Exam Contingency Plan

Magna Academy

2026-2027

Approved by:		**Date:**	November 2024
Last reviewed on:	September 2026		
Next review due by:	September 2027		

Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Mr. Philip Midworth
Exams Officer line manager (Senior leader)	Mrs Manpreet Kainth
Exams Officer	Mr Farayi Munyoro
SENCO	Kate O'Kelly
Senior leader(s)	Mrs Mel Orchard
	Mr. John Eldridge (Business Manager)

Purpose of the strategy

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Magna 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 (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 Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document Preparing for disruption to examinations (Effective from 1 September 2023).

This plan also confirms Magna Academy'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 manager or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. 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. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The head of centre will also ensure that Magna Academy has a contingency to enable the prompt handling of urgent issues only, responds to the awarding bodies' request for information regarding the contact details of a senior member of staff (which might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). This will ensure that urgent matters which might adversely affect candidates which arise outside of term time, and which potentially put qualifications at risk, can be addressed by awarding bodies with the support of that member of staff. Heads of centre should ensure that this member of staff has the necessary authority to mobilise resources to provide this support, which might include resolving issues within the centre itself.

1. Exams manager extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Risks - 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

- The line manager/Exam assistant to undertake any tasks required using the Exams Manual. SLT(Business Manager) to assist where required and awarding bodies to be contacted for advice if necessary.

2. SENDCo extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Risks - 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

Exam time

- access arrangement support for students not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Deputy SENDCo to undertake any tasks required alongside the SENDCo and JCQ guidance

Pastoral team and SLT to identify students where applications for access arrangements may be required. The employment of outside professionals to conduct testing may be required.

3. Head of Centre/ Senior Leader (Line Manager) extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Risks - 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

- Exams Officer to liaise with Head of department and/or SLT (Business Manager) to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to. If this is not possible, the exams manager will liaise with the awarding bodies and act upon advice received.

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 will review invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained in a timely fashion.
- Senior Leadership Team and members of the Extended Leadership Team will be trained and ready for invigilation duties at short notice and at peak times if required.

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 e.g fire or flooding etc

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Officer will organise rooming before Easter holidays, ensuring sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms.
- In the event of a room not being available at very short notice, SLT and the Exams Officer will work together to ensure that sufficient staff are available to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised, whilst alternative rooming is organised within the centre.

6. Cyber attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

The Exams Officer will work with the SLT and the IT department, to make immediate contact with the Awarding Bodies to seek further guidance and support. The SLT will work with the Exams Officer to take action as determined by the relevant awarding bodies.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The systems for restoring the data are reliable and robust
- The school will make contact with the police and Action Fraud
- The school will make contact with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)
- The school will inform the Department for Education

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

MIS system failure at final entry deadline
MIS system failure during exams preparation and student work back-up
MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Exams Officer, in consultation with SLT, will make entries from another venue direct to the

awarding bodies. Results may also be accessed directly from the Awarding Body. At all times during the system failure the Exams Officer will liaise with the Awarding Body to minimise disruption and costs incurred.

- IT to use cloud back-up for saving all work
- Secondary internet option for the school will immediately kick in

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
● Exams Officer will liaise with the Awarding Body to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take appropriate action.

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
● SLT to manage all such incidents. Candidates will be taught remotely.

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

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
● Exams Officer will liaise with the Awarding Body to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take appropriate action.

11. Centre may not be 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)

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

The Exams Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Body to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take the appropriate action. Magna Academy has formed a partnership with nearby schools within half a mile, Parkstone Grammar School, Haymoor Primary School and Ad Adastral Primary. The year group may be split to each of these alternative schools, depending on the situation. This would enable students to take their examinations. We would notify the JCQ Centre Inspection Services of the alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP). Students, parents and staff will be timeously notified using the School's communication channels.

12. 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

- SLT to manage all such incidents. Candidates will be taught remotely.

13. 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

- Exams Officer to liaise with awarding organisations to get electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.
- Exams Officer to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.
- 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 would consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date.

14. Disruption to transporting 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, the Exams Officer will seek advice from awarding organisations, we will not make our own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.
- For any examinations where we make our own collection arrangements, the Exams Officer will investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations.

- Exams Officer to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

15. 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

- Exams Officer will contact the Awarding Body to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given.
- Awarding organisations may 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

16. 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

Exams Officer will liaise with SLT to make arrangements to access the results/post results services at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, or to send them electronically if appropriate. The Exams Officer will contact the Awarding Organisation to notify them where appropriate.

Alternative venue details: Ocean Academy, Poole

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

Cyber Security Standards for schools and colleges
Cyber crime and cyber security: a guide for education providers
DfE Cyber Security Guidance – March 2023

Ofqual

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

Contingency planning
Awarding organisations are required to establish, maintain and comply with an up-to-date detailed written contingency plan, to mitigate any incident they have identified may occur. This includes having communication plans for external parties (Ofqual General Condition of Recognition A6). Schools and colleges should also be prepared for possible disruption to exams and assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

General contingency guidance

- emergency planning and response from the Department for Education in England
- handling strike action in schools from the Department for Education in England
- school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools from the Department for Education in England
- school terms and school closures from NI Direct
- police guidance from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats

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

You may also wish to see the JCQ's notice to centres on exam contingency plans and JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for qualifications within its scope.

Steps you should take

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.

In the event of disruption

- Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to 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 students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
- In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's Centre emergency evacuation procedure.
- Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
- Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

After the exam

- 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.

- Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
- Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
- 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.

Steps the awarding organisation should take

Exam planning

- Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
- 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.

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.

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.

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

Wider communications

The regulators, Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA Regulation 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.

Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations or assessments

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education in 2022 to 2023 has returned to normal. Schools are open and examinations will go ahead in 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 examinations and assessments, including exam timetables.

In November 2022, Ofqual and the Department for Education issued decisions following a consultation on the resilience of the qualifications sector for specific examinations awarded in England in summer 2023. Ofqual has published Guidance for schools, colleges and other exam centres on gathering evidence of student performance for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications to support resilience in the exam system in England in 2023.

The Department for Education has updated its guidance on handling strike action in schools in England in light of the industrial action in 2023. The guidance recommends schools should prioritise the running of examinations and assessments on any strike days, and should review their contingency plans to make this happen. Schools, colleges and

other exam centres should speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

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

(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** (last updated 18 January 2023) 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, awarding bodies 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

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 All centres must have 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. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency.

All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the examination contingency 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 'contingency sessions' for examinations, summer 2024. 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 'contingency sessions' 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 2024, 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 last 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 the contingency arrangements so that they may take them into account when making their plans for the summer.

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents
JCQ Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/generalregulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/
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-conductingexaminations

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

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption;
www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrenssocial-care-settings
Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning
www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service

National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free Web Check and Mail Check services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to **all UK schools**. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the NCSC website.

The Department for Education has been asking centres to review **National Cyber Security Centre** advice following the increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports centres in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the Department is reminding centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.

For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

1. Further ransomware attacks on UK education by cyber criminals - NCSC.GOV.UK
2. Mitigating malware and ransomware attacks
3. Offline backups in an online world
4. Backing up your data
5. Practical resources to help schools improve their cyber security
6. Building Resilience: Ransomware, the risk to schools and ways to prevent it
7. School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK