingency plan, The Pivot Academy Kirklees and The Pivot Academy Leeds East will identify an alternative site or alternative sites which can be used if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address. Larger sites may require more than one potential alternative site or different sites for different year groups.

The Pivot Academy Kirklees and The Pivot Academy Leeds East has 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, several contacts are provided to the awarding bodies, by the Data and Exams Manager, to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

The Pivot Academy Kirklees and The Pivot Academy Leeds East will ensure where candidates' work is produced electronically it is backed-up, including being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up via the Cloud. Appropriate security arrangements are implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

4. Operating across more than one centre

As the head of centre and Data and Exams Manager both operate across more than one centre, the head of centre will ensure there is suitable senior leadership team and examinations officer support in place so they can meet their obligations, across all centres, for which they are responsible in relation to recruitment, selection, training and support of staff. The arrangements covered in this contingency plan relate to the following centres:

- The Pivot Academy Kirklees
- The Pivot Academy Leeds East

5. National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

In accordance with the current JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, the head of centre will ensure that The Pivot Academy Kirklees and The Pivot Academy Leeds East 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 will 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.

6. 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 (see Exam Policy).

7. Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

Data and Exams Manager 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 the post-results services

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- All work relating to the above will be stored centrally
- Member of SLT for each site to be trained on entering learners and any non-examination assessment (NEA) results onto awarding body websites
- Member of SLT for each site to have access and be trained in how to download exam results and download candidate result statements

SENCo 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

- Educational Psychologist (Kathryn Parkinson) and Strategic Lead for SEN and Inclusion (Fiona Gallagher) to assist in any testing of learners
- Teachers to collate and supply Normal Ways of Working
- Head of Centre / Deputy Head of Centre and Exams Officer to work together to plan rooming and support arrangements

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 Data and Exams Manager on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the 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 (including controlled assessments and coursework) 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

- Head of Centre to ensure suitably qualified staff are made available to teach KS4
- Teachers to regularly update annual plans to allow other staff to pick up from the point of absence

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

- Head Of Centre to ensure all staff are invigilator trained to act as backups

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Senior Leaders 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

- Head Of Centre to ensure sufficient rooms are available

Alternative site(s) details:

- Unit 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 16 Killingbeck Drive, Leeds, LS14 6UF
- Unit 12 & 15a Cartwright Court, Bradley Business Park, Huddersfield, HD2 1GN
- Bradley Youth Club, 87 Bradley Road, Huddersfield, HD2 1RA
- Salus House, Off Dyson Wood Way, Bradley Business Park, Huddersfield, HD2 1GN
- Technology House, Alexandra Court, Off Dyson Wood Way, Bradley Business Park, Huddersfield, HD2 1GN
- Unit 7 Thornes Office Park, Off Monckton Way, Wakefield, WF2 7AN
- 5 Alice Street, Bradford BD8 7RT
- Grange Interlink, Summerville Road, Bradford, BD7 1PX

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

(This will include the required arrangements for cyber security)

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

- a) ensuring that all members of centre staff who access awarding bodies' online systems undertake annual cyber security training.

The training must include:

- the importance of creating strong, unique passwords for all accounts;
- keeping all account details strictly confidential;
- the critical role of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) in protecting against unauthorised access;
- how to properly set up and use MFA for both centre and awarding bodies' systems;
- an awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts
- the importance of staff quickly reporting any suspicious activity, events, incidents and encouraging a safe and supportive reporting culture.

Certificates of completed staff cyber training must be downloaded and held on file for inspection. The NCSC training resource provides a certificate of completion of cyber training.

- b) developing and maintaining a comprehensive cyber security policy for the centre. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) provides resources to assist centres in creating such policies;
- c) implementing and enforcing robust security measures, including where available, multi factor authentication (MFA) must be used for all accounts and systems containing exam-related information, including those that interface between awarding body and centre systems, to enhance security and protect sensitive data. Where MFA is not available on systems, an equivalent multi-layered security approach must be in place. For example, strong log-in controls, access and monitoring controls and secure storage so that exam-related data is protected in line with cyber security best practice.
 - regularly reviewing and updating security settings to align with current best practices;
 - updating any passwords that may have been exposed
 - setting up secure account recovery options
 - reviewing and managing connected applications
 - monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
 - ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document Guidance for centres on cyber security

Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' Multi Factor Authentication requirements, reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body.

If a cyber incident occurs:

- Isolate affected systems immediately
- Notify the IT team (Adept)
- Notify the Associate Director of Compliance
- Contact affected awarding organisations
- Follow NCSC guidance
- Assess impact on examination materials and candidate work
- Activate manual contingency processes where possible
- Record and report any data breach in accordance where possible

Failure of IT systems:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- IT system corruption affecting candidates' work
- Management Information System failure at final entry deadline
- Management Information System failure during exams preparation
- Technical failure or power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen examination

- MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

(This will include the security arrangements put in place which protect candidates' work)

- Ensure where candidates' work is produced electronically that 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... Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.
- Entries to be made directly onto the exam board websites
- Transfer to alternative site if power outage affects whole building or to an alternative room if power outage is localised
- Hard copy candidate lists maintained
- Examination timetables exported and stored offline
- Candidate numbers securely retained offline
- Emergency access to awarding body systems available from alternative locations

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

- Immediate contact made with exam board and written report completed
- Special Consideration applied for all applicable learners
- Examinations will be conducted in accordance with the centre's Lockdown Procedure and the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.

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

- Where there is disruption to teaching time and learners miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of centres to prepare learners, as usual, for examination, in the case of unitised courses, centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series, centres should have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning

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

- 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 or at another time, 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
- The relevant awarding body will be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required

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

- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre can open
- 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
- Assess risks arising from severe weather, flooding, loss of utilities, structural damage or other incidents which could make all or part of the site unavailable.
- The decision on whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre who is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies (For further guidance see: [What schools, colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted](#))
- Special consideration is an option if all other avenues have been exhausted and candidates meet the published criteria

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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

- 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
- Obtain and download electronic copies of papers

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

- 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 own arrangements for transportation, centres should investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations.
- Centre to keep completed examination scripts in the secure room until as close to the collection time as possible – ensuring script packages are not left unattended at the collection area)

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

- Awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based 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

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Distribution of results: centre to plan to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
- Centres to plan to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site
Centres to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
- Facilitation of post results services: Centre to plan to post results requests at an alternative location
- Centres to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible

Alternative site(s) details:

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Exam planning

This contingency plan is reviewed well in advance of each exam or assessment series, taking into consideration how, if the contingency plan is invoked, we will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

The Data and Exams Manager will speak to the relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible if we are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, the Head of Centre will ensure that exams take place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises. We will discuss alternative arrangements with awarding organisations if:

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

In the event of disruption

The Data and Exams Manager will:

- Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre can 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 learners whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
- Communicate with learners, parents and carers any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
- Communicate with any external assessors, invigilators or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

After the exam

The Head of Centre, in discussion with the Data and Exams Manager will:

- Consider whether any learners' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply to the relevant awarding organisation for special consideration.
- Advise learners, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment later.
- 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.

8. Appendix A: Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

Cyber security standards for schools and colleges [Cyber security: core standard](#)

Ofqual

Ofqual guidance extract below 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 (last updated 7 May 2024)
<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

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

Preparing for disruption to examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/
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/

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

Guidance for centres on cyber security (Effective from November 2023; Revised July 2025)
www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption
www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Contingency planning
www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service

National Cyber Security Centre

Cyber Security for Schools www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools
Cyber security training for school staff www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools