ST CUTHBERT'S
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Lockdown Policy (Examinations)

for the Academic Year 2026 – 2027

Approved by:	Local Governing Committee	**Approved on:**	
Review date:		**Revision approved:**	
Version No:	1	**Originator(s):**	JCQ Policy

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions should be noted:

Lockdown

This is a protective measure implemented when there is a credible threat to the safety of candidates/students and staff. During a lockdown, individuals are instructed to remain inside the building and seek shelter in a secure location, away from the source of danger.

The purpose of a lockdown is to minimise exposure to potential harm and ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone on site until the threat has been resolved or emergency services arrive.

Lockdown procedures may be activated in situations including:

- An intruder on site
- A weapons-related incident
- A nearby police incident
- Serious violence
- A bomb threat
- Criminal activity
- A dangerous animal
- A chemical or biological incident
- A terrorist attack

All staff must be familiar with the centre's lockdown protocol and ensure candidates/students are guided calmly and efficiently to designated safe areas. Communication with emergency services and internal coordination will be managed by the head of centre or designated safeguarding lead.

Invacuation

This is a safety measure used when there is a potential external threat in the surrounding area. While lockdowns are activated in response to immediate risks within or directly threatening the premises, invacuations are employed when it is safer for candidates/students, staff, and visitors to remain inside the building due to hazards outside.

Invacuation procedures are designed to ensure that all individuals are brought indoors promptly and remain inside until the external threat has passed or further guidance is provided by emergency services.

An invacuation may be applicable to exam candidates if they have left the exam room in the event of an emergency evacuation (for example, due to a fire alarm).

Examples of situations requiring invacuation include:

- The presence of loose or potentially dangerous animals on the grounds
- Environmental hazards such as gas leaks, smoke, or chemical pollution in the vicinity
- Nearby incidents (e.g. police activity or civil disturbance) that may pose a risk if individuals exit the building

Staff are expected to follow the invacuation protocol calmly and efficiently, ensuring that all candidates/students are accounted for and safely indoors. The head of centre or designated safeguarding lead will oversee communication and coordination during such events.

1. Purpose of the policy

This policy details the measures taken at St Cuthbert's Catholic High School in the event of a centre lockdown during the conducting of examinations.
Depending on the nature of the incident, 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.

St Cuthbert's Catholic High School has devised lockdown procedures during the conducting of examinations.

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025

Although St Cuthbert's Catholic High School is not classified as a high-risk venue under current legislation, we are committed to embedding the principles of Martyn's Law into our safeguarding and emergency preparedness framework. These include:

- **Risk awareness:** Staff being equipped to identify potential threats and recognise suspicious behaviour or activity that may pose a risk to students, staff and visitors
- **Emergency planning:** Maintaining clear, comprehensive, and regularly reviewed procedures to respond effectively to a range of emergency scenarios
- **Rapid response capability:** Training staff to act swiftly and appropriately in the event of an emergency to ensure the safety and protection of students, colleagues, and visitors

These principles underpin our broader approach to security and safeguarding, and will be reflected in staff training, policy reviews, and incident management protocols.

To ensure that all staff at St Cuthbert's Catholic High School are meeting the requirements of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, the following procedures are in place:

Evacuation (Getting people out of the building)

An evacuation of the exam room will be initiated when it is deemed safer for candidates and staff to leave the room and the building due to an internal threat such as fire, gas leak, structural damage, or other emergencies. This procedure ensures a swift, orderly, and safe exit to designated assembly points.

Step-by-step procedure:

1. **Activation of alarm**
    - The fire alarm or emergency alert system will be triggered manually or automatically
    - Invigilators will immediately begin evacuation procedures without waiting for further instruction unless advised otherwise
2. **Immediate response**
    - Candidates will be instructed to stop their examination and prepare to leave the exam room in line with the invigilator's instructions
    - Invigilators will lead candidates out of the building via the nearest safe exit, avoiding lifts and blocked routes
3. **Use of evacuation routes**
    - Pre-assigned evacuation routes and exits will be followed
    - Invigilators will check the exam room (and any candidates who may have temporarily left the exam room) to ensure that no one is left behind
4. **Assembly at designated point**
    - Invigilators will take candidates to the designated assembly point(s) outside the building
    - Registers will be taken promptly to account for all candidates and invigilators
    - Any missing candidates will be reported immediately to the senior leadership team or emergency services
5. **Communication and co-ordination**
    - The head of centre or designated safeguarding lead will liaise with emergency services and provides updates
    - Invigilators will supervise candidates and maintain calm until further instructions are given

6. **Re-entry or dismissal**
    - No one will be permitted to re-enter the building until it has been declared safe by emergency personnel

Invacuation (Moving people to a safe place)

If candidates have been outside of the exam room, for example, for an emergency evacuation, or on a supervised rest break, they will be brought back into the exam room promptly and remain inside until the situation is resolved. The procedure will include:

1. **Initial Alert**
    - The head of centre or designated safeguarding lead will assess the situation and initiate the invacuation protocol
    - A clear announcement will be made via the centre's communication system
2. **Movement Indoors**
    - All outdoor activities (for example, an emergency evacuation or supervised rest break) being undertaken by candidates sitting an examination will be halted immediately
    - Candidates will be escorted indoors quickly and calmly, using the nearest safe entry point
3. **Securing the Building**
    - External doors and windows will be closed and secured
    - Access points will be monitored to prevent entry or exit until the all-clear is given
4. **Internal Safety Measures**
    - Candidates and staff (invigilators) will remain in the exam room or designated safe area(s)
    - Movement within the building will be restricted unless necessary
    - Invigilators will take registers to account for all candidates and report any discrepancies to the exams office/officer (unless instructed otherwise)
5. **Communication**
    - The head of centre or designated safeguarding lead will maintain contact with emergency services and monitor updates
    - Parents/carers will be informed if appropriate, depending on the nature and duration of the incident
6. **All-Clear and Debrief**
    - Once the threat has passed, an all-clear message will be issued
    - Candidates will resume their examination

The incident will be reported to the relevant awarding body/bodies, and a short debrief may be conducted to review the response and identify any improvements

2. Key Staff involved in this policy.

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Daniel P. Murray
Senior leader(s)	David Swindells, Julianna Blackie, Karl Stuart, Jennie Westwood, Matt Turner, Richard Collinson, Michael Donnelly and Paul Burrows
Exams officer	Carol Wetherell
Lead invigilators	Tim Rogers and Mary Kaluza

3. Lockdown procedure

(a) Before an examination

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

- A member of the senior leadership team (SLT) will be present around exam room areas.
- Students/pupils will be instructed to enter the exam room immediately.
- Students/pupils 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 mobile phones are on silent and non-vibrate mode.
- Where safe/possible, the SLT member will communicate (via mobile phone/walkie talkie) the situation to the member of SLT in charge of exams (ensuring that all mobile phones/walkie talkies are on silent and non-vibrate mode)
- Where safe/possible, the exams officer will collate the information from all exam rooms and forward this to the headmaster immediately.
- Invigilators will:
  - lock all windows and close all curtains/blinds.
  - switch off all lights.
  - lock all doors and/or use tables, or any other furniture, to barricade the entrance to the examination room.
  - take an attendance register/head count if possible.
  - (If the threat is a chemical or toxic release) instruct students/pupils 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.

The headmaster will make informed decisions on alerting parents/carers, awarding bodies and emergency services.

(b) During an examination

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

- Invigilators will:
  - tell students/pupils to stop writing immediately and close their answer booklets.
  - collect the attendance register.
  - make a note of time when the examination was suspended.
  - instruct students/pupils 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 SLT member in charge of exams (ensuring that all mobile phones/walkie talkies are on 'silent' 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 examination room.
  - (If the threat is a chemical or toxic release) instruct students/pupils 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 and scripts unattended/out of sight.

- Where safe/possible, the exams officer will collate the information from all exam rooms and forward this to the headmaster immediately.
- The headmaster will make informed decisions on alerting parents/carers, awarding bodies and emergency services.
- If appropriate, where safe/possible, and following centre policy, the exams officer (or invigilators in the absence of the exams officer) will initiate the emergency evacuation procedure.
- Where safe/possible, the exams officer will collect all examination papers and materials for safe/secure storage following advice from the appropriate awarding bodies.

(c) 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 students/pupils from the exam room.
  - instruct students/pupils who have left the room to re-enter the exam room.
  - instruct students/pupils 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 exam 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 and scripts unattended/out of sight.

  Where safe/possible, the exams officer will collate the information from all exam rooms and forward this to the headmaster immediately.

(d) 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/Headmaster entering each exam room.

  - Invigilators will undertake a head count/register and confirm attendance with the exams officer/SLT.

  - Where applicable and if advised to do so by SLT/Headmaster, and following JCQ guidelines, if there is sufficient time remaining, students/pupils may restart their examination.

  - Invigilators will then:

    - ask students/pupils to return to their desks, remind them they are under formal exam conditions and allow a settling down period.
    - allow students/pupils the full working time remaining to do their examination.
    - recalculate the revised finish time(s)
    - tell the students/pupils 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 exams officer will:
    - safely/securely store all collected exam papers and materials pending awarding body advice/guidance.
    - ensure support follow-up is undertaken after the incident, reporting the incident to the awarding body and the actions taken (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 (where this may be applicable)

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, SLT will:
    - 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/Headmaster will prepare a communication to parents/carers advising them of events (including relevant actions and outcomes)
- Where possible, exams staff and students/pupils will be invited to attend an assembly led by the headmaster 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.

4. Roles and responsibilities

(a) Head of centre

- To ensure that vulnerability and space assessments are conducted to:
    - Identify specific risks (for example, intruders, violent or aggressive individuals or incidents happening in the local area)
    - Consider different times of the day/during an examination when candidates may be more dispersed across the site or away from the exam room (for example, during a supervised rest break, a toilet break)
    - Highlight areas where an attacker might carry out an attack, and where the easiest places to gain access are
    - Assess how many candidates can be accommodated in a particular (safe) area (for example, the exam room)
- 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 evacuation ,invacuation and lockdown procedures
- To ensure that students/pupils are aware of the procedures relating to an evacuation, invacuation and a lockdown, particularly those arriving late for an examination who cannot access the exam room due to it being-in lockdown.
- To ensure that all students/pupils and staff are aware of a possible exit point in case an intruder manages to gain access, or the exam room becomes unsafe.
- To provide written invacuation and lockdown procedures for exam room/invigilator use
- To inform the relevant emergency services immediately in the case of any potential threat to the safety of exams staff and students/pupils

(b) Senior leadership team

- To have accountabilities for all exams staff and students/pupils taking examinations during an invacuation/ lockdown
- To run training/drills for examination students/pupils on invacuation and lockdown procedures
- To inform parents/carers 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 each exam session
- To liaise with the appropriate authorities and awarding bodies regarding students/pupils taking examinations during an invacuation/ lockdown
- To use the exam room attendance register(s) to compile a list of all students/pupils not accounted for

(c) Exams officer

- To train invigilators in the centre's invacuation and 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 an invacuation/ lockdown.
- To assist with invacuation/lockdown training for staff and students where applicable to the conducting of examinations

(d) Invigilators

- To be aware of the centre's invacuation and lockdown procedures
- 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 students/pupils can be identified in the event of an invacuation/ lockdown.
- Where safe/possible, to communicate with the exams officer during an invacuation / lockdown to confirm the situation in a particular exam room.
- Where safe/possible, not leave the examination question papers and candidates' scripts unattended/out of sight