

Emergency Evacuation Policy (Exams)

2023 - 2024

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Version	Date	Amendments
V1	15/12/2022	First issue
V1.1	09/05/2023	Procedure amended to reflect IMMEDIATE evacuation of all exam rooms upon hearing the alarm with the exception of the sports hall
V1.2	16/01/24	Updated to reflect changes/clarifications to JCQ regulations regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement to report security breaches/malpractice to the awarding body immediately • Requirement to produce a full incident report and retain on file • Special consideration applications Clarification regarding candidate briefing of evacuation procedures

Introduction & aims

This policy forms part of the Ridgewood High School Emergency Evacuation Policy, and is produced in accordance with the JCQ publication Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2023-2024 (ICE) section 25 – Emergencies. The policy details how Ridgewood High School deals with an emergency evacuation of the exam room(s) by defining staff roles and responsibilities and confirming the emergency evacuation procedure.

Please note that in the event of a whole-school evacuation, to maintain the security and integrity of the examination all examination candidate assembly points are separate and away from the main school cohort's emergency assembly points.

Invigilators are trained in the emergency evacuation procedures contained in this policy and understand the actions they must take in the event of an emergency evacuation of the examination room.

When is an emergency evacuation required?

An emergency evacuation is required where it is unsafe for candidates to remain in the exam room. This might include a fire in the exam room, the fire alarm sounding to warn of fire, a bomb alert or other serious threat.

In exceptional situations, where candidates might be severely disadvantaged or distressed by remaining in the exam room, the emergency evacuation procedure may also need to be followed. This might include situations where there is severe disruption in the exam room, serious illness of a candidate or invigilator or similarly serious incidents.

As each incident may be different, advice will be sought from the relevant awarding body as soon as it is safe to do so, particularly where there is concern about the security of the examination(s).

Where candidates are unable to return to the building to complete the examination, the relevant awarding body will be contacted immediately for advice.

Emergency evacuation of an exam room

Roles and responsibilities

Head of centre

- Ensures the emergency evacuation policy for exams is fit for purpose and complies with relevant health and safety regulation
- Ensures any instructions from relevant local or national agencies are referenced and followed where applicable
- Ensures any breach of question paper security or malpractice is reported to the relevant awarding body immediately
- Where safe to do so, ensures candidates are given the opportunity to sit exams for their published duration

Senior leader

- Where responsible for the centre-wide emergency evacuation procedure, ensures all staff and appointed fire marshals are aware of the policy and procedures to be followed when an emergency evacuation of an exam room is required

Additional learning support (ALS) lead/Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)

- Ensures appropriate arrangements are in place for the emergency evacuation of a disabled candidate from an exam room where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for the candidate
- Ensures the candidate is informed prior to taking their exams of what will happen in the event of an emergency evacuation

Exams officer

- Ensures invigilators are trained in emergency evacuation procedures and how an incident and actions taken must be recorded
- Ensures candidates are briefed prior to exams taking place on what will happen in the event of an emergency in the exam room, via assemblies/candidate information leaflets
- Provides invigilators with a copy of the emergency evacuation procedure for every exam room
- Provides a standard invigilator announcement for each exam room which includes appropriate instructions for candidates about emergency procedures and what will happen if the fire alarm sounds
- Provides an exam room incident log in each exam room
- Liaises with the ALS lead/SENCo and other relevant staff prior to each exam where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate
- Briefs invigilators prior to each exam where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate
- Ensures appropriate follow-up is undertaken after an emergency evacuation, reporting the incident to the awarding body and the actions taken
- Ensures a full report of the incident is produced and is retained on file if required by the awarding body
- Ensures an online application for special consideration is submitted to the awarding body where candidates have been disadvantaged

Invigilators

- By attending training and/or update sessions, ensure they understand what to do in the event of an emergency in the exam room
- Follow the actions required in the emergency evacuation procedure issued to them for every exam room
- Confirm with the exams officer, where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate they are invigilating
- Record details on the exam room incident log to support follow-up reporting to the awarding body by the exams officer (see below)

Other relevant centre staff

- Support the senior leader, ALS lead/SENCo, exams officer and invigilators in ensuring the safe emergency evacuation of exam rooms

Recording details

As soon as possible and safe to do so, details should be recorded. Details must include:

- the actual time of the start of the interruption
- the actions taken
- the actual time the exam(s) resumed
- the actual finishing time(s) of the resumed exam(s)

Further details could include:

- report on candidate behaviour throughout the interruption/evacuation
- a judgement on the impact on candidates after the interruption/evacuation

Emergency procedures

In the event of an emergency such as a fire or a bomb threat, the fire alarm will be activated.

Upon activation of the fire alarm, the following procedures will be followed:

The immediate evacuation of all exam rooms to their designated assembly points (in accordance with the evacuation procedure below) is to be actioned, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE SPORTS HALL. The Sports Hall will ONLY be evacuated if the building itself is threatened.

SPORTS HALL ONLY:

Upon hearing the alarm, invigilators must take the following action:

- **Stop the candidates from writing**
- **Instruct all candidates to close their answer booklet**
- **Remind candidates they are still under exam conditions and must remain silent**
- **Make a note of the time of the interruption**
- **Await further instructions from SLT/ Exams Officer**

A DESIGNATED MEMBER OF SLT MUST IMMEDIATELY ASSESS WHETHER AN EVACUATION OF THE SPORTS HALL IS REQUIRED, AND COMMUNICATE THE ACTION REQUIRED TO THE INVIGILATORS IN THE SPORTS HALL IMMEDIATELY

If an evacuation is **NOT** required, the exam should be restarted as soon as possible once the alarms have been silenced.

Invigilators must:

- **Make a note of the interruption to the exam on the exam room incident log, detailing how long it lasted**
- **Re-start the exam, ensuring candidates are allowed the full working time for the exam**
- **Make relevant changes to the displayed finish time for the exam**

If an evacuation of the Sports Hall IS required, invigilators **MUST** follow the evacuation procedures detailed below.

If an evacuation is required (all exam venues) - procedure

In accordance with JCQ instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE) regulation 25, invigilators must take the following action if the fire alarm is activated in a room and evacuation is required, or in any other emergency where evacuation of the exam room is required:

- **Stop the candidates from writing**
- **Instruct all candidates to close their answer booklet**
- **Collect the attendance register (in order to ensure all candidates are present)**
- **Evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority**
- **Instruct candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room**
- **Inform candidates they must leave the room in silence**
- **If there are only a few candidates, consider the possibility of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another place to finish the examination**
- **Supervise candidates as closely as possible to ensure there is no discussion about the examination**
- **When instructed, supervise the return of the candidates to the examination room**
- **Make a note of the interruption and how long it lasted**
- **Allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination**
- **Make notes of the incident - the Examination Officer must produce a full report of the incident and of the action taken, to be forwarded to the relevant awarding body**

In addition to the actions required by JCQ ICE regulation 25, invigilators are also informed of the following centre-specific actions or information:

- **The exam room must be evacuated by the nearest fire exit**
- **Candidates must be escorted to the relevant assembly point**
- **On returning to the exam room, allow candidates time to settle down, reminding them that they are still under exam conditions**
- **Restart the exam and allow candidates the full working time set for the examination**
- **Make relevant changes to the displayed finish time**
- **All information regarding the evacuation must be recorded in the exam room incident log**

TO MAINTAIN THE SECURITY OF THE EXAMINATION THERE SHOULD BE NO COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CANDIDATES AT ANY TIME

Evacuation Assembly Points

Examination Venue	Evacuation Assembly Point
Sports Hall	School field
Learning Support Dept (F Block)	Car park to the side of Tech Block
PLC	Main school entrance by front gate
A Block, D Block & E Block (Maths block)	Car park to the side of Tech Block
Other venues within the school site	School field (far end)

- Unless otherwise directed by member of the SLT/Exams Officer, candidates evacuated from Learning Support Dept/A Block/ D Block & E Block are to be escorted safely to the car park to the side of the Tech Block.
- Candidates evacuated from the PLC are to assemble at the front of the school by the main gate.
- Candidates evacuated from the Sports Hall/other exam venues within the school site are to be escorted safely to the school field.

Candidates must remain segregated from the rest of the school, under the supervision of the invigilator and under examination conditions at all times throughout the evacuation.

When advised that it is safe to return to the examination venue, candidates must remain under the supervision of the invigilator **and under exam conditions** upon return to the exam room. There should be no communication between candidates at any time during the evacuation.

In all cases, even if an evacuation is not required, a note of the incident including the time and duration of the interruption to the exam must be made, should the Exams Officer need to report the incident to the awarding body and make an application for special consideration for all affected candidates.

Where not allowed to return to the exam room, or the decision is taken to abandon the exam, the school's **Examinations Contingency Plan** will be invoked and invigilators will be briefed accordingly at the time.

SEN/Vulnerable Candidates

This procedure applies to all candidates, including vulnerable students and those with SEN, **except where specific different procedures or assistance is required for the evacuation of a particular candidate.** The invigilator will be advised of any appropriate arrangements which are to be implemented for the emergency evacuation of such candidates on an individual basis prior to the start of the examination.

Other emergencies

In the event of an emergency in the exam room other than a fire alarm activation (for example the serious illness of a candidate or an invigilator), invigilators should contact the Exams Officer immediately for advice. If necessary, candidates should be instructed to stop writing and turn their papers over while the emergency is dealt with. Candidates must remain supervised at all times and should be reminded they are still under examination conditions.

Any necessary evacuation should be conducted following the above procedures. A note of the incident must be made, and the full working time set for the examination must be allowed if the examination is able to be restarted. Invigilators should note the details of the incident in the exam room incident log as the Exams Officer must make a full report to be forwarded to the awarding body, and may need to make an application for special consideration for all candidates affected by the incident.