Emergencies and Evacuation Policy (Exams)

Vision: Grow - Flourish - Succeed
Mission: Together we inspire creative, mindful learners who value diversity, support one another and strive for success.

1. Purpose of policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm the arrangements at GEMS Founders School - Dubai for dealing with an emergency evacuation of an examination room by defining staff roles and responsibilities and confirming the emergency evacuation procedure.

This policy ensures compliance with JCQ regulations (ICE 25) which state that centres must have a written policy for dealing with emergency evacuation of the examination room which will be subject to inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

2. People Involved

Head of Centre – Head of Secondary School or on behalf of the Incident Commander, Manages School Operations for all Emergency procedures.

Executive and Senior Leadership Team – Executive Principal/CEO/Vice-President Education, Associate Principal, Vice Principal, Manager School Operations, Head of Secondary School, Senior Deputy Head of Secondary School, Deputy Heads of Secondary School, Head of Primary School, Senior Deputy Head of Primary School, Deputy Heads of Primary School, Assistant Principals

Assistant Head teacher- Inclusion

Head of Inclusion Secondary/ Primary

Senior Examinations Officer

Examinations Officer

Invigilators – People in the examination room responsible for conducting a particular examination session in the presence of the candidates.

3. 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

4. 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 regulations.
- Ensures any instructions from relevant local or national agencies are referenced and followed where applicable.
- Where safe to do so, ensures candidates are given the opportunity to sit exams for their published duration.
- Ensures any breach of question paper security or malpractice is reported to the awarding body **immediately**.

Executive and Senior Leadership Team

- Where responsible for the centre-wide emergency evacuation procedure, ensure that all staff and appointed fire marshals are aware of the policy and procedures to be followed when an emergency evacuation of an examination room is required.

Assistant Head teacher- Inclusion /Head of Inclusion Secondary

- 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.
- Ensure the candidate is informed prior to taking their exams of what will happen in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Examinations Officer

- Ensures invigilators are trained in emergency evacuation procedures and how an incident and actions taken must be recorded.
- Ensure candidates are briefed 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 Head of Inclusion Secondary 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 bodies 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).
- Ensure a full report of the incident is produced and retained on file if required by an awarding body.
- Ensure an online application for special consideration is submitted to the relevant awarding body where candidates have been disadvantaged.

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 bodies by the exams officer.

Other Relevant Centre Staff

- Support the senior leader, Head of Inclusion Secondary, exams officer and invigilators in ensuring the safe emergency evacuation of exam rooms.

Where to evacuate?

In case a fire alarm sounds, everyone must evacuate the building by way of the safest and closest exit and/or stairway. Assembly point for the candidates who are sitting IGCSE, AS or A Level exams will be the Founders common playground between Phase 1 and Phase 3. Candidates must be kept separate from the rest of the students.

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.

5. 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:
Stop the candidates from writing.
Collect the attendance register (**in order to ensure all candidates are present**) and report to MSO.

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 should leave the room in silence.
Make sure that 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.
Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.
Allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination.
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.
Lock Down Procedure
Actions to be taken:
Stop the candidates writing.
Lock examination room door from the inside or place desks against the door to keep it from opening and turn off all lights. Move candidates to the far side of the room away from window view and instruct them to remain as quiet as possible.
Close all window blinds.
Take attendance register to ensure all candidates are present. Note names of students you may have brought into the exam room at the lockdown. Keeping record of who is present with you is critical in an emergency.
Do not open the door for anyone regardless of what you hear going outside. If someone knocks at the door, do not respond. An administrator may be under duress and be forced to ask you to open the door. **Do not.**
Do not use your phone unless you are instructed to use them. Your administrator may be trying to contact you by mobile.
Ensure candidates stay in this lock down position until the 'all clear' is sounded.
Be prepared to follow further instructions from the Principal or Designee. **NEVER** open the door or leave the room until the all-clear announcement is given.
Supervise candidates as closely as possible while making sure there is no discussion about the exam. Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.
Once the danger has been assessed and building cleared candidates should complete the examination.
Alternatively, if necessary, candidates should be evacuated via the emergency exit to safety.
Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken and send it to the relevant awarding body.

Safe Haven (off campus evacuation)
Actions to be taken:
Stop the candidates writing.
Collect the attendance register (**in order to ensure all candidates are present**) and report to MSO.
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 may take backpacks. No building re-entry! Remain calm and in firm control. Candidates will need good adult guidance.
Candidates should leave the room in silence.
Make sure that 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.
Move to the announced assembly point with the candidates. Note that this assembly point may be off site at the back of the school.
Remain quiet and listen for direction from Principal or his Designee.
WAIT AT ASSEMBLY POINT until direction is given to move to the 'safe' location area.
The Crisis Management Team will identify staff members who will be responsible for leading groups to the "Safe Haven" location area.
Students and teachers in each group must follow the designated line leader's directions.
Be responsible for your group. Good judgment and mature discretion will be the best rule in any time of crisis.
Write it down! Keep notes, names, numbers, and reminders in writing.
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 and in that case allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination.
Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken and send it to the relevant awarding body.

6. Monitoring and review

This policy has been discussed and agreed by the GEMS Founders School teaching staff and leadership teams for implementation.

Signed ..... Date 5-Oct-2026

Senior Examinations Officer

Signed ..... Date 6/10/26

Head of Secondary/ Head of Centre

Signed ..... Date 6/10/2026

Manager School Operations

Signed ..... Date 6/10/26

Vice Principal

Signed ..... Date 6/10/26

Associate Principal

Signed ..... Date 7/10/26

Executive Principal/CEO

Senior Vice President- Education

Policy review date: September 2027