

St Matthew Academy

EMERGENCY EVACUATION (EXAMS)

2026/2027
Policy



Date of approval	Autumn 2026
Date of review	Autumn 2027

Key staff Involved in this policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Mr J Potter
Exams officer	Ms G Williams
Senior leaders	Ms V Dunne, Mr J Young, Mr M Bradley, Ms J Chick, Mr J Charlery, Mrs I Ige, Ms S Williams, Mr D Abioro, Ms I West
SENCo	Ms S Williams

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how St Matthew Academy deals with an emergency evacuation of the exam room(s) by defining staff roles and responsibilities and confirming the emergency evacuation procedure.

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, 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. [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.

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 and national agencies are references and followed where applicable
- Ensures any breach of question paper security or malpractice is reported to the awarding body immediately [ICE 25.5]
- 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 (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 (Candidate assembly), prior to exams taking place, on what will happen in the event of an emergency in the exam room
- Provides invigilators with a copy of the emergency evacuation procedures for every exam room
- Provides a standard invigilator announcement for each exam which includes appropriate information for candidates regarding what will happen if the fire alarm sounds
- Provides an exam room incident log in each exam room
- Liaises with the 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 retained on file if required by an awarding body [ICE 25.4]
- Ensures an online application for special consideration is submitted to the relevant awarding body where candidates have been disadvantaged [ICE 25.7]
- Other relevant centre staff
- Support the senior leader, SENCo, exams officer and invigilators in ensuring the safe emergency evacuation of exam rooms

Invigilators

- By attending training, 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 reposting to the awarding body by the exams officer

Recording details

As soon as 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)

Emergency evacuation procedure

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

Actions to be taken (as detailed in current JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations section 25, Emergencies)

- Instruct all candidates to stop writing
- Make a note of the time of the interruption
- Collect the attendance register (in order to ensure all candidates are present)
- Advise candidates to
- close their answer booklet
- leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room
- EVACUATE THE ROOM in silence
- Make their way to the appropriate assembly point (details below)
- Ensure that the candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room so that there is no discussion about the examination
- Once safe to do so, escort the candidates back to the examination room(s)
- Resume the exam – allow the candidates 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 of note of the time the exam resumed, and the length of the interruption
- Make a full report of the incident and actions taken in the Exam room incident log for the exams officer to be retained on file if required by an awarding body.

Assembly Points

In the event of a real emergency requiring evacuation of an exam room, the Invigilators will accompany the exam candidates through the nearest fire exit to the following points whilst Senior Leaders determine the risk:

- Sports Hall: The Cage
- Nursery: The Car Park
- The Chapel: behind the East block

If necessary, the exam candidates will be escorted over St Joseph's Vale to the middle field once the rest of the school has been evacuated. They will be away from all other pupils and supervised. Exam conditions will still apply and candidates must be reminded not to communicate with one another.

- Invigilators MUST remain with their candidates.
- Invigilators must check the candidates against the attendance register. They must report any anomalies to the exams officer.

When advised by the premises team that it is safe to re-enter the building, the candidates will be escorted back to the exam rooms before all other pupils return to the building by the invigilators.

Members of SLT and the exams officer will assist with the supervision and movement of candidates during an evacuation. Members of SLT who teach the subject being examined will not be involved in supervision of the candidates or have any contact with them during an evacuation.