



# **Exam Contingency Plan**

## **2022/23**

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## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at The West Bridgford 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 West Bridgford Schools compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) that the centre has in place:

- This plan also confirms The West Bridgford School is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, General Regulations for Approved Centres 2020 - 21 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. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

## Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

### 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 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

- Head of Centre, Head of School and Exams Officer's SLT line manager ensure that Exams Assistant has all necessary support and resources, checking regularly on progress and ensuring support from all colleagues
- Exams Assistant to be aware of key points in exams cycle eg data collection and deadlines eg entries
- Exams Assistant to be confident in processes such as how to make entries, create timetables, book rooms
- Exams Assistant is supported by other associate staff ie Exams Officer's SLT line manager, HR Manager/Administrator and Cover Administrator in room allocation and booking and invigilator recruitment and training
- Directors of Learning to support Exams Assistant in delivering information to candidates
- Heads of Department to ensure assessment materials and candidates' work stored under required secure conditions and internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators correctly
- Exams Assistant to be supported by Senior Invigilators in ensuring exams taken under correct conditions and scripts dispatched correctly
- Exams Assistant to be confident in receiving results from awarding bodies and preparing results for candidates
- Administrative support to Exams Assistant on eg post-results services to be supplied from within team (Student Services/Data assistants)
- In event of absence of both Exams Officer and Exams Assistant, Head of Centre and Head of School to explore availability of trained/experienced staff within MAT

## **2. ALS Lead/SENCo 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

- Head of Centre to ensure SENCo team has all necessary support and resources
- SENCo to ensure team, specifically Assistant SENCo, fully trained re exam processes
- Exams Officer to ensure JCQ information circulated to SENCo and Assistant SENCo at beginning of academic year
- Exams Officer to liaise with Assistant SENCo in SENCo absence and ensure all candidates requiring access arrangements are correctly recorded
- SENCo to ensure cover in place from within the team or externally for appropriate testing
- SENCo to ensure support from within the team to manage evidence being collated and applications made correctly
- Exams Officer to ensure that SENCo team are aware of deadlines for modified papers to be ordered and access arrangements to be made online
- Exams Officer to ensure SENCo team are aware of staff required to facilitate access arrangements sufficiently in advance of exams
- SENCo team to ensure sufficient trained staff available to facilitate access arrangements
- Exams Officer to ensure adequate rooms and invigilators available for students with access arrangements

### **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 awarding body submission deadlines*

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

- HOD/Deputy HOD to ensure information provided to deadlines to exams officer
- HOD/Deputy HOD to ensure non-examination assessments are run according to department timetable and marks and work submitted to awarding bodies to deadline
- HOD/Deputy HOD to ensure non-examination assessments are run according to school and awarding body requirements
- SLT line manager to ensure HODs are able to ensure the above met

### **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

- Draft exam timetable to be completed pre-Christmas to allow information gathering re numbers of invigilators required
- Invigilator recruitment by Exams Officer and Exams Assistant supported by HR team in New Year with sufficient numbers to allow for over-staffing
- Exams Officer to ensure 'spare' invigilators available on exam days
- Exams Officer to ensure cover supervisors and Learning Centre team trained as invigilators as appropriate
- Exams Officer to contact other schools in MAT to share invigilators where appropriate

## 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

- Exams Officer to work with Cover Administrator and Head of School to discuss rooming options and find appropriate rooms during planning period
- Head of School and SLT to consider potential issues in advance and discuss with Exams Officer if necessary
- Head of Centre to decide whether to open school to exam candidates only
- Head of School and SLT to discuss potential alternative venues in the event of unexpected incidents and advise Exams Officer in event of change of venue
- Head of Centre to communicate with candidates, parents and carers in event of change of venue
- Exams Officer to communicate with awarding bodies in the event of unexpected incidents on the day and apply for Special Consideration as appropriate

## 6. Cyber-attack

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

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

- Establish an Incident Response Team
- Isolate and Contain the Attack - Immediately isolate impacted systems, such as student databases or online learning platforms, to prevent further damage and contain the spread of the cyber attack
- Utilise backup systems if possible whilst the attack is addressed
- Recover and restore impacted systems from clean backups
- Ensure all malicious code has been removed before bringing systems back online to avoid reinfection
- Communicate with stakeholders where appropriate and collaborate fully with authorities

## 7. Failure of IT systems

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*MIS system failure at final entry deadline*

*MIS system failure during exams preparation*

*Power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen test*

*MIS system failure at results release time*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Officer to ensure entries made before deadline to avoid delays
- ICT Systems Manager to ensure staff available on results download days
- ICT Systems Manager to ensure backup system available to download results including offsite if appropriate
- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies if issues with receiving results

**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

- Head of Centre decides to evacuate or lock down centre
- Head of Centre to communicate with candidates and parents/carers re incident and implications and solutions
- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies immediately for advice
- Exams Officer to apply for special consideration as appropriate
- Head of Centre to offer candidates opportunity to sit the exam in the next available series

**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

- Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring candidates continue to be prepared for their examinations as usual and for communicating any changes to candidates, parents and carers as per the relevant part of the emergency plan

**10. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Head of School to discuss with Exams Officer options for re-locating the exam candidates to other rooms or alternative venue
- Head of School to make final decision re re-rooming or alternative venue
- Head of Centre responsible for communicating changes to candidates, parents and carers as required
- Exams Officer to make awarding bodies aware of the issue and apply for Special Consideration as appropriate
- Head of Centre to offer candidates opportunity to sit the exam in the next available series

**11. Centre 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 unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Officer informs all affected awarding bodies as soon as possible to discuss options
- Head of Centre responsible for deciding whether to open to exam candidates only
- Head of Centre and SLT to discuss possible alternative venues in advance of summer series
- Head of Centre to decide if alternative venue required/available
- Exams Officer to complete and return JCQ 'Alternative site form' as necessary, as early as possible and at least 6 weeks before the start of the exam series unless unforeseen circumstances apply
- Exams Officer to apply for Special Consideration as appropriate
- Exams Officer to ensure scripts kept secure as appropriate
- Head of Centre to offer candidates opportunity to sit the exam in the next available series

**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

- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies as soon as made aware of this issue to organise alternative distribution methods

**13. 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

- Exams officer to communicate with awarding bodies to discuss options to resolve
- Completed scripts to be stored securely until collected

**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

- Head of Centre to communicate immediately with awarding bodies and candidates/parents
- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies to discuss and apply for special consideration if appropriate

**15. 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

- ICT Systems Manager to ensure Exams Officer is able to access results in case of IT issues preventing access to exam results in normal manner - from off-site via remote desktop services if required
- Exams Officer to communicate with awarding bodies to discuss options
- Head of Centre to arrange alternative site for distribution of results and communicate this information to candidates and parents/carers if required
- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies if there is delay with applying for post-results services

## 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

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.

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

#### 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
- [Opening and closing 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 closures from NI Direct
- [Opening schools in extremely bad weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [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:

- [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.

#### **Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations / 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 should national disruption occur with any further relevant links.

[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*, (updated 18/01/2023) <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 Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the 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 a 'contingency days' for examinations, summer 2023. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examsystem-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

The designation of a 'contingency days' 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 that there is national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2023, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and the 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 was agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the re-scheduling 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. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course.

[JCQ guidance taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2022-2023* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, **Contingency planning**]

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents>

JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations (Effective from 1 September 2022) [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/)

General Regulations for Approved Centres <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance notes on *alternative site* arrangements <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms>

Guidance notes concerning transferred candidates <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms>

Instructions for Conducting Examinations <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

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

## **GOV.UK**

Emergency planning and response: Exam disruption;

[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)

Opening and closing maintained schools [www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools)

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: guidance for schools [gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools](http://gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools)

## **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 [www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools)

## **ProtectUK**

[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. [More ransomware attacks on UK education - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)
2. [Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement](#)
3. [Offline backups in an online world](#)
4. [Backing up your data](#)
5. [Practical resources to help improve your cyber security](#)
6. [Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it](#)
7. [School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)

