

# Appendix 1 - Exam contingency plan 2023/24

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## Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Mr A Bridson
Exams Officer Line Manager (MIS & Data Manager)	Mrs L Barton
Exams Officer	Mrs H Gardiner
SENDCo	Mrs S Lord
SLT Link	Curriculum Deputy Headteacher

## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Cardinal Langley RC High School. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our 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** and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2023).

This plan also confirms Cardinal Langley RC High School is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2019-20* 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 SENDCo 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 Cardinal Langley RC High School as 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.

## Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

### 1. Exam officer extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where there is an extended period of time that the EO is absent. Their role will be covered by Mrs L Barton (MIS & Data Manager)

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

#### Planning

- Where possible collect 2-year data information each year.
- Annual exams plan to be produced as soon as the assessment calendar is available, to incorporate all internal assessment key tasks, dates & deadlines alongside external exam information.
- Ensure recruitment is actioned at the start of each academic year in line with numbers of students and Sixth Form recruitment.

#### Entries

- Another member of centre staff to have access to the exam audit to enable estimates to be submitted by AB deadlines.
- A member of centre staff will be trained on creating and submitting AB entries/registrations.
- In line with the annual exams plan, the member of centre staff will ensure entry/registration deadlines are met.

#### Pre-exams

- EOs at Middleton Technology School & St. Cuthbert's RC High School to incorporate invigilators in their centre's training/update meetings.
- All exam rooms are booked at the beginning of the academic year according to the annual exams plan, invigilators are to be made aware of the plan at the same time.
- Student handbooks to be prepared once JCQ documents become available, distributed internally and posted on the centre's website. The centre's Key Dates Calendar will be posted on the website at the same time.
- Define the appropriate level of security, in line with each AB's requirements, for each department where necessary, ensure each department is made aware.
- Have a central system for the submission of centre marks, a log to be kept of candidates' work being despatched to ABs/external moderators.

#### Exam time

- Checklist available to ensure all criteria for external exams is met, teaching staff to ensure they familiarise themselves with each relevant ABs conditions for assessments.
- Required reports/requests to be submitted within 5 working days of the occurrence during exam/assessment periods.
- Candidates' scripts to be despatched in the afternoon following a morning exam, and afternoon exams to be ready for despatch the following morning.

#### Results and post-results

- Liaise with local schools to access their facilities to download/distribute results, if there is a change of location for distribution post on the centre's website.
- A member of centre staff will be trained on all aspects of post-results services to be able to facilitate.

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

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

#### Planning

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

#### Pre-exams

- approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body
- centre-delegated arrangements not put in place
- modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
- staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained

#### Exam time

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

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

#### Planning

- Establish contact with an appropriately qualified assessor who can facilitate the centre's access arrangements testing if required.
- All centre staff to be aware of the centre's Equality, Diversity & Community Cohesion Policy.
- Deputy HOD able to access evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working.

#### Pre-exams

- EO able to request approval for access arrangements.
- EO to liaise with SENDCo to ensure that the MIS system is updated with all access arrangements once testing is complete.
- Modified paper requests as part of the annual exams plan to ensure AB deadlines are met.
- Additional Needs staff will be trained/have a review at the start of each academic year to update access arrangements procedures. The EO will provide a list of all candidates requiring support in a timely fashion before each exam series.

#### Exam time

- The EO will provide a list of all candidates requiring support in a timely fashion before each exam series.

## 3. Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for exams/assessments 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

- Early/estimated entry information will be collected before the end of the academic year, to ensure all information has been collated before the start of each academic year.
- The EO will request final entry information in a timely fashion, this will only be submitted once the HOD has confirmed in writing it is correct. Entry information for each exam series will be part of the annual data collection exercise.
- Non-examination assessment key dates to be included in each departments' assessment plan for the academic year.
- All candidates are informed of their centre –assessed marks before they are submitted to the ABs as per the centre's Appeals Against Internal Assessments of Work Procedure.
- The EO will ensure the deadlines for internal assessment marks and candidates' work submission are included on the annual exams plan.

#### **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

- Ensure recruitment is actioned at the start of each academic year in line with numbers of students and Sixth Form recruitment, and training/update meetings are held at the beginning of each academic year.
- Exam timetables generated in a timely fashion to ensure all invigilator slots are covered.
- Establish a dedicated contact at a reputable agency to organise cover immediately the EO receives notification of invigilator absence.

#### **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

- The main exam rooms will be booked at the start of each academic year, and separate rooms will be allocated once each session's timetable has been generated.
- As above.
- Relocate in school if possible, check whether there is accommodation available at local schools Middleton Technology School, St. Cuthbert's RC High School or Hopwood Hall College, special consideration requests to Awarding Body/s.

#### **6. Cyber-attack**

##### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of the delivery of examinations

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

- The Exams Officer will work with the IT department and make contact with the relevant Awarding Body/s to seek further guidance.
- Senior Leaders will monitor the situation and take any action required as directed by the Awarding Body/s.
- Where the school IT system is significantly compromised for an exam that requires IT for completion, school may need to transport students to an alternative venue at a local school, Middleton Technology School, St. Cuthbert's RC High School or Hopwood Hall College.
- The IT department where necessary will request support from an outside agency to check IT systems are 'clean' in order for exams to continue and that we are safe from further attacks.
- Ensure entries are final and ready to be sent 5 working days before the ABs deadline.
- Seating plans, attendance register checking, and any other preparation requiring the use of the MIS system to be actioned at least 5 working days before each exam.
- Liaise with local schools to access their facilities to download results.

## **7. Failure of IT systems**

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

MIS system failure during exams requiring IT equipment

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

- The Exams Officer will work with the IT department and make contact with the relevant Awarding Body/s to seek further guidance.
- Ensure entries are final and ready to be sent 5 working days before the ABs deadline.
- Seating plans, attendance register checking, and any other preparation requiring the use of the MIS system to be actioned at least 5 working days before each exam.
- Liaise with local schools to access their facilities to download results.

## **8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)**

### 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

- Candidates will be made aware of the centre's emergency evacuation procedure outside each exam venue, and of the exam lockdown policy.

## **9. Disruption of teaching time – 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

- Liaise with local school/external venues to ensure students continue to be prepared for exams. Request extensions if appropriate.

## 10. Candidates may not be able to take examinations because of a crisis – 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

- Liaise with local schools/external venues to check whether accommodation is available.

## 11. Centre may not be able to open as normal during the exams 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

- Liaise with local schools/external venues to check whether accommodation is available.

Alternative venue details:

- Middleton Technology School
- St. Cuthbert's RC High School
- Hopwood Hall College

## 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

- EO to download papers from AB secure websites, and arrange for adequate amounts of papers to be securely printed in a timely fashion for each exam. EO to create checklist to ensure all papers have been received/downloaded in preparation for each exam day.

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

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

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

- EO to report any missed collections as soon as possible, as a last resort exam papers will be taken to the Post Office.

## 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

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

- EO to submit claim for missing internal assessment, if applicable re-arrange the assessment.

## 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

- Liaise with local schools to access their facilities to download/distribute results, if there is a change of location for distribution post on the centre's website.

Alternative venue details:

- Middleton Technology School
- St. Cuthbert's RC High School
- Hopwood Hall College

## 16. Head of Centre or Member of SLT with Oversight of Examination Administration Absence

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Exams Officer's line manager is absent during key points in the exam cycle

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

- Another member of SLT to deputise and support where required  
[See Appendix 1A: Escalation Process](#)

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

## DfE

### **Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges**

[Cyber Security Standards for schools and colleges](#)

[Cyber crime and cyber security: a guide for education providers](#)

[DfE Cyber Security Guidance – March 2023](#)

## Ofqual

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

### **1. Contingency planning**

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

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

### **2. 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



### **3. 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**

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 parents, carers and students 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.

#### **3.3 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 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.

### **4. 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**

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 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.

#### **4.3 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.

## 5. If any students miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption, you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration.

Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects.

See also:

- [JCQ's guidance on special considerations](#)
- [FAB's guidance on special considerations](#)

## 6. 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 DfE in England, the DfE 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.

## 7. Widespread national disruption

In the event of widespread sustained national disruption, the 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 exam timetables.

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.

[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 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, JCQ and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

Further information may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

15.2 In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.

15.3 All centres must have a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENDCo 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 taken directly from JCQ *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 <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents>

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 <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 and assessment 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)

*Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

*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>

*Statutory guidance on school closures* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>

## Wales

*School closures – examinations* <https://gov.wales/school-closures-examinations>

Opening schools in extremely bad weather and extreme hot weather: [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* <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days>

*Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School* <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools>

*School closures* <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-closures>

## 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. [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 schools improve their cyber security](#)
6. [Building Resilience: Ransomware, the risks to schools and ways to prevent it](#)
7. [School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)