

Emergency Evacuation Policy (Exams)

The Hart School

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Current policy approved by	Jude Mahon - Vice Principal
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Key staff involved in the policy

Role	**Name**
Head of centre	Rachael Sandham
Senior leader(s)	Anita Cleary / Ben Brennan / Heidi Goodall / Jude Mahon / Louisa Burnett / Nathan Lewis / Sandip Dosanjh / Shara Davies
	Fran Kinnstein
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Louise Taylor
Other staff (if applicable)	

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that emergency evacuation from examination rooms at The Hart School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations and reflects centre practice.

References in this policy to ICE refer to the JCQ document **Instructions for conducting examinations**.

Introduction

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

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

- As each incident may be different, advice will be sought (if applicable) from the relevant awarding body as soon as it is safe to do so (ICE 25.6)
- Where candidates are unable to return to the building to complete the examination, the relevant awarding body will be contacted immediately for advice (ICE 25.6)

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm the arrangements at The Hart School for dealing with an emergency evacuation of an examination room by defining staff roles and responsibilities and confirming the emergency evacuation procedure.

This policy ensures compliance with JCQ regulations (ICE 25) which state that centres must have a written policy for dealing with emergency evacuation of the examination room which will be subject to inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

1. Emergency evacuation procedure

Actions taken in the event of an emergency evacuation of the examination room

At The Hart School, the following actions (in accordance with ICE 25) are taken if an examination room has to be evacuated:

- Candidates are instructed to stop writing
- The attendance register is collected (to ensure all candidates are present)
- The examination room is evacuated in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority
- Candidates are advised to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room. Candidates are advised to close their answer booklet(s)
- Candidates are instructed to leave the room in silence
- Candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room so that there is no discussion about the examination
- The time of the interruption is noted and how long it lasted
- Candidates are allowed the remainder of the working time set for the examination once it resumes
- If there are only a few candidates, the possibility is considered of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts collected by the invigilator) to another place to finish the examination
- A full report is made of the incident and of the actions taken (and retained on file if required by an awarding body)
- **For on-screen examinations**:
    - candidates must be closely supervised if an emergency evacuation of the assessment room occurs
    - invigilators should refer to any software specific instructions to safeguard the security of the assessment content and candidates' responses (For example, pausing the assessment for all candidates and locking the evacuated assessment room without closing down the software)
    - invigilators should understand the procedures for re-starting an assessment after an unplanned break (i.e. an emergency or a technical failure), controlling the re-starting of the assessment, re-setting the timing (where necessary) and ensuring, where this is technically feasible and permitted by the assessment regulations, candidates can reaccess their previous responses

Additional actions taken:

- In the event of a fire alarm, invigilators are trained to
  In the event of a fire alarm, invigilators are trained to evacuate to the Designated Evacuation Area - Year Group Zone (assembled away from peers)
  1. On the ringing of the Fire Alarm, a member of Senior Management will immediately contact each Examination Lead Invigilator. The Lead Invigilator will be responsible for supervising the candidates.
  2. The Lead Invigilator will ask students to stop writing, close their answer booklets and turn exam papers over, taking note of the time and how long the examination has been going on. Remind students that they are still under exam conditions.
  3. All examination question and answer papers and materials should be left on the candidate's examination desk and NOT taken out with them. No bags or personal belongings should be taken out of the examination room with the candidates.
  4. GIVE THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES:
  Instruct the students to remain calm and silent, and ask them to leave their belongings and papers on their desks. Remind students that they are still under examination board conditions and under NO CIRCUMSTANCES should talk to one another. Remind them that this is a breach of regulations and could mean disqualification from their examination. Under NO circumstances are students to take their bags or personal belongings outside with them. Reiterate that this is a breach of regulations and could mean disqualification from their exam.
  5. Evacuate candidates in an orderly fashion to designated area, preferably in row order. The Invigilation team should closely supervise and monitor candidates as they travel from exam room to the evacuation point to maintain the integrity of the exam.
  6. The registers should be taken out with the Lead Invigilator, together with pens. The Lead Invigilator should take a roll-call once all assembled, to ensure that all students are present and accounted for.
  7. Make sure that candidates are closely supervised at all times to eliminate discussion about the examination. Be clear to the candidates that they should not be talking to each other at all.
  8. Once all clear is received, candidates are to be supervised back into the exam room remaining under exam conditions at all times.
  9. Restart the exam making sure that candidates are given the full exam time and changing exam finish time accordingly on the exam board.
  10. Fill out incident form in exam pack
  Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken, and send to the relevant awarding body
- When/if allowed to return to the examination room, invigilators allow candidates time to settle down, reminding them they are still under formal examination conditions and that they must not open their answer booklets until instructed to do so
- Invigilators announce clearly to candidates when they may begin and how much time they have (the examination will formally restart at this point)
- Invigilators record the time the examination(s) restarted and amend the displayed finishing time(s) for all candidates to see
- Invigilators are trained to record as much detail on the exam room incident log when able to do so (ensuring candidates are continually supervised and giving complete attention to this duty at all times) and to ensure the exams officer is fully briefed at the end of the examination(s) to enable a full report to be submitted to the awarding body/bodies
- Where not allowed to return to the examination room, or the decision is made by the appropriate authority that the examination(s) cannot be resumed, the centre's examination contingency plan will be invoked and invigilators/candidates briefed accordingly at the time

Further actions taken:

Not applicable

2. Roles and responsibilities

The role of the head of centre

- Ensure that the emergency evacuation policy for examinations is fit for purpose and complies with relevant health and safety regulation

- Ensure that any instructions from relevant local or national agencies are referenced and followed where applicable (ICE 25.1)
- Ensure any breach of question paper security or malpractice is reported to the awarding body **immediately** (ICE 25.5)

Other responsibilities:

Where safe to do so, ensures candidates are given the opportunity to sit exams for their published duration

The role of the senior leader

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

Other responsibilities:

Not applicable

The role of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) or equivalent role

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

Other responsibilities:

Not applicable

The role of the exams office

- Ensure that invigilators are trained in emergency evacuation procedures and how an incident and actions taken must be recorded
- Ensure that candidates are briefed prior to examinations taking place, on what will happen in the event of an emergency in the examination room
- Provide invigilators with a copy of the emergency evacuation procedure in every exam room
- Provide 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
- Provide an exam room incident log in every examination room
- Liaise with relevant staff prior to each examination session where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate
- Brief invigilators prior to each examination session where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate
- Ensure that appropriate follow-up is undertaken after an emergency evacuation, reporting the incident to the awarding body and the actions taken
- Ensure a full report of the incident is produced and retained on file if required by an awarding body (ICE 25.4)
- Ensure an online application for special consideration is submitted to the relevant awarding body where candidates have been disadvantaged (ICE 25.7)

Other responsibilities:

Not applicable

The role of invigilators

- By attending training and/or update sessions, ensure they understand what to do in the event of an emergency in the examination room
- Follow the actions required in the emergency evacuation procedure issued to them for every examination 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 responsibilities:

Not applicable

The role of other centre staff

Support the senior leaders, SENCo, exams officer and invigilators in ensuring the safe emergency evacuation of exam rooms

Recording details

As soon as practically possible and safe to do so, the following details will be recorded (see **Roles and Responsibilities** for the members of staff who will record these details):

- 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 which may also be recorded include:

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

Changes effective from 1 September 2026

(Updated) Under **Emergency evacuation procedure** reference to on-screen assessments changed to on-screen examinations and wording amended to reflect ICE (section 32, Emergencies).

Centre-specific changes

Upon review in September 2026, no additional centre-specific updates or changes were applicable to this document