LOCKDOWN POLICY (Exams)

2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Alexis Bergamo	
Date of next review	September 2026

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Key staff involved in the policy/procedure

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	**Maurice Devenney**
Senior leader(s)	Alexis Bergamo
Exams officer	Bex Shorey
Invigilators	

Purpose of the policy

This policy details the measures taken at Oxted 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.

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 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 to the safety of exams staff and candidates

Oxted School has devised lockdown procedures during the conducting of examinations after consulting ProtectUK guidance.

In the event of a lockdown during an examination the focus before, during and after an exam will be:

- 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 o examinations
- how to let people know what's happening
- maintaining the integrity and security of the examinations/assessments process

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 to it being in 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 provide written 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 candidates

Senior leadership team (SLT)

- To have accountability for all exams staff and candidates taking examinations during a lockdown
- To run training/drills for examination candidates on 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 candidates taking examinations during a lockdown
- To use the exam room attendance register(s) to compile a list of all candidates not accounted for

Exams officer

- 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

Invigilators/staff/students are informed of the lockdown procedure by an intermittent ring of the school bell. Everyone should stay calm in classrooms or offices. Instructions will appear on staff screens. Anyone moving around the site should go to the nearest classroom/office and remain in there until the all clear has been given. A message will appear on staff screens letting you know it is safe to come out.

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 will 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 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 exams officer (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 head of centre 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 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
- The head of centre will make informed decisions on alerting parents/carers, 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:
    - tell candidates to stop writing immediately and close their answer booklets
    - collect the attendance register
    - make a note of 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' 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 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 candidates' scripts unattended/out of sight
- Where safe/possible, the exams officer 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/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

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
    - 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 candidates' scripts unattended/out of sight
- Where safe/possible, the exams officer 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 the exams officer/SLT
- Where applicable and if advised to do so by SLT/head of centre, and following JCQ guidelines, if there is sufficient time remaining, 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 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, SLT/exams officer 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/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 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.