Emergency Evacuation Policy (Exams)

2026/2027

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Adam Palmer	
Date of next review	September 2027

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	**Adam Palmer**
Exams and Data Assistant	**Jocelyn Watson**
Senior leader(s)	**Lou Baker, Hannah Austin, Roisin Still, Simon Ralph, Rob Rooney**
ALS lead/SENCo	**Caren Urbani**

Emergency evacuation procedure for Examinations 2026/27

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how St Michael's Catholic 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, particularly where the centre is concerned about the security of the examination(s). (ICE 25)

Where candidates are unable to return to the building to complete the examination, the relevant awarding body will be contacted immediately for advice. The awarding bodies have procedures in place to ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged where they are unable to complete the examination due to circumstances beyond their control.

Invigilators should await instructions from the Exams and Data Officer or a member of SLT as to whether the exam room should be evacuated

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, including information from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office on the Procedures for handling bomb threats | Protect UK
- Where safe to do so, ensures candidates are given the opportunity to sit exams for their published duration

Senior leader (SLT)

- 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 Manager/Officer/Assistant

- Ensures invigilators are trained in emergency evacuation procedures and how an incident and actions taken must be recorded
- Ensures candidates are briefed in assemblies 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 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 through the *special consideration* process where applicable (in cases where a group of candidates have been disadvantaged by a particular event)

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 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)

Further details could include:

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

Emergency evacuation procedure

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

Emergency evacuation procedure
Actions to be taken (as detailed in current JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations section 25, **Emergencies**)
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 candidates leave the room in silence. Remind them that they remain under exam conditions when they are out of the room
Ensure the candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure there is no discussion about the examination
When instructed, supervise the candidates back to the exam room
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
Additional centre-specific actions to be taken
The exam room must be evacuated by the nearest exit **Sports Hall –** any appropriate fire exit including side doors **PA/Any other room -** the nearest and/or safest exit from the school building
Candidates must be escorted to the assembly point from all exam rooms to the field next to the tennis courts
Invigilators must exit with the students to maintain the integrity of the exam, for example if the sports hall has 14 rows occupied and 6 invigilators, then an invigilator will be responsible for 2 rows and will leave the room as each set of 2 rows evacuates the room. The last two invigilators to leave will be responsible for 3 rows.
The last invigilator in the room will be responsible for checking that the attendance registers have been collected.
Students will be expected to stand in row and seat order number at arm's length, facing front
A member of SLT and the Exams and Data Officer will also be in place to supervise the candidates.
Any student requesting a toilet break must be accompanied at all times to and from the facilities if it is safe to do so; invigilators must maintain the correct number of staff for the number of students at all time
When instructed, return the candidates to the exam room in row and seat number order

Allow the candidates time to settle down, reminding them they are still under exam conditions
Check the attendance register to ensure that all the candidates ha returned to the exam room
Restart the exam and allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination
Make relevant changes to the displayed finish time on the boards (including extra time)
Record all information regarding the evacuation in the exam incident log
The Exams and Data Officer is responsible for informing the relevant exam board(s) of the incident and applying for the appropriate special consideration for the candidates affected.

In the event of an emergency evacuation of an exams room for events such as:

- Fire/Fire alarm
- Bomb alert
- Any other emergency which requires the evacuation of an exam room

Invigilators at St Michael's Catholic School have been informed that they must take the following action (in accordance with JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE)):

1. Stop the candidates from writing.

2. Collect the attendance register (in order to ensure all candidates are present).

3. Evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority.

4. Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room.

   4a. 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.

5. Inform candidates they must leave the room in silence. Remind them that they remain under exam conditions when they are out of the room.

6. Supervise candidates as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure there is no discussion about the examination.

7. When instructed, supervise the return of candidates to the exam room.

8. Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.

9. Allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination.

10. Make notes of the incident to enable the exams officer to 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 above, invigilators are also informed of the following centre-specific actions or information:

1. The exam room must be evacuated by the nearest fire exit:

Sports Hall	any appropriate fire exit including side doors
PA or other exam room	the nearest and/or safest exit from the school building

2. Candidates must be escorted to the assembly point to the field next to the tennis courts from all exam rooms.

3. Invigilators must exit with the students to maintain the integrity of the exam, for example, if the sports hall has 14 rows occupied and 6 invigilators, then an invigilator will be responsible for 2 rows and will leave the room as each set of 2 rows evacuates the room. The last two invigilators to leave will be responsible for 3 rows.

4. The last invigilator in the room will be responsible for checking that the attendance registers have been collected.

5. Students will be expected to stand in row and seat number order at arm's length apart, facing front.

6. Invigilators are expected to ensure that the integrity of the exam is maintained.

7. A member of SLT and the Exams Officer will also be in place to supervise the candidates.

8. Any student requesting to use the toilet during this time must be accompanied at all times to and from the facilities if it save to do so; invigilators must ensure that the correct number of staff for the number of candidates is maintained at all times.

9. When instructed, return the candidates to the exam room in row and seat number order.

10. Allow the candidates time to settle down, reminding them they are still under exam conditions.

11. Check the attendance register to ensure that all candidates have returned to the exam room.

12. Restart the exam and allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination.

13. Make relevant changes to the displayed finish time on the board.

14. Record all information regarding the evacuation in the exam incident log.

15. The Exams Officer is responsible for informing the relevant exam board(s) of the incident and applying for the appropriate special consideration for the candidates affected.