Merchant Taylors' School

EXAMINATIONS – LOCKDOWN POLICY

Centre 17632

This policy details the measures taken at Merchant Taylors' School in the event of a centre lockdown during the conducting of examinations.

Depending on the nature of the incident, centres may also decide to evacuate, invacuate (an inward evacuation) or use a protected space(s). However, this policy focuses specifically upon the actions, roles and responsibilities during an exams-related lockdown.

If Lockdown is initiated a pulsed tone on the siren will be heard. Invigilators may not have heard this sound before, so a member of the Exams Team will make contact to provide guidance.

A lockdown 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 dangerous animal roaming loose.
- An internal threat from a student.
- Any other external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of exams staff and candidates.

During lockdown training, the focus will be on how to deal with a lockdown before, during and after an exam. This will include:

- Training staff engaged/involved in the conducting of examinations.
- How to achieve an effective lockdown.
- Implementing Run, Hide, Tell principles.
- The welfare and safety of exam candidates and centre staff engaged in the conducting of examinations.
- Maintaining the integrity and security of the examinations/assessments process.
- How to let people know what's happening.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Head of Centre

- To ensure that a dedicated lockdown alarm tone is in place and recognised by all staff and candidates.
- To ensure that all staff involved in the conducting of examinations are trained in how to raise the alarm for a lockdown, act effectively and made aware of their responsibilities.
- To arrange appropriate training for all exams-related staff in lockdown procedures.
- To ensure that candidates are aware of the procedures relating to a lockdown, particularly those arriving late for an examination who cannot access the exam room due it being lockdown.
- To ensure that all candidates and staff are aware of a possible exit point in case an intruder manages to gain access, or the exam room becomes unsafe.
- To inform the relevant emergency services immediately in the case of any potential threat to the safety of exams staff and candidates.

Senior leadership team (SLT)

- To have accountability for all exams staff and candidates taking examinations during a lockdown.
- To run training/drills on lockdown procedures.
- To inform parents/guardians about the centre's Lockdown Policy in relation to the conducting of examinations.
- To have a presence around exam room areas prior to the start of an exam session if required
- To liaise with the appropriate authorities and awarding bodies regarding candidates taking examinations during a lockdown.
- To use the exam room attendance register(s) to compile a list of all candidates not accounted for.

Head of Examinations

- To train invigilators in the centre's lockdown procedure - 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, to liaise with SLT/invigilators in all exam rooms during a lockdown.
- To assist with lockdown training for staff and students where applicable to the conducting of examinations.

Invigilators

- To be aware of the centre's lockdown procedure
- To quickly and physically secure access/egress points
- To be aware of an effective communication system to inform authorities of the situation
- To 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 officer during a lockdown to confirm the situation in a particular exam room

LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE

Before an examination

If a lockdown is required as candidates are entering/waiting to enter the exam room, the following procedure will be employed:

- A member of SLT may be present around exam room areas.
- Candidates will be instructed to enter the exam room immediately.
- Candidates will be instructed to remain silent, hide under exam desks or sit against a wall / around a corner but not near the door and to ensure, if they are not yet under exam regulations that their mobile phones are on silent and non-vibrate mode.
- (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 available to seal up cracks around doors and any vents into the room.
- Updates will be provided to the senior member of staff in the room via email/SMS/WhatsApp
- Where safe/possible, the exams officer will collate the information from all exam rooms and forward this to the head of centre immediately.
- Invigilators will:
    - Lock all windows and close all curtains/blinds.
    - Switch off all lights.
    - 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.
    - If appropriate, where safe/possible, and following Centre policy, a member of the exams team (or invigilators in the absence of a member of the exams team) will initiate the emergency evacuation procedure.
    - Where safe/possible, not leave the examination question papers unattended/out of sight.

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

During an examination

If a lockdown is required during the exam/when candidates are in the exam room, the following procedure will be employed:

- Invigilators will:
    - Stop the exam by asking the candidates to stop writing/typing and close their question papers, answer booklets and laptops. Ensure that relevant candidates have removed their headphones/earplugs.
    - Make a note of time when the examination was suspended in the incident log.
    - Collect the attendance register.
    - Instruct candidates to remain silent, leave all examination materials on their desks and hide under desks.
    - Lock all windows and close any/all curtains/blinds.
    - Switch off all lights.
    - (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 available to seal up cracks around doors and any vents into the room.
    - Updates will be provided to the Lead invigilator via email/SMS/WhatsApp
    - Where safe/possible, not leave the examination question papers and candidates' scripts unattended/out of sight.
- Where safe/possible, the Head of Exams will collate the information from all exam rooms and forward this to the Head of Centre immediately.
- The Head of Centre will make informed decisions on alerting parents/guardians, awarding bodies and emergency services.
- If appropriate, where safe/possible, and following centre policy, a member of the Exams Team (or invigilators in the absence of a member of the Exams Team) will initiate the emergency evacuation procedure.
- Where safe/possible, a member of the Exams Team will collect all examination papers and materials for safe/secure storage following advice from the appropriate awarding bodies.

After an examination

If a lockdown is required after the exam/as candidates are leaving the exam room, the following procedure will be employed:

- Invigilators will:
    - Stop dismissing candidates from the exam room.
    - Instruct candidates who have left the room to re-enter the exam room.
    - Instruct candidates to remain silent and hide under desks/tables.
    - Lock all windows and close any/all curtains/blinds.
    - Switch off all lights.
    - (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 available to seal up cracks around doors and any vents into the room.
    - Updates will be provided to the Lead invigilator in the room via email/SMS/WhatsApp.
    - Where safe/possible, not leave the examination question papers and candidates' scripts unattended/out of sight.
- Where safe/possible, the Head of Examinations will collate the information from all exam rooms and forward this to the Head of Centre immediately.

Ending a lockdown

- The lockdown will be ended by either:
    - The sound of a defined alarm; or
    - The identification/authorisation of Emergency Service officers/SLT/Head of Centre entering each exam 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 a member of the exams team/SLT.
- Where applicable and if advised to do so by SLT/Head of Centre, and following JCQ guidelines, candidates may restart their examination.
- Invigilators will then:
    - Ask candidates to return to their desks, remind them they are under formal exam conditions and allow a settling down period.
    - Allow candidates the full working time remaining to do their examination.
    - Recalculate the revised finish time(s).
    - Tell the candidates to open their answer booklets and re-start their exam.
    - 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 and where relevant, any centre-wide lockdown recording form/log).
- The Head of Exams will:
    - Provide a report of the incident for the awarding body/bodies (through application of the special consideration process or as advised by the awarding body/bodies).
    - Safely/securely store all collected exam papers and materials pending awarding body advice/guidance.
- Where applicable/possible/available, SLT/Head of Exams will:
    - 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.
    - Discuss any alternative exam sittings with the awarding body/bodies.
    - Offer, arrange and provide support services to staff and candidates.
- At the earliest opportunity, SLT/Head of Centre will prepare a communication to parents/guardians advising them of events (including relevant actions and outcomes).
- Where possible, exams staff and candidates will be invited to attend an assembly led 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 where appropriate.

Head of Examinations
October 2026
To be reviewed October 2027