



**The Telford Langley School**  
**ENSURING EXCELLENCE**

**Exam Contingency Plan**

Approved: Autumn 2023

# Exam Contingency Plan

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Exam Contingency Plan
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# 1. Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Telford Langley 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 the OFQUAL Exam System Contingency Plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland which provides guidance in the publication what schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted and the JCQ *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

This plan also confirms The Telford Langley School is compliance with the JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centre (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. 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 Telford Langley School 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 any urgent matters which might adversely affect candidates which arise outside of term time, and which potentially put qualification awards 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.

# 2. Possible causes of potential disruption to the exam process

## 1.Exams Officer 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*
- *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

- SLT to nominate a 'deputy' to cover the role/task

### **1. SENCo/Assistant SENDCo extended absence at critical stage in the exam cycle.**

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

#### *Planning*

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

#### *Pre-exams*

- *approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body*
- *centre-delegated arrangements not put in place*
- *modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline*
- *staff 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 to nominate a 'deputy' to cover the role/task of either SENDCo/Assistant SENDCo.

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

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Key tasks not undertaken including:*

*Early/estimated entry information not provided to the curriculum and progress officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received*

*Final entry information not provided to the curriculum and progress 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*

*Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines*

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SLT to nominate a 'deputy' to cover the role/task

## 3. 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

- SLT to nominate a 'deputy' to cover the role/task
- Use support staff who have been invigilator trained.
- Have invigilators from an agency who are fully trained to JCQ standard.

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

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Curriculum and progress officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning*

*Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days*

*Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time*

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Source alternative venue/facilities – Telford Park School

## 6. Cyber-attack

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Promptly reporting any incidents to the relevant awarding body/bodies which might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery such as a cyber-attack
- 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
- Following and regularly reviewing National Cyber Security Centre advice for support in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work / Using the NCSC's free [Web Check](#) and [Mail Check](#) services to help protect from cyber-attacks.

## 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- If school has a power cut, the Exams Officer will go to a CAT school and enter data, examination prep and release of results
- Server down: School to contact Telford and Wrekin Council/Link in with Bromcom Cloud Base
- Bromcom's Contingency refer to their 'Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery Plan'

## 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

- School to contact awarding body
- School to inform students, parents and carers

## 9. Disruption of teaching time in weeks before an exam – centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- *The school to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.*

## **10. 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

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The school to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- The school to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.

## **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

- School inform awarding body of examinations which will be affected.
- Provide alternative provision at another CAT School
- 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).

## **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

- School to discuss alternative delivery of papers to the school.
- 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 to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date.

### 13. Disruption in the transportation of completed examination scripts

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence.

#### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- School will communicate and organise alternative arrangement for sending completed scripts
- 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 organisation.
- For any examinations where centres make their arrangements for transportation, centres should investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations*.
- Centres to ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection.

### 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

- Immediate communication to be made with the relevant awarding body
- Students, parents and carers to be informed by letter
- 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.

### 15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results service

(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

- School to contact awarding bodies to discuss alternative means of distribution
- Centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
- Centres to make arrangements 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 make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
- Centres to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible

### 3. Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

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

##### Contingency planning

Prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

##### General contingency guidance

- [emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [exceptional closure days](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [school terms and school closures](#) from NI Direct
- [opening schools in extremely bad weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [bomb threats](#) procedures for handling bomb threats from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office

##### 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:

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

See also:

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

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 your 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.

Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

### **In the event of disruption**

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

### **After the exam**

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

### **Steps the awarding organisation should take**

#### **Exam planning**

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

### **In the event of disruption**

- 1 Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
- 2 Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
- 3 Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students are able to complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
- 4 Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
- 5 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, depending on their specific policies.

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**

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 assessment, including exam timetables.

In September 2023, Ofqual and the DfE published joint consultation decisions on long-term resilience arrangements. As in 2023, Ofqual has provided guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications. For VTQs and other qualifications used alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels, awarding organisations will provide guidance where needed and will contact schools and colleges with more information.

In December 2022, Qualifications Wales published guidance for contingency assessment arrangements for GCSEs, AS and A levels and Skills Challenge Certificates in the event that a national decision is made to cancel exams. This guidance is still relevant for the current academic year.

The DfE 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 must speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

The DfE has also issued guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in their buildings. It includes the need for contingencies for possible disruption to examinations and links to the existing emergency planning guidance.

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

## **General contingency guidance**

- emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings from the DfE in England
- handling strike action in schools from the DfE in England
- school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools from the DfE in England
- reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete: guidance for education settings with confirmed RAAC from the DfE in England
- exceptional closure days from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- checklist - exceptional closure of schools from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- school terms and school closures from NI Direct
- opening schools as well as childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- emergency planning and response guidance for education and childcare settings- guidance for schools and education settings from the Welsh Government
- police guidance from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats

- cyber security guidance for schools and colleges from the National Cyber Security Centre

(Ofqual guidance extract above taken directly from the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted (updated 5 October 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:

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 guidance above taken directly from **Instructions for conducting examinations 2023-2024** <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, Contingency planning)

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents)

JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/)

JCQ Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/)

General Regulations for Approved Centres [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations)

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Guidance notes for transferred candidates [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Instructions for conducting examinations [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations)

A guide to the special consideration process [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)

Guidance for centres on cyber security (Effective from November 2023) [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/)

Information for centres affected by RAAC – the delivery of non-examination assessments and the special consideration process [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/)

## GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings)

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

## Wales

School closures: examinations [gov.wales/school-closures-examinations](http://gov.wales/school-closures-examinations)

Opening schools in extremely bad weather and extreme hot weather: guidance for schools  
[www.gov.wales/opening-schools-well-childcare-and-play-settings-extreme-bad-weather-and-extreme-hot-weather](http://www.gov.wales/opening-schools-well-childcare-and-play-settings-extreme-bad-weather-and-extreme-hot-weather)

## Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days [www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days)

Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School – exceptional closure of schools [www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools)

## Protect UK

[www.protectuk.police.uk](http://www.protectuk.police.uk)

## 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 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](#)
  
8. Cyber Security Standards for schools and colleges  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/cyber-security-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>
9. Cyber crime and cyber security: a guide for education providers  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/indicators-of-potential-fraud-learning-institutions/guide-on-cyber-crime-and-cyber-security-for-education-providers>
10. DfE Cyber Security Guidance – March 2023  
<https://www.eduqas.co.uk/media/05kl3f3f/dfe-cyber-security-guidance-2023.pdf>