

FIRE RISK PREVENTION POLICY

Regulation ISSR: Part 3

Reviewed and updated by: Mrs M Rigby (DFO)

Approval: Full Governor Board

Last Review: September 2024

Next Review: Summer 2025



Introduction

This policy sets out the approach that the school has to securing fire safety and is based on the following legislation and guidance:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999
- Department of Communities and Local Government “Fire Safety Risk Assessment- Educational Premises.”

The School’s priority is to minimise risk to life and to ensure that there are adequate fire prevention methods in place and clear organisational arrangements in case of fire. The School, in conjunction with a specialist advisor, undertakes regular Fire Risk assessments covering the whole school, which are formally recorded and regularly reviewed.

Independent Schools Standards Regulations, and the above legislation and guidance, place on the governing body additional duties to:

- Develop a fire risk (prevention) policy which includes the elimination, substitution or reduction of risks from dangerous substances
- Ensure the safety of staff, pupils and visitors
- Develop fire procedures and provide staff with training
- Carry out fire drills and contact emergency services when necessary
- Appoint competent persons (with sufficient training, experience and knowledge) to assist in taking preventive and protective measures (including firefighting and evacuation)
- Have a suitable system for the maintenance of clear emergency routes and exits (with doors opening in the direction of escape), signs, notices, emergency lighting where required, fire detectors, alarms and extinguishers
- Provide staff and any others working on the school site with fire safety information.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body is the designated “responsible person” for fire safety as outlined in legislation. Responsibilities throughout the school for fire safety are outlined below:

Board of Governors

- Consider and agree financial resources for any fire precautionary measures outlined in legislation.
- Approve the fire risk prevention policy and any reviews.
- Ensure a Fire Risk Assessment has been undertaken and is regularly reviewed.

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- Provide an update to the Governors on a regular basis regarding the fire risk assessment of the school and review the fire risk (prevention) policy regularly
- Ensure that fire prevention and fire precautions are implemented.
- Ensure that all staff receive adequate training and instruction in fire safety and retain training records.
- Ensure that the fire risk assessment is reviewed when there are any material changes to the school.
- Arrange for regular fire practice drills to be undertaken and document the findings of the drill.

Staff

- Report any issue which may affect the fire safety of the building to the Director of Finance & Operations or Estates Manager.
- Ensure they have received a Fire Safety briefing.

Fire Officer (Director of Finance & Operations)

- Accounts for all personnel within the buildings.
- Takes overall control of an evacuation with support from Senior Staff.
- Liaises with the Fire Brigade with the support of the Senior Staff in the event of an evacuation and arranges for all information regarding missing persons to be relayed to them.
- Provides the ‘all clear’ to staff upon consultation with the Fire Brigade Controls the perimeter around the building through the use of senior staff
- Ensures that regular inspection of fire doors and fire appliances are undertaken and carried out.

Estates Manager (Deputy Fire Officer):

- Ensure that regular testing of the emergency lights are undertaken and recorded
- Ensures that regular testing of the call points are undertaken and recorded.
- Ensure that all recommendations arising from fire risk assessments regarding the fabrication of the building are implemented

- Organise the maintenance and testing of the fire alarm system and emergency lights by a competent person and maintain the certificates for the installation and maintenance of firefighting systems and equipment

Heads of Departments:

- Co-operate with Fire Officer to assist in fire prevention.
- Highlight any areas of concern to the Director of Finance & Operations or Estates Manager.

Management Arrangements for Fire Prevention

The school ensures that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment is undertaken on the school premises and that the findings of the assessment are implemented. This risk assessment is reviewed periodically and also if there are any structural or process changes to the premises.

Prevention of Arson

The school takes all reasonable precautions to minimise the likelihood of arson. This includes:

- Supervision of pupils
- Security lighting on all entrances; footpaths and building facades
- Close down procedures for the school site
- School entrance doors being on keypad
- External waste bins are stored away from buildings
- Ensuring that internal waste bins are emptied on a daily basis
- Maintaining the Security Gates.

Electrical Equipment

All members of staff are made aware that they must not use any personal electrical equipment unless it has had a portable appliance test (PAT test).

Electrical Safety

Portable electrical equipment is subject to PAT test. Visual inspection of portable electrical appliances is carried out termly in higher risk areas. Qualified electricians are used for any remedial works required. Fixed wiring is inspected throughout the School on a rolling programme. Records of the testing is held by the Estates Manager.

Gas Safety

All gas equipment is subjected to an annual inspection by a Gas Safe registered engineer. All boilers are inspected by external contractors. Records of the testing are held by the Estates Manager.

Lightning Protection

All lightning protection and associated earthing conforms to British Standard 66511999. It is tested annually by a specialist contractor and records of the testing are held by the Estates Manager.

Hazardous substances

All flammable substances such as science chemicals, fuel and maintenance products are stored in 30 minute fire resistant cabinets.

All departments with hazardous substances must try to eliminate, substitute or reduce their chemicals that they hold within their areas wherever possible.

Means of Escape

All buildings in the school are provided with a secondary means of escape. The school aims to ensure that all staircases and doors opening onto the protected routes are so designed that they prevent the spread of fire for 30 minutes. This includes the provision of door closures and automatic door guards where necessary. The school aims to ensure that all fire escape routes are provided with adequate emergency lighting as identified by the fire risk assessment. Fire Notices and Evacuation Route signs are located throughout all School buildings. Fire Call Points and Smoke Detectors are located in each building. Fire escape routes and exits are kept clear – records are kept by the Director of Finance & Operations and Estates Manager of checks undertaken on these routes and exits.

Fire Fighting Equipment

The school provides a suitable number of fire extinguishers and fire blankets as determined by the school's fire risk assessment. All fire extinguishers are checked by a specialist contractor on an annual basis. Records of the testing are held by the Estates Manager. The following types of fire-fighting equipment are available in the School:

- Fire blanket
- Water extinguisher
- CO2 extinguisher
- Foam extinguisher
- Dry Powder extinguisher
- Wet Chemical extinguisher

Fire Detection

The school recognises that early detection of fire enhances the time available for evacuation and reduces the damage caused to buildings. The school is committed to continuing to review and, where necessary, upgrade its fire detection system in relation to recognised standards.

The fire alarm system is tested weekly by Estates Staff, using a different Call Point each time. Six monthly checks on the fire alarm and electrical lighting systems are also carried out by specialist contractors. Records of this testing are held by the Estates Manager.

Fire drills are also held on a termly basis, in order to promote and maintain an awareness of the need for orderly evacuation and assembly in the event of a fire. Records of these drills are held by the Director of Finance & Operations.

Arrangements for action to be taken in the event of fire

The school provides a health and safety information sheet which includes details of procedures in the event of fire for visitors and contractors whilst on the School site. The sheets are issued by the main School Reception when visitors arrive on site.

All School rooms have information sheets posted on notice boards which detail the procedures to be completed if there is a need to evacuate the buildings. Notices are also displayed in each room identifying the primary exit route in green and a secondary exit route (if applicable), in black. All staff and pupils are expected to be familiar with these procedures.

Safe Storage

The School ensures that any flammable materials used for teaching or site maintenance purposes, are locked in purpose-made, flame-proof containers at the end of every day.

The School waste bins are stored away from its buildings in a designated compound.

Training

Information on fire procedures is provided to all staff. Information is reviewed to ensure that it is suitable and sufficient by means of feedback from fire drills and via the health and safety committee.

All staff are provided with fire awareness training at induction and during employment, on a periodical basis.

Safety of staff or anyone else on the school premises

All visitors and contractors, other than parents/guardians collecting pupils, arriving in the school, are requested to sign in using the electronic signing system. They are given information outlining the procedures to follow in the event of the alarm being raised and the location of the relevant assembly points.

All contractors on site are informed that they should also sign in daily, using the electronic signing system, before they can commence work. On larger scale projects the contractors will have to sign in at their site office.

The Director of Finance & Operations and Estates Manager have mobile devices providing access to the list of staff and visitors

Use of School Premises outside school hours/ letting of premises

The School lets the facilities to external organisations. These organisations receive full information about fire evacuation procedures and what to do in the event of an evacuation.

There are a number of areas on the School site that may be used for both external and internal events and the School calculates a maximum occupancy for these rooms taking into account the size of the room, any furniture within it and the number and size of fire exits.

The current limits are as follows:

- Millenium Hall 500
- PA Hall 200

For certain events where there is a high level of staff supervision and awareness of evacuation procedures, such limits may be modified slightly, by formal agreement with the Headmistress and Director of Finance & Operations.