Bowbrook School

BOWBROOK HOUSE SCHOOL

EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY & LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE (EXAMS)

2026/27

THIS POLICY IS REVIEWED AND UPDATED ANNUALLY TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH CURRENT REQUIREMENTS AND REGULATIONS

KEY STAFF INVOLVED IN THE POLICY

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	**C Allen**
Exams Officer	**J Ironside**
Senior Leader(s)	**R Mills, A Farr**
SENDCo	**L Kimberlee**

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This policy details how Bowbrook House School deals with an emergency evacuation of the exam room(s) by defining staff roles and responsibilities and confirming the emergency evacuation procedure. This policy ensures compliance with JCQ regulations 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.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Examination Contingency Plan, Lockdown Policy, Critical Incident Policy and Business Continuity Arrangements. In circumstances where an examination cannot continue or be completed, the centre will follow its Examination Contingency Plan and seek immediate advice from the relevant awarding bod

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, 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 the centre is concerned 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 awarding body **immediately**

Senior Leader(s)

- 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

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo)

- 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
- Ensures Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are in place where required and that invigilators are briefed on any candidate-specific emergency arrangements before the examination commences.

Exams Officer

- Ensures invigilators are trained in emergency evacuation procedures and how an incident and actions taken must be recorded
- ensures all candidates are informed before each examination series of the actions to be taken during an emergency evacuation or lockdown, including the requirement to remain under examination conditions and not communicate with other candidates

- 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 SENDCo and other relevant staff prior to each exam where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a candidate with access arrangements/a disability
- Briefs invigilators prior to each exam where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a candidate with access arrangements/a disability
- 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 retained on file if required by an awarding body
- Ensures an online application for special consideration is submitted to the relevant awarding body where candidates have been disadvantaged
- Following an evacuation, lockdown or other emergency incident, the Exams Officer will consider whether candidates have been disadvantaged and, where appropriate, submit an application for special consideration in accordance with JCQ A Guide to the Special Consideration Process.

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)
- must ensure that question papers, answer booklets and any confidential materials remain secure and under centre control at all times. Where examination materials cannot remain supervised, this must be fully documented and reported to the relevant awarding body.

Other Relevant Centre Staff

- Support senior leader(s), the SENDCo, the Exams Officer and invigilators in ensuring the safe emergency evacuation of exam rooms

Recording Details

As soon as is practically 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)
- report on candidate behaviour throughout the interruption/evacuation if required
- a judgement on the impact on candidates after the interruption/evacuation if necessary
- Examination room(s) affected
- Candidate numbers affected
- Details of any communication with awarding bodies
- Confirmation that examination security was maintained
- Details of any access arrangement candidates affected
- Outcome and actions taken following awarding body advice

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire alarm, invigilators are trained in this procedure and understand the actions they must take in the event of a fire alarm or a bomb alert or other emergency that leads to an evacuation of the exam room.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE
The following actions, in accordance with JCQ ICE 2026-27, are taken if an examination room has to be evacuated.
Stop the candidates from writing
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
Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room. Candidates must be advised to close their answer booklet
Ensure the candidates leave the room in silence
Ensure candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room so that there is no discussion about the examination
Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted
Allow the candidates the remainder of the working time set for the examination once it resumes
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
Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken and send to the relevant awarding body
For on-screen assessments: ▪ 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 on-screen assessment after an emergency evacuation of the assessment room, controlling the re-starting of the assessment, re-setting the timing and ensuring, where appropriate, candidates can access their previous responses
Additional Centre-Specific Actions to be Taken
The Exams Officer and Senior Leadership Team will liaise and provide assistance to the invigilator(s). If and when the students are to return to their exam room(s): ▪ Ensure they walk back in silence ▪ Allow the full working time set for the examination ▪ If there are only a few candidates, there may be the option of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another room to finish the examination allowing candidates the full working time set for the examination. ▪ 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

The Exams Officer will make a full report of the incident and of the action taken, and send to the relevant awarding body.

THE ASSEMBLY POINT IS ON THE RUGBY PITCH AREA BESIDE THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE SCHOOL

- The car parks, roads and drive must remain clear of people to allow emergency vehicles to gain access where necessary

FIRE EXIT ROUTES…

- **Main Hall** – exit via the main doors or the fire exit at the back of the hall if necessary
- **Main School House**
    - **Ground floor** – leave via the nearest safe exit
    - **First floor** – leave via the main staircase and through the front door if possible. If that route is blocked/not safe, leave via the back stairs and through the back/side door or the use the fire exits through the resources room or the administration office
- **Schofield Block** – leave via the nearest safe exit
- **Q1-Q4** – exit across the playgrounds and courtyard. If this route is blocked/unsafe, walk around the back of N1-N4 and across the grass to the assembly point

LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE

A lockdown of the school may be required in the following situations (this is not an exhaustive list):

- an incident or civil disturbance in the local community which poses a risk
- an intruder on the site with the potential to pose a risk
- local risk of air pollution, such as a smoke plume or gas cloud
- a major fire in the vicinity
- a dangerous animal roaming loose
- an internal threat from a student
- any other external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat

Where a lockdown may be required when conducting examinations, the focus will be:

- the welfare and safety of candidates and exams staff
- maintaining the integrity and security of the examination/assessment process

Where a lockdown is required, the following procedures will be employed at Bowbrook House School:

Before an Examination

As candidates are entering/waiting to enter the examination room:

Invigilators will:

- instruct candidates to enter the examination room immediately
- instruct candidates to remain silent, hide under desks or sit against a wall/around a corner but not near the door and to ensure mobile phones are on silent and non-vibrate mode
- lock all windows and close any/all curtains/blinds
- switch off all lights
- lock all doors and/or use tables, or any other furniture, to barricade the entrance to the room
- take an attendance register/head count if possible
- (if the threat is a chemical or toxic release) instruct candidates to cover their nose and mouth (their own clothing can be used) and attempt to use anything to hand to seal up cracks around doors and any vents into the room
- where safe/possible, not leave the examination question papers unattended/out of sight

School Staff

A senior leader/authorised person will be present around the examination room(s) area(s) and where safe/possible, communicate the situation to the Exams Officer (via mobile phone/walkie talkie on silent and non-vibrate mode)

The Exams Officer will collate the information from all examination rooms and forward this to the head of centre immediately

The Head of Centre will make informed decisions on alerting parents/carers, awarding bodies and emergency services

During an Examination

When candidates are in the examination room:

Invigilators will:

- tell candidates to stop writing immediately and close their answer booklets
- collect the attendance register
- make a note of the time when the examination was suspended
- instruct candidates to remain silent, leave all examination materials on their desks and hide under desks
- where safe/possible, communicate (via mobile phone/walkie talkie) the situation to the exams officer (ensuring that all mobile phones/walkie talkies are on silent and non-vibrate mode)

- lock all windows and close any/all curtains/blinds
- switch off all lights
- lock all doors and/or use tables, or any other furniture, to barricade the entrance to the room
- (if the threat is a chemical or toxic release) instruct candidates to cover their nose and mouth (their own clothing can be used) and attempt to use anything to hand to seal up cracks around doors and any vents into the room
- where safe/possible, not leave the examination question papers unattended/out of sight
- Where safe/possible, the exams office/officer will collate the information from all examination rooms and forward this to the head of centre immediately
- If appropriate, where safe/possible, and following instruction from the appropriate authority, the exams office/officer and/or invigilators will initiate the emergency evacuation procedure
- Where safe/possible, the exams office/officer will collect all examination question papers and materials for safe/secure storage following advice from the appropriate awarding body/bodies

The Head of Centre will make informed decisions on alerting parents/carers, awarding bodies and emergency services

Additional centre-specific procedures: After an examination

As candidates are leaving the examination room:

Invigilators will:

- stop dismissing candidates from the examination room
- instruct candidates who have left to re-enter the examination room
- instruct candidates to remain silent and hide under desks/tables
- where safe/possible, communicate (via mobile phone/walkie talkie) the situation to the exams officer (ensuring that all mobile phones/walkie talkies are on silent and non-vibrate mode)
- lock all windows and close any/all curtains/blinds
- switch off all lights
- lock all doors and/or use tables, or any other furniture, to barricade the entrance to the room
- (if the threat is a chemical or toxic release) instruct candidates to cover their nose and mouth (their own clothing can be used) and attempt to use anything to hand to seal up cracks around doors and any vents into the room
- where safe/possible, not leave the examination question papers unattended/out of sight
- Where safe/possible, the exams officer will collate the information from all examination rooms and forward this to the head of centre immediately

The Head of Centre will make informed decisions on alerting parents/carers, awarding bodies and emergency services

Additional centre-specific procedures: Ending a lockdown

The lockdown will be ended by either:

- the sound of a defined alarm, or
- the identification/authorisation of emergency service officer/senior leader/head of centre entering the examination room
- A specific word or phrase may be used to confirm that the instruction to end the lockdown is genuine
- Invigilators will undertake a head count/register and confirm attendance with the Exams Officer/Senior Leader
- Where applicable and if advised to do so by a senior leader/head of centre, if there is sufficient time (and following JCQ regulations), candidates may be allowed to restart their examination

Invigilators will:

- ask candidates to return to their desks, remind them they are under formal examination conditions and allow a settling down period
- allow candidates the full working time remaining for their examination
- recalculate the revised finish time(s)

- tell the candidates to open their answer booklets and re-start their examination
- amend the revised finish time(s) on display to candidates
- note how long the lockdown lasted on the exam room incident log (to later inform a report to the awarding body/bodies)

The Exams Officer will:

- safely/securely store all collected exam papers and materials pending awarding body advice/guidance

and where this may be applicable:

- ensure appropriate follow-up is undertaken after the incident, reporting the incident to the awarding body and the actions taken, where this may be applicable
- where this may be applicable, ensure a full report of the incident is produced and retained on file if required by an awarding body
- where this may be applicable, ensure an online application for special consideration is submitted to the relevant awarding body where candidates have been disadvantaged

At the earliest, immediate opportunity the Head of Centre will ensure that any breach of question paper security or malpractice is reported to the awarding body.

Where applicable/possible/available, the Senior Leader/Exams Officer will:

- discuss any alternative examination sittings with the awarding body/bodies
- offer, arrange and provide support services to staff and candidates
- At the earliest opportunity, the senior leader/head of centre will prepare a communication to parents/carers advising them of events (including relevant actions and outcomes)
- Where possible, exams staff and candidates will be invited to attend an assembly lead by the head of centre to discuss the lockdown and offer ongoing support.
- If this is not possible, communications will be provided via a centre text/email/newsletter and information uploaded to the centre website

Roles and Responsibilities - The role of the Head of Centre

- Ensure that a dedicated lockdown alarm tone is in place and recognised by all staff and candidates
- Arrange appropriate training for all exams staff in lockdown procedures
- Ensure candidates are aware of the procedures relating to a lockdown, particularly those arriving late for an examination who cannot access the examination room due to it being locked down
- Ensure all candidates and staff are aware of a possible exit point in case an intruder manages to gain access, or the room becomes unsafe
- Provide written lockdown procedures for examination room/invigilator use
- Inform the relevant emergency service(s) immediately in the case of any potential threat to the safety of exams staff and candidates
- Candidates arriving during a lockdown must be supervised appropriately and may only be admitted to the examination room when authorised by the Head of Centre or senior member of staff responsible for the incident.

Additional Responsibilities: The Role of the Senior Leader

- Assume responsibility for exams staff and candidates taking examinations during a lockdown
- Arrange training/drills for examination candidates on lockdown procedures
- Inform parents/carers about the centre's Lockdown Policy in relation to the conducting of examinations
- Have a presence around examination room areas prior to the start of each examination session
- Liaise with the appropriate authorities and awarding bodies regarding candidates taking examinations during a lockdown
- Use the examination room attendance register(s) to compile a list of any candidates not accounted for

Additional responsibilities: The role of the Exams Officer

- Train invigilators in the centre's lockdown procedures (this should also include identifying all access and egress points within exam rooms, an awareness of the design of the locking device within each room and if there is more than one invigilator, whose role it would be to secure the exam room)
- Where safe/possible, liaise with senior leaders/invigilators in all examination rooms during a lockdown
- Assist with lockdown training for staff and candidates where applicable to the conducting of examinations
- candidates must not use mobile phones, internet-enabled devices or communicate with any person about the content of the examination during a lockdown interruption. Any suspected breach must be reported immediately to the Head of Centre and relevant awarding body

Additional responsibilities: The Role of the Invigilator

- Be aware of the centre's lockdown procedure
- Complete attendance registers as soon as possible so candidates can be identified in the event of a lockdown
- Where safe/possible, to communicate with the exams office/officer during a lockdown to confirm the situation in a particular examination room
- Where safe/possible, not leave the examination question papers and candidates' scripts unattended/out of sight

Post-Incident Review

Following any evacuation or lockdown affecting examinations:

- The Head of Centre and Exams Officer will conduct a review of the incident.
- Any lessons learned will be incorporated into future examinations planning.
- Staff training requirements will be identified.
- The policy and contingency arrangements will be updated where necessary.