
POLICY STATEMENT ON FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION INCLUDING FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURES

1. Scope

This guidance is applicable to all premises under the control of the School and details the approach to the control of risk from fire.

2. Objectives

To ensure that risks from fire are identified and that arrangements are in place to control those risks. To enable the School to comply with its duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and other education specific guidance.

3. Guidance

The School has in place procedures for:-

- (a) carrying out fire risk assessment;
- (b) preventing fires;
- (c) evacuation in the event of a fire;
- (d) maintaining and checking all fire detection, alarm and fighting systems.

4. Fire Risk Assessment

- 4.1. All of the School premises will be subject to a fire risk assessment. This is conducted by an external consultant or other competent person.
- 4.2. The fire risk assessment will be updated every year or in the event of significant changes to the buildings or their usage.
- 4.3. A copy of the fire risk assessment report will be available on site (from the Bursar) and employees' attention brought to any hazards found in the assessment.
- 4.4. Fire hazards will be eliminated or the risk reduced to the minimum level practicable by implementing control measures and safe systems of work.
- 4.5. Regular assessments will be made by staff, including Boarding staff and the Maintenance Supervisor to ensure that the walkways are kept clear of obstruction and tripping hazards.

5. Fire Detection

The School has adequate means of fire detection which is maintained and regularly checked by competent persons.

6. Fire Alarm

- 6.1. The School has an adequate means of raising the alarm in the event of fire.
- 6.2. The fire alarm system is tested weekly with the date and time made known. This will be managed by the Maintenance Supervisor.

- 6.3. The fire alarm system is serviced by a competent contractor.
- 6.4. Records of these tests and servicing are maintained in a fire logbook held in the Maintenance Department.

7. Fire Fighting Equipment

- 7.1. A risk assessment will determine the minimum level of firefighting equipment which must be present on the School premises.
- 7.2. Fire extinguishers and other fire suppressant systems will be serviced by a competent contractor annually and the service date recorded on each extinguisher.

8. Emergency Lighting

- 8.1. Emergency lighting is installed in the School which will remain operational for a minimum of two hours following a power cut. In addition, the School has a generator which powers night lights and main lighting circuits in event of a power failure.
- 8.2. The emergency generator is tested on a weekly basis.
- 8.3. Battery operated emergency lighting is tested on an annual full discharge test by a competent contractor.
- 8.4. Records of testing and servicing of emergency lights are maintained by the Maintenance Department.

9. Emergency Procedures

- 9.1. Written emergency procedures are set out in Annex 1.
- 9.2. Notices will be displayed in each building of the School premises detailing the action to take in the event of a fire and highlight the assembly point to evacuate to in an emergency.
- 9.3. Adequate means of escape are maintained for all occupants of the School premises. These means of escape are clearly signed with pictograms.
- 9.4. Where disabled persons use the premises, specific arrangements will be made to ensure they can escape in an emergency. For staff and students there will be a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) in place, visitors will be catered for by the Bursar when notified.
- 9.5. Fire drills will be held every term at the School. We also practice a night-time evacuation of the boarding houses every term.
- 9.6. Written records of fire/evacuation drills are maintained in the fire logbook which is kept by the Maintenance Department.

10. Fire Training

- 10.1. Staff will be informed in relation to:-
 - (a) action to take if they discover a fire, including how to activate the fire alarm;
 - (b) action to take on hearing the alarm, including location and use of exits and escape routes; and
 - (c) Staff will receive Fire Awareness training on at least an annual basis.
- 10.2. Fire Wardens will be trained by a competent external training provider.
- 10.3. Students will be informed of exits and escape routes.
- 10.4. Visitors and contractors:-
 - a) on arrival at the School will receive a briefing to ensure that they are aware of the policy procedures and assembly points in the event of an evacuation.
 - b) For events with large numbers of attendees, such as open days, concerts etc. an announcement will be made at the beginning of the event regarding evacuation arrangements.

11. Fire Prevention

The School takes all reasonable precautions to prevent a fire from breaking out and recognises that for a fire to take place oxygen, flammable materials and a source of ignition must all be present. The processes of prevention are aimed at preventing one or more of these elements being together. To ensure the processes are being implemented the Bursar, Caretakers and Heads of Department will:-

- 11.1. Comply at all times with relevant regulations on the storage, transportation, handling and disposal of flammable materials (including hazardous substances etc);
- 11.2. Regularly inspect all the areas where there are potential sources of ignition and ensure that no flammable materials are stored close by;
- 11.3. Maintain awareness through training and refresher training of the preventative steps that need to be taken;
- 11.4. Include fire prevention and evacuation procedures during the induction process with all new starters; and
- 11.5. Pay close attention to the activities of contractors as appropriate, particularly during maintenance and building works.

12. Fire Records

Records are kept of training, inspections, evacuations and maintenance of systems and equipment.

13. Legal Requirement & Education Standards

- A: Handbook for the Inspection of Independent Schools: Part 3: The Regulatory Requirements of Independent Schools, March 2009 version. (www.isi.net).
- B. Part II of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005, (www.opsi.gov.uk)
- C. "Fire Risk Assessment," Ecclesiastical Risk Services Ltd guidance note (www.ecclesiastical.com)
- D. "Fire Safety: Managing School Facilities" DCSF Guidance, (www.gov.uk/dfc)
- E. "Fire Safety Risk Assessment for Educational Premises" and "Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Sleeping Accommodation," DCLG publications (www.communities.gov.uk)
- F. Education Funding Agency "Fire risk during school maintenance or building works" (Nov 2016) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fire-risk-from-school-maintenance-or-building-works>

ANNEX 1

Fire Evacuation Procedures

Introduction

This guidance is specific in dealing with an evacuation of the School buildings in the event of a fire.

This guidance note has been prepared to comply with statutory requirements contained in the Fire Precautions [Workplace] Regulations 1997 [as amended] and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Staff and the School's appointed contractors must familiarise themselves with the contents of these guidance notes and ensure that they comply with any duties and/or procedures contained within the document. Further clarification or direction on any duties or procedures contained within this guidance note can be obtained via the Bursar.

Action in the event of a fire or suspicion of a fire

Immediately raise the alarm by activating the nearest available fire alarm call point.

If applicable, (and if possible) isolate and shutdown any work equipment if it is safe to do so, electrical equipment, etc, that is in use or being used by you.

Get everyone out of the room or area where the fire is located via the nearest fire exit and proceed to the designated assembly point. If not supervising students and it is possible, shut any windows that may be open. Finally, close the door to the room [or area], in order to prevent both fire development and smoke and the other products of combustion from spreading into occupied areas within the School.

How to raise the alarm

Activate the nearest break glass type fire alarm call point. The call point can be activated by pressing firmly onto the middle of the panel that is incorporated within the call point unit. The panel is designed to drop down safely with firm pressure being applied.

Action to take on hearing the alarm

On hearing the fire alarm, staff should immediately commence the evacuation of their own classroom, room or area and if necessary, alert members of staff in any adjoining classroom, room or area. **Leave the building via the nearest available escape route** and assemble at the School's designated fire assembly point, with the exception of the staff specifically designated in these procedures to investigate the fire.

Do not stop to collect personal belongings or return to the building until instructed that it is safe to do so even if the alarm has stopped. There should be absolute silence throughout the duration of the evacuation and until the 'All Clear' is given by the Fire Evacuation Coordinator.

The School's appointed Fire Marshals must ensure that they inspect all classrooms, toilets, workrooms, offices etc, to establish that they have been safely evacuated, if it is safe to do so.

Once this has been completed, Fire Marshals must immediately leave the building by the nearest available escape route and report to the fire assembly point.

Fire Investigation – Caretaking Staff

On hearing the fire alarm, the Duty Caretaker will go immediately to the fire panel to identify the location of the fire. All other members of caretaking staff must make their way to the fire assembly point. All caretaking staff and duty staff must change the channel on their radio to channel 3. This will act as the emergency channel.

On arriving at the panel, if there are other caretaking staff on site and the fire is located in Brooke, Bligh or the Activity Centre, the Duty Caretaker will radio and ask the other caretaking staff to investigate and radio back information. Where possible, two members of the caretaking staff will investigate. However, if only one Caretaker is available to respond to the request, they should investigate and maintain radio contact.

If the fire is in Main House, T-Block or the Caretaker is working alone and unable to call on colleagues to investigate the fire elsewhere, they must wait for the Bursar or designated person (see appendix 1) to arrive at the panel before investigating the fire. **On the occasions where the Caretaker is lone working, they must contact the duty member of the Leadership Team using the mobile phone and maintain contact while they investigate the fire.**

When attending the fire panel with the Duty Caretaker, the Bursar or designated member of staff must pick up the radio located next to the fire panel and check connection to the Duty Caretaker before the Duty Caretaker investigates the fire.

Every care must be taken when investigating a fire. Do not proceed if there is smoke or signs of fire unless the fire is small enough to be tackled using a fire extinguisher. Do not go through doors if there are signs of smoke or the door is hot. In these circumstances, alert the Bursar or designated person who will contact the Fire Brigade.

Once an investigation is complete, the Bursar or designated person will report the findings to the senior member of staff co-ordinating at the fire assembly point.

Evacuating the School building - arrangements for people with disabilities

Individuals who have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) will already have been briefed of their own personal arrangements and should follow the plan provided for them. Duty Caretakers, and other staff as necessary, will be made aware of any PEEP that has been developed.

Ensuring that everyone is out of the building - School Fire Marshals' duties

As previously stated, the School's appointed Fire Marshals will undertake a check of their floor or area of the School building, including staff and ancillary rooms, toilets etc.

The School's appointed Fire Marshals will also (where applicable) assist with the evacuation of staff, students and visitors.

Location of assembly point

The Tennis Courts.

Action at the Assembly Point

During the School day (Term Time Monday to Friday 08.00 to 17.00, Saturday 09.00 to 13.00) tutors and students will assemble in tutor groups at the fire assembly point on the tennis courts except on a Saturday when they will line up in year groups. Support staff, non-tutor staff, contractors and visitors will assemble separately at the fire assembly point. The duty fire evacuation coordinator (see appendix 1) will hand out fire registers to group leaders (tutors and staff allocated to check staff groups) who will check their group and return the sheet. The duty fire evacuation co-ordinator will check visitors against the visitor sign in record. Any letting groups on site will assemble on the fire assembly point and are responsible for registering their groups.

Outside of the School Day (Term Time) The School Day procedures apply other than the students will assemble in boarding houses at the fire assembly point on the tennis courts and registers will be taken by boarding staff.

Outside of Term Time. Outside of term time, lettings visiting the site on residential or day activities are responsible for maintaining appropriate fire lists for their groups and registering their groups. Fire evacuation procedures will be agreed with each individual group. Generally, these will conform to term time procedures. However, for certain activities, the fire assembly point may be changed. Duty staff will be advised on the specific arrangements in place. Support staff, contractors and Cobham Hall visitors will assemble separately at the fire assembly point on the tennis courts. The duty fire evacuation coordinator will check staff against the fire register for Cobham Hall staff and will check visitors against the visitor sign in record.

Staff and visitors must not be allowed to re-enter the School buildings, until they are told that it is safe to do so by the senior member of staff at the fire assembly point or, in the event of the Fire Brigade attending, by the Senior Fire Officer.

Arrangements for exam candidates

On hearing the alarm, invigilators should stop candidates from writing, make a note of the time the exam was stopped and collect the attendance register. Candidates will be advised to leave all papers, scripts and belongings in the room and to leave the room calmly in silence; candidates must not talk to each other.

Invigilators will escort the candidates to the fire assembly point keeping students apart as much as possible (ideally 1.25 meters). Once at the assembly point students will be registered in the area specifically designated for exams candidates.

Candidates returning to the exam room will be allowed the full allocated exam time.

Extinguishing a fire (if safe to do so)

In the event of a small fire - such as a fire in a wastepaper bin, etc, it may be possible to extinguish the fire, using the School's portable fire-fighting equipment. However, you must not place yourselves or others at personal risk and must be trained in the correct usage of such equipment.

Prior to attempting to extinguish the fire, you must ensure that the fire alarm has been activated and that the evacuation of the room or area has commenced. If you are supervising students, contractors or visitors at that point in time your priority is to immediately escort the individuals to the appropriate assembly point, and you should not attempt to fight the fire.

For fires involving **paper, wood and textiles**, a **water extinguisher** should be used to extinguish the fire.

If the fire involves **live electrical equipment**; a **carbon dioxide or dry powder extinguisher** should be used to extinguish the fire.

If the fire involves **flammable liquids**, a **foam or dry powder extinguisher** should be used to extinguish the fire.

If the fire is larger than the size of a wastepaper bin or is producing a large quantity of smoke or fumes, you should not attempt to try to fight the fire. It will be safer to evacuate the area (if possible closing windows and doors behind you) activate the fire alarm and await the arrival of the Fire Brigade.

In the event that you see smoke emanating around the edges of a closed door, or the door or handle feels warm or hot to the touch - DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR. - you may be placed at immediate and serious risk if by opening the door the fire receives an inrush of oxygen. (Eg the fire may "flashover"). **In the event of these circumstances, you must not attempt to try to fight the fire. Operate the nearest available fire alarm call point and commence the evacuation of the classroom, room or area.**

12. Procedures in the event of fire alarm system failure

In the event of the fire alarm systems failing, the School will designate Fire Marshals and Caretakers to sweep the buildings for signs of fire at 30-minute intervals whilst the building is in use.

If a fire is discovered during the daytime/term time, the Fire Marshal or Caretaker will need to contact the Fire Brigade and notify the School Office/Reception or PA to the Headteacher.

If a fire is discovered during the night-time/term time, the Fire Marshal or Caretaker will need to contact the Fire Brigade and notify the Headmistress or Duty Housemistress.

If a fire is discovered outside of term time in the day, the Fire Marshal or Caretaker will need to contact the Fire Brigade and notify the School Office/Reception or the Bursar.

If a fire is discovered outside of term time in the night, the Fire Marshal or Caretaker will need to contact the Fire Brigade and telephone the duty member of the Leadership Team using the mobile phone.

Fire Marshalls and Caretakers will then be allocated areas of the School to raise the alarm by shouting 'fire'. Where possible an announcement will be made via the School's tannoy system.

APPENDIX 1

Fire Marshalls:

- Fenice, Caro
- Flynn, Sam
- Hosford, Peter
- Howard, Erika
- Kearney, Kevin
- Shipton, Nicole
- Ukachi-Lois, Amaka

Duty Fire Evacuation Coordinators:

- PA to the Headmistress (Term time 08.30 to 16.30). In their absence nominated member of the School Office/Reception staff.
- Senior Housemistress on duty other than Duty Housemistress (Term time outside of School hours)
- PA to Bursar (outside of term time 9am to 5pm). In their absence, another member of staff will be nominated and staff advised.

Designated Person to Attend Fire Panel

In addition to the Duty Caretaker:

- Bursar (Office hours). If the Bursar is absent, a second Caretaker or senior member of staff will be nominated. The Duty Caretaker will be advised.
- Duty Housemistress (Term time, outside of office hours)

Senior Person at Assembly Point

- Headmistress (Term time 08.00 to 17.00). If the Headmistress is absent, the Deputy Headmistress or, in their absence, Director of Studies.
- Senior Housemistress on duty other than Duty Housemistress (Term time outside of School hours).
- Bursar's PA (Outside of term time 09.00 to 17.00). In their absence, another member of staff will be nominated and staff advised.