

eat.uk.com

@EthosAcadTrust

Company Registration Number: 10745840 (England and Wales)

Ethos Academy Trust

Exam Contingency Plan

2025-2026

1	Summary	This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Ethos College. By outlining actions and procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.			
2	Responsible person	Mel Kilner			
3	Accountable ELT member	Mel Kilner			
4	Applies to	Ethos College			
5	Trustees and/or individuals who have overseen development of this policy	N/A			
6	Headteachers/Service Heads who were consulted and have given approval (if applicable)	Mel Kilner			
8	Ratifying committee(s) and date of final approval	ELT			
9	Version Number	1.6			
10	Available on	Every	Y	Trust Website	Y
				Academy Website	Y
				Staff Portal	Y
11	Related documents (if applicable)				
12	Disseminated to	Ethos College staff			
13	Date of implementation (when shared)				
14	Date of next formal review	November 2026			
15	Consulted with Recognised Trade Unions	N			

Date	Version	Action	Summary of changes
19/09/2023	1.4	No Changes	
17/10/2024	1.5	No Changes	
24/11/2025	1.6	Moderate changes	Responsible person, Accountable person and Headteacher changed to Mel Kilner. Removal of reference to Assistant SENCo as a role in the contingency process. Change to MIS. Removal of Covid-19 and widespread disruption specific specific guidance

Contents

Section	Description	Page
1.	Purpose of the plan	3
2.	Possible causes of disruption to the exam process 2.1 Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle) 2.2 SENDCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle 2.3 Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle 2.4 Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence 2.5 Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice 2.6 Failure of IT systems and Cyber Attacks 2.7 Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down) 2.8 Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam - centre closed for an extended period 2.9 Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations - centre remains open	4 -10

	<p>2.10 Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during examination period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to unforeseen emergency)</p> <p>2.11 Disruption to the distribution of examination papers</p> <p>2.12 Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts</p> <p>2.13 Assessment evidence is not available to be marked</p> <p>2.14 Centre unable to distribute results as usual or facilitate post results services</p>	
3.	<p>Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ofqual ➤ JCQ ➤ GOV.UK ➤ National Counter Terrorism Security Office 	11-13

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Mel Kilner
Deputy Head	Rich Billings, Diane Parkinson
Exams officer	David Connon
Exam officer line Manager SENDCo (Senior Leader)	Mel Kilner / Lindsey Ellis
Senior leaders	Diane Parkinson

Escalation Process:

In the event that the Deputy Head is absent, responsibility for all matters relating to examinations and assessments will be assumed by the Head of Centre.

Should both be absent, the SLT team will have shared responsibility

1. Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Ethos College. By outlining actions and 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 that Ethos College is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *Centre management*) that the centre has in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence. 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.

2. Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

2.1 Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning

- annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered
- annual exam plans not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines

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, e.g. 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 will nominate/recruit an interim experienced exams officer. An Exams Handbook has been created, which outlines procedures to be followed at key points in the exam process. (The Exams Officer will keep this up to date)
- OCR contingency service. Contact OCR customer services and they will put you in contact with Jayne Harris (OCR Northern Manager).

2.2 SENDCo extended absence at key points 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 (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:

- A member of SLT will cover or recruit an interim experienced SENDCo to the role.
- The Exams Officer to apply for access arrangements

2.3 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 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 submission deadlines

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- SLT to cover role/tasks. If necessary temporary teaching staff will be appointed and SLT/ Exams Officer will liaise with them to ensure that all deadlines are met

2.4 Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Failure to 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:

- Teaching staff and SLT to be utilised alongside the internal team of trained staff (note - staff may not invigilate a subject that they teach)

2.5 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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Alternative venues to be sourced by Exams Officer/a member of SLT. This could be Engage or Reach Academy (part of Ethos Academy Trust)

1.6 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
- Cyber Attack

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset and ask Alamo and/or Arbour to resolve the issue as a matter of urgency
- The centre to contact <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/> in the case of cyber attacks

2.7 Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

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:

- Centre evacuation procedures to be followed by all invigilators if an evacuation takes place during an exam
- Centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations, local or national agencies depending on the nature of the disruption
- Exams Officer to source alternative site or make arrangements to transfer candidates where necessary
- Exams Officer to prioritise Year 11 candidates where alternative accommodation is limited
- Exams Officer to apply for special consideration
- Centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates about any arrangements that have been put in place

2.8 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:

- Centre to have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning
- Centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates about the potential for disruption to teaching time and the plans to address this

2.9 Candidates at risk of being unable 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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue and take advice offered by them. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue
- The Exams Officer will source alternative accommodation, possibly Engage Academy or Reach Academy (part of Ethos Academy Trust) or other local schools and community rooms
- The Exams Officer will complete an alternative site application where necessary
- Consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, The Exam officer will apply for special consideration

2.10 Centre at risk of being unable 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 at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Take advice, or follow instructions, from the relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether a centre is able to open
- The centre to inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible and follow its instructions
- The Exams Officer will discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body and follow guidance provided by them. If alternative arrangements can be made The Exam Officer will source alternative accommodation, possibly Engage Academy or Reach Academy (part of Ethos Academy Trust) or other local schools and community rooms
- If accommodation is limited, The Exam Officer will prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue
- The Exams Officer will complete an alternative site application where necessary
- Consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, The Exam officer will apply for special consideration
-

2.11 Disruption to 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:

- The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to arrange alternative delivery of papers (awarding bodies will usually provide electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network). The Exams Officer will ensure that copies are downloaded, copied and stored securely
- As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date

2.12 Disruption to 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:

- 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 and will not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation
- For any examinations where centres make their own arrangements for transportation, the Exams Officer will investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations
- The Exams Officer will ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection

2.13 Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked
- Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- It is the responsibility of the head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to candidates and their parents or carers
- 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(s) in a subsequent assessment series

2.14 Centre unable to distribute results as usual 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 services

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

Distribution of results:

- centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site (which may be Engage Academy or Reach Academy), in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation. Candidates and their parents/carers will be informed by text message and secure student email if results are to be collected from an alternative venue
- 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 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

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

When drafting contingency plans, you should consider the following guidance:

1.2 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
- [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:

- 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 candidate's control

See also:

The [JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England](#)

Steps you should take

3.1 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.

3.2 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 candidates 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 candidates 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.

3.3 After the exam

Consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.

Advise candidates, 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

4.1 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.

4.2 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, candidates 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 candidates, 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.

4.3 After the exam

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected candidates. 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 candidates miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption

If some of the candidates 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:

[JCO's guidance on special considerations](#)

Wider communications

The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales and [CCEA](#) 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.