

Plumtree School

Fire Safety Policy and Emergency Evacuation Procedures

This document sets the policy on how the regulations are interpreted at our School.

Legal Status:

- Regulatory Requirements, Independent School Standards (England) Regulations 2023
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 (as amended 1999)
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Fire Precautions Act 1971

Applies to:

- the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the out of school care and extra-curricular activities inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours;
- all staff (teaching and support staff), the proprietors and volunteers working in the school

Related Documents:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Accessibility Plan

Availability

- This Policy is made available to parents, staff and students in the following ways: via the school Website, and from the office from where a request for a copy of the Policy may be obtained
- The Fire Safety Policy and Emergency Evacuation Procedures along with relevant procedural documents, are provided either in hard copy or electronically to all new employees and volunteers before commencing work at Plumtree School. They are required to state that they have read and understood such documents.
- Each September all employees receive an update and refresher of policies and procedures.

Monitoring and Review:

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Head Teacher.
- The proprietor will undertake a formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than two years from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed:

Date: April 2024

Joanne Howarth
Proprietor

Fire Safety

Our Fire Safety Policy and Procedures are based on risk assessment, a duty to maintain fire precautions which are for the use of fire fighters and new duties on fire authorities for fire safety, investigation and testing. The fire safety arrangements in Plumtree School have been dictated by the provisions of the Fire Safety Acts, where, in such premises, there are at any one time either:

- a) more than twenty people at work; or
- b) more than ten people at work elsewhere than on the ground floor,
then the owner or occupier of the premises is required to apply for a fire certificate.

The Proprietor has had a fire risk assessment completed in accordance with the Fire Precautions Workplace Regulations. The Head Teacher ensures compliance and this is viewed as a minimum standard to be achieved. The Head Teacher and proprietors will ensure any further modifications required as a result in changes in legislation or established best practice are approved by the local fire authority.

In accordance with legislation, there is an annual Health and Safety Fire Risk Assessment.

In compliance with both regulations and best practice, the Proprietors have ensured that:

- each week, the fire call point is tested;
- adequate and suitable fire extinguishing appliances are provided and maintained;
- suitable means of fire detection and signalling of the presence of fire is provided and maintained;
- adequate means of escape are provided and maintained;
- suitable signs designating fire fighting equipment and means of escape are provided and maintained;
- a fire logbook is provided and maintained;
- fire training is provided to employees;
- evacuation drills are undertaken at least termly and the results recorded;
- suitable fire procedures are published in respect of:
 - Action to be taken on discovering a fire.
 - Action to be taken on hearing the alarm.
 - Responsibility of key personnel in the event of a fire.

Emergency Contact

A Pro-forma for emergency contact telephone numbers is issued to parents at the beginning of each academic year and this is to be completed and returned to the School Office as soon as possible. Notification of any change to these details must be reported to the School Office. Every employee at the School has been asked to complete a form giving details of next of kin, emergency contact numbers, and relevant details about medication. If they do not wish to do this, a "disclaimer" must be signed.

Were there ever to be a disaster or crisis affecting the staff and/or pupils of the School, there would be need for easy access to certain data. It would also be essential for considered procedures to be pre-determined to avoid the risk of ill-considered action being taken during a time of stress.

- The primary aim of our Fire Policy is to safeguard life and to this end the Head Teacher and the Proprietors will assume this responsibility. Policies and procedures are available for all staff who are required to be familiar with and apply them.
- Regular health and safety inspections are carried out by the Head Teacher, as the HSM.
- Advice is taken from the Fire Brigade inspector and appropriate specialist advisors.
- Problems will be noted, prioritised and acted upon appropriately.
- Outside teachers, visitors and contractors will be required to take note of and follow our emergency procedures.
- Public events are assessed for all risks including fire.
- Fire Drills are held regularly, at least once a term and timed. Records of fire drills are kept in the Log Book in the School Office.
- Escape routes are clearly labelled and lead to a safe assembly point.

- All staff and pupils are instructed on action to be taken in the event of an emergency.
- Every room has prominently displayed clear notices describing the action to be taken.
- Fire doors are clearly labelled and unlocked.
- Clear and prominent signage directs visitors to the nearest evacuation route.
- Arrangements are in place for summoning the Fire Brigade.
- The designated assembly point is at a safe distance from the building and not on a route which may be used by the emergency services.
- A roll call is taken using class registers and visitors book.
- The alarm system is tested weekly and is audible in every part of the premises.
- The alarm is never switched off and is routinely serviced.
- All the fire fighting equipment is recommended by the Fire services and checked on a regular basis.
- Electrical equipment is regularly checked and maintained by an approved electrical.
- Regulations concerning the control and storage of flammable liquids are followed.
- All appropriate risk assessments are in place and checked by the Health and Safety Manager (HSM).

Fire-fighting equipment is regularly serviced and clearly labelled. Signage is regularly checked and updated in line with current legal requirements.

There is a fire drill/emergency evacuation procedure every term. Neither staff nor children are warned of an impending practice. It is essential therefore, that each member of staff is aware of what the evacuation arrangements are for each area of the School. These are detailed in to this document. In case of a fire or bomb threat, evacuation procedures will be tested each term. The evacuation and safety of visitors and contractors will be the responsibility of the person who they are visiting or working for.

The School has:

- Fire Safety Policy and Procedures
- Fire Safety Audit
- Evacuation Procedures

In accordance with statutory requirements there is an annual fire safety audit which includes checking all fire fighting equipment by an approved contractor and records maintained. All emergency lighting is tested monthly and records maintained.

Fire Drill

Staff are also informed of the location of the fire extinguishers. All employees and voluntary helpers are provided with a personal copy of the fire drill procedures including:

- evacuation from the premises;
- exit routes;
- checking the children are present;
- their responsibilities regarding the children they are supervising.

A copy of these procedures is also available in each classroom.

Execution

Our fire safety policy regime mirrors closely Plumtree School's health and safety (H&S) systems and procedures. Fire safety is by definition a subset of the current H&S systems and procedures.

Allocation of Responsibilities

Responsibilities are as follows:

	Tasks	Comments
Proprietors	Responsible in law for what happens on the premises	
Responsible Person (Head Teacher)	Plans, implements, monitors and reviews the policy	
Employees	Comply with H&S policy and take reasonable steps to protect themselves and colleagues at work.	
Visitors	Should be briefed on any H&S issues that will effect them, as required, when they are on site	

Risk Assessment. The Responsible Person (Head Teacher) produces the risk assessment for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions that he needs to take. The Risk Assessment is based on an understanding of the relevant legislation, guidance and good practice in the fire prevention field. The overall risk has been assessed and agreed with the Fire and Rescue service

Fire Precautions Maintenance

The following arrangements have been made for maintenance:

	Item	By whom
Ongoing	Check signage, safety clips on fire extinguishers, ensure that fire doors are not wedged open	Proprietor/head teacher
Weekly	Test fire panels at the weekend	Proprietor
Weekly	Test emergency lighting	Proprietor
Half Yearly	Fire alarm service	External contractor
Annually	Test all fire extinguishers, check all fire blankets. Replace any missing fire evacuation signs. Emergency lighting service Alarms	External Contractor

Smoking

Smoking can be a major source of fires. Smoking on the School's premises is prohibited.

Training

The Person Responsible (Head Teacher) will arrange annual training for staff.

Practice Evacuation

There will be a number of practice evacuations each year. The aim of the practices is to familiarise children and staff with evacuation procedures, a full evacuation is considered successful when a building is evacuated within 4 minutes. The Head Teacher will set off the fire panel and monitor the time it takes to evacuate the buildings, these details are recorded. The following practices should occur every term:

	Detail	By whom
Whole School	One daytime evacuation practice	Head Teacher

Action on Hearing a Fire Evacuation Bell. The following actions should occur when anyone hears a fire evacuation bell:

- **Evacuate** all buildings and carry out roll call
- **Confirm** what has happened; decide whether to call the fire brigade. **Deputy Head to phone the fire brigade if required.**
- **Control** re-entering to buildings. The Head Teacher should investigate all false alarms, recording all details for record keeping purposes.
- **Fire fighting** The aim is to evacuate the buildings as quickly as possible. Staff are prohibited from fighting fire unless all available exits are blocked.

Annual Review

This document will be reviewed annually as part of the H&S Annual Report.

Overview of hazards, people at risk, level of risk, records and review

1. Identification of hazards.

- a. **General introduction.** With only a small numbers of people likely to be effected it is relatively easy to keep risk management under continual review.
- b. **Sources of ignition.** The number of sources of ignition are relatively few. There are no hot surfaces, electrical sockets etc are constantly kept under review to minimise risk, there are few chances of mechanically generated sparks – contractors are supervised by School staff
- c. **Sources of fuel.** The School is on both mains gas and electric supply.
- d. **Sources of oxygen.** Doors are kept shut to reduce the levels of draft (an accelerant) and slow the spread of fire; there are no stored oxygen containers on site. All doors are fire doors and must not be wedged open.

2. People at risk.

- a. **By day.** By day the numbers fluctuate and although at this stage we are a very small School with a high staff ratio there are often external people using the premises.
- b. **By night.** At night there is nobody in the School.
- c. **During holidays.** During the holiday periods there could again be occasions when the School is used for activities and continuing professional development but these numbers are low.
- d. **People especially at risk.** At this stage, there are no people with a registered disability in this category. However, many of our pupils require English as an additional language, therefore there is a need for great clarity in giving instructions.

Evaluation of risk.

- e. **Overall evaluation of risk.** The overall evaluation of the risk of a fire starting is assessed as **LOW** because there are no ignition sources and combustible materials are kept away from them. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the School premises or the entrance area. electrical equipment is inspected regularly and tested, and the chance of arson is assessed as low due to the security arrangements of the School.
- f. **Evaluation of risk to people from fire.** Risk to people from fire is low.
- g. **Reduction of fire hazards.** All adults are briefed on induction and annually on the importance of good housekeeping to prevent the build-up of combustible material.
- h. **Reduction of risk to people.**
 - i. **Detection and warning.** The premises are well protected with fire detection equipment, emergency lighting, warning bells and a sprinkler system.
 - j. **Fire fighting.** All staff are trained in using fire extinguishers. Although the School policy is not to fight fire unless it is to ensure a safe evacuation.
 - k. **Escape routes.** The School follows the Head Teacher that main escape routes are all signed.
 - l. **Signs and notices.** Signs and notices comply with H&S (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.

3. **Records and Review.** The Head Teacher as the Responsible Person plans, implements, monitors and reviews the fire safety policy. She is responsible for record keeping and maintaining the emergency evacuation and liaison with other interested parties.

Fire Prevention

Introduction

The proprietor is appointed as the Fire Safety Coordinator at our School. He is responsible for ensuring that all procedures, precautionary measures and safety standards are clearly understood and complied with.

Appropriate procedures are in place for ensuring that safety precautions are properly managed, formulated and disseminated to all staff. These procedures include Fire Drills and the use of Fire Extinguishers. A copy of the School evacuation procedure is available in all key areas. There is at least one exit door from each room and on leaving the room the exit routes are clearly displayed. All staff, visitors and volunteers should be fully conversant with the evacuation procedures in the case of a fire/bomb threat. The procedure for this purpose at Plumtree School is in full at the bottom of this document.

Bomb Threats

The aim is to prevent bomb or incendiary attacks, or when this is not possible, to minimise their effects in buildings to which members of the public must have access. This must be done without imposing unacceptable restrictions on them and the Proprietor must weigh the seriousness of the threat against the need to maintain business as usual and decide the extent to which counter measures should be adopted.

Public Access

Consideration should be given to dividing the areas to which the public usually require access from the rest of the building. The rest of the building can then be made a secure area.

Package Bombs and Hoaxes

Postal bombs are unlikely to be in large parcels, rather in flat packages. Staff should be on their guard for:

- The post mark – especially foreign, and any name/address of sender.
- The writing – especially of foreign style.
- Stains – these could be sweating explosives.
- The smell – usually an aroma of marzipan or almonds indicate an explosive.
- The sound – if the parcel rattles, ticks, etc.

Telephone Calls

These are more of a common occurrence than parcels. All members of staff should be aware of the necessary procedures should they receive such a call:

- Alert security/police immediately.
- Above all, be calm, listen carefully, and report exactly what is said.

Fire and Bomb Alerts

In the event of a fire or bomb alert the Head Teacher or designated person must:

- Ring the fire alarm to activate the evacuation of the premises of all adults and children (see fire drill procedure).
- Phone 999 for the fire brigade and police.
- Check that the evacuation procedure has been followed.
- Remain at the front of the school to meet the fire brigade/police and direct them to the incident.
- All children and adults must remain outside.
- Only when the all clear has been given will registers be sent back to classes enabling children and adults to re-enter the premises.

If an alert is a practice, then the fire brigade must be informed before the evacuation of the premises takes place.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure: Fire/Bomb

- the bell will ring continuously.
- leave all bags/belongings.
- close all windows and turn off lights.
- lead out in single file and in silence.
- last person out close the door.
- go to form positions on playground.
- wait for teachers.

Once Outside:

- Teachers should stay with their forms, keep the children silent and check if they are present.
- Non-Form Teachers should assist the staff in delivering registers and keeping order.
- Teachers should report to the Head Teacher that all children officially recorded on registers as present are present.
- All teaching and support staff should report their presence to the Head Teacher.

Prevention of Arson

Arsonists in schools often start their first fires by chance. Perhaps they break into the school just for the hell of it. ("Let's break into the school," "yeah" – and the bravado and adrenaline take over).

There is no planning, no organization. Having got inside, they can't find too much to steal, they have matches in their pocket, they see the waste paper bin and they start a fire. It all happens by chance. This chance element in arson makes some people believe that arson is the hardest of all the security risks control.

With the number attacks on schools rising rapidly and the number of large fires also rising fast, some credence is given to this view. But the fact that the action of most arsonists is either unplanned or badly planned does give the school a good chance of preventing the fires.

Because it seems to be easy, because they don't get caught, because of the thrill they get from the adrenaline rush, because the school seems powerless to do anything about the problem, the arsonists do it again – which is why school fires come in cycles.

Larger scale attacks – a serious attempt to burn the whole school down – normally come after the smaller-scale events. Some arson is aimed at hiding the details of another crime – although this is rare in schools.

Arsonists do not normally bring the method of starting the fire into the school – they are reliant on finding scrap paper, etc., in the school to start the fire. There are few instances of arsonists seemingly tearing up books etc. in order to create the blaze – they look for loose paper on desks, in waste bins, etc.

The school policy on arson prevention is therefore:

- As far as is practicable inflammable materials are locked away.
- All waste bins are emptied into a main bin at night.
- The Head Teacher and HSM make occasional unannounced checks that the procedure is being adhered to.

Fire Drills

- Evacuation drills are carried out once a term.
- The first drill should be carried out as soon as the new year begins so that all new pupils and staff are aware of the procedures.

Fire Alarm Test

The fire alarms are tested once a week by the Head Teacher and records are kept in the School office. The Head Teacher is responsible for reporting any defect and ensuring that they are repaired.

Fire Fighting Equipment

Fire fighting equipment will be examined and tested at least once a year by a competent service engineer.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

A separate chart states and clarifies these procedures, and is to be found in all main rooms.

The Head Teacher will ensure that the emergency plan is reviewed on an annual basis, or sooner if changes occur that affect this plan.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be continually monitored and a formal review will take place not later than two years after the date shown below, unless changes in regulations and accepted best practice require an earlier formal review.

Signed:

Joanne Howarth
Proprietor

Date: April 2024