Our Lady Queen of Peace

Catholic High School

Contingency Plan

2026/2027

Mission Statement

In Christ We Grow – As a learning community we live out our Mission Statement striving for excellence through caring, sharing and achieving.

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Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

This plan is next due for review on 12th November 2027

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examination/assessment process at Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High School. 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 publication, '*What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted',* and the JCQ guidance **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (effective from 1 September 2024).

This plan also confirms Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High School's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (GR 5.3) that:

- The centre has 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
- The centre's contingency planning **must** include succession arrangements for members of staff involved in examination and assessment administration.

Contingency arrangements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.31-36) Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High School **must** have in place, and at all times comply with, 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 od centre, relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration, SENDCo (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 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)

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 with oversight of examination and assessment administration absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Where the head of centre/senior leader with oversight of examination and assessment administration 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 point 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 service

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Deputy Headteacher, Mr Ryan Hughes will take over the running and implementation of the exam process using the 'Exams Instruction Manual' produced by the Exams Officer. An electronic version can be found on the 'T' drive in the 'Exams' folder T:\EXAMS

- In the event that Mr Hughes is also absent, Assistant Headteacher Mrs Rebecca Witter will undertake the exams process as per the centre escalation process

2. SENDCo (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:

- SLT/SENCo to nominate a 'deputy' to cover a role/task
- Exams officer to liaise with SENCo to ensure access arrangements are in place by the summer term of Year 10 for all students where possible
- Exams officer to plan access arrangements for exam days in advance of the summer series in consultation with the SENCo

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
  - candidates being entered late or other penalty charges being applied 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 submission deadlines

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- SLT/Subject Leaders to nominate a 'deputy' to cover a role/task
- Head of centre to ensure that the priority for teaching is the examination cohort and teaching staff will be covered in good time

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:

- Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High School use 7 regular invigilators of which 2 can act as lead invigilator – this ensures that we have more capacity for 1 invigilator per 30 students than there are students on roll
- Where there is an invigilator shortage or absence on peak exam days, TA and non-subject teachers will be drafted in to invigilate
- In extreme circumstances, SLT will act as invigilators after receiving training from the exams officer

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 exam 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:

- Exams officer will ensure that the planning of rooms is completed by the end of the spring term in order to identify potential rooming issues
- In the event of a room not being available at very short notice, sufficient staff will be made available to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced. The head of centre and deputy headteacher will work with the exams officer at all times during such emergencies
- Dependant on the number of candidates needing to be relocated, alternative venues have been identified as:
    - Lathom High School (Glenburn Road, Skelmersdale WN8 6JN)
    - West Lancashire College (College Way, Skelmersdale WN8 6LH)

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:

- This will include the required arrangements for cyber security (GR 3.38) to ensure that procedures are in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:
    - providing training for authorised staff on the importance of creating strong unique passwords and keeping all account details secret
    - providing training for staff on awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts
    - enabling additional security settings wherever possible
    - 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
    - implementing and enforcing robust security measures, including:
        - where available, 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 the centre's 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
    - 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' MFA requirements
    - reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems **immediately** to the relevant awarding body

A record of completed cyber security training must be held on file for inspection. This record could take the form of a certificate, a paper checklist, a spreadsheet-based checklist or a Learning Management System (LMS) report.

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- IT system corruption affecting candidates' work
- MIS system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS 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:

- 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.
- Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber attacks. (GR 3.36)

8. 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:

- The procedure for the emergency evacuation of examination rooms is detailed in the Emergency Evacuation Policy and Lockdown Policy

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:

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

10. Candidates may not be able to take examinations – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal because of a crisis

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Exams officer will communicate with relevant awarding body/bodies to make them aware of the issue and seek guidance
- Consider the starting time of the examination for all candidates (section 6 of the JCQ document **Instructions for conducting examinations**), whilst being aware of the rules for very late arrivals (section 21 of the JCQ document **Instructions for conducting examinations**) as it is always in the best interest of candidates to sit the examination.
- Special consideration is an option where a candidate is unable to sit the examination (chapter 4 of the JCQ document **A guide to the special consideration process**).
- Consider the possibility of candidates sitting exam in the next examination series if feasible
- Senior leader with oversight of exams and assessments will communicate information and solutions to parents/carers and students

11. Centre may not be able to open for examinations

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

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 arrangement 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).)
- 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
- Special consideration is an option if all other avenues have been exhausted and candidates meet the published criteria
- The relevant awarding organisations should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required
- Alternative site details:
    - Lathom High School (Glenburn Road, Skelmersdale WN8 6JN)
    - West Lancashire College (College Way, Skelmersdale WN8 6LH)

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:

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

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:

- Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, the centre will contact the relevant awarding body for advice and instructions
- For any examinations where centres are required to make their own arrangements for collection, the centre should investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ guidance *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

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:

- Liaise with the awarding organisations to determine if they can 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, senior leadership with responsibility for examinations and assessments will inform candidates that they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal 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 service

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

Distribution of results:

- Centre to make arrangements to access results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
- Centre to make arrangements to coordinate access to post-results services from an alternative site
- Centre to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation

Facilitation of post results-services:

- Centre to make arrangements to make post-results requests at an alternative location
- Centre to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post-results requests are not possible
- Alternative site details:
    - Lathom High School (Glenburn Road, Skelmersdale WN8 6JN)
    - West Lancashire College (College Way, Skelmersdale WN8 6LH)

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

Cyber security: core standard

Ofqual

Ofqual guidance extract 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**

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

This document was updated in October 2023 to include Ofqual's final decisions on long-term resilience arrangements, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC).

In addition to this guidance, the centre must be aware of its specific responsibilities for local and national school preparations and contingencies. The centre should also follow advice from relevant public health bodies.

JCQ

Instructions for conducting examinations 2026-2027 (ICE) section 15, **Contingency Planning**

JCQ-Instructions-for-conducting-examinations-2025_6_FINAL.pdf

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 www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

5 tips to get exam ready and stay cyber safe! www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/blogs/

GOV.UK
Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption
www.gov.uk/guidance//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