Cothill House Policy Documents

ISSR 12 Fire Prevention Policy

NMS for Boarding: 7.1, 7.2

Date: September 2024
Next review: September 2025

Fire Prevention Policy

(to include boarding, day and EYFS pupils)

This policy and its implementation are in accordance with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 which requires the school, Trust Office and Trustees to take such fire precautions to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the protection of people legally on the premises, Trust property and the environment from the effects of fire.

Further non-statutory guidance can be found at:

- Making your premises safe from fire
- Fire safety risk assessment: educational premises
- Fire safety risk assessment: sleeping accommodation

Elimination/Reduction of Risks

- The school will implement such general fire precautions as will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of its employees, students, contractors and visitors on its premises.
- These general fire precautions will be implemented on the basis of the following principles from Part 3, schedule 1 of the Order:
    - avoiding risks
    - evaluating the risks which cannot be avoided
    - combating the risks at source
    - adapting to technical progress
    - replacing the dangerous by the non-dangerous or less dangerous
    - developing a coherent overall prevention policy which covers technology, organisation of work and the influence of factors relating to the working environment
    - giving collective protective measures priority over individual protective measures
    - giving appropriate instructions to employees.
- The school will implement, so far as is reasonably practical, the general precautions listed in
- Article 4 of the Fire Safety Reform Order:
    - measures to reduce the risk of fire on the premises and the risk of the spread of fire on the premises
    - measures in relation to the means of escape from the premises
    - measures for securing that, at all material times, the means of escape can be safely and effectively used
    - measures in relation to the means for fighting fires on the premises
    - measures in relation to the means for detecting fire on the premises and giving warning in case of fire on the premises
    - measures in relation to the arrangements for action to be taken in the event of fire on the premises, including:

        - measures relating to the instruction and training of employees and
        - measures to mitigate the effects of the fire.
- All school buildings are maintained to a standard that will not be adversely affected by fire for at least sufficient time to allow all occupants to vacate in safety. Ongoing preventative maintenance in line with the school's Health and Safety Policy, as well as regular reviews of the Fire Risk Assessment, ensures that appropriate measures are in place to ensure the elimination or reduction of risks from dangerous substances.

Organisation

The Trustees of the Prep Schools Trust have oversight of the policy and implementation of fire safety procedures in the school. These are reviewed at termly LAG meetings as well as meetings of the Full Board of Trustees.

The Head

- The Head is the "Responsible Person" in terms of fire safety. They will ensure that preventative and proactive measures are taken to ensure fire safety, the following activities take place, and associated documents and records are kept up to date:
    - the Fire Prevention Policy
    - the Fire Risk Assessment
    - fire procedures and arrangements
    - fire safety training records
    - fire evacuation drills;
    - records of inspections of escape routes
    - maintenance of fire alarm systems, detectors, emergency lighting and fire fighting systems/equipment.

- The Head also ensures all new infrastructures/buildings and alterations to buildings are designed and built and all existing buildings are maintained in accordance with Building Regulations, current Health and Safety legislation and relevant British Standards in respect of fire safety.

Key Duty Holders

The school will designate **Key Duty Holders**, and if appropriate deputies

- **Fire Wardens** for designated areas of the school. In the event of an evacuation Fire Wardens are responsible for:
    - Helping everyone to leave the areas / buildings they are responsible for quickly and safely,
    - Checking all rooms within their areas / buildings, including offices, staff rooms, cloakrooms and workrooms, to ensure everyone has left,
    - Using firefighting equipment, if the fire is small, it is safe to do so, and they have been trained to use fire-fighting equipment,
    - If it is safe to do so, shutting down any equipment that has been left on, and closing any doors that have been left open / not closed properly,
    - Reporting the status of their area to the Emergency Evacuation Coordinator.

Teaching staff will normally be in charge of groups of pupils when the alarm sounds; their primary responsibility is to ensure those pupils arrive safely at the assembly point. Fire Wardens will therefore normally be members of the Support Staff, eg Technicians, Premises staff and Admin Staff.

- **Emergency Evacuation Coordinator** - in the event of the fire alarm being activated they are responsible for:
    - ensuring that the Fire and Rescue Service has been called,
    - checking with the Fire Wardens and people taking roll calls that the premises have been fully evacuated,
    - meeting the Fire and Rescue Service on their arrival, ensuring that they can access all buildings and are notified of any special risks, e.g. the location of highly flammable materials,
    - ensuring that no-one is allowed to enter or re-enter the buildings until the 'all clear' has been given.

- **Fire Drill Officer -** responsible for:
    - Coordinating termly fire evacuation drills from all buildings and ensuring that any improvements that could be made to the evacuation procedures are highlighted and remedial actions implemented;
    - Keeping records of all fire evacuation drills including date, time of the evacuation, time taken to evacuate the buildings and time taken to complete a full roll-call, as well as any problems encountered;
    - Reporting the findings of the fire evacuation drills, particularly any problems and remedial measures to the school's H&S Committee;
    - Ensuring that all staff and pupils are briefed on the fire evacuation procedures at the start of every new academic year, and that new staff/pupils are briefed as part of their induction/when they join the school.
- People responsible for documenting and updating the school's:
    - Fire Safety / Fire Risk Management Policy
    - Emergency Evacuation Procedures
    - Fire Safety Risk Assessment Action Plan
- A person responsible for documenting 'Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans' (PEEPs) for staff and pupils that need them;
- People responsible for training staff, pupils and contractors working regularly on the premises, eg caterers, in fire safety procedures;
- People responsible for providing fire safety information to visitors, contractors and people who hire the school facilities;
- People responsible for regularly monitoring that fire safety systems and equipment are in place and working. This will include checking Escape routes, Fire doors, Alarm activated door closers/holders, Fire fighting equipment, Fire alarm systems, Emergency lighting and Fire signage.

All Staff

- All staff are required to undertake fire safety training as part of their induction.
- All staff have a legal responsibility under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work A (1974) to take reasonable care of themselves and all others who may be affected by their acts and/or omissions and to co-operate with their employer with regard to health & safety including fire safety matters.
- Regulation 14 of the Management of Health and Safety Regulations (1999) requires all employees to bring to the employer's attention any situation they are aware of which could

pose a risk to their health, safety or welfare or that of their colleagues e.g. a fire risk situation. All staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- Ignition sources and combustible materials are kept segregated as far as is practicable.
- Combustible rubbish and waste is well managed, not allowed to build up and carefully stored until it is disposed of.
- Dangerous substances such as highly flammable liquids (e.g. petrol, turpentine), highly flammable gases (e.g. LPG), oxidising chemicals (e.g. chlorine used in swimming pools) and potentially explosive substances (e.g. some fertilisers) should be avoided where possible. Where a safer alternative is not available the smallest amount necessary for the task should be used/stored on the premises
- Emergency routes and exits are kept clear of obstructions at all times and properly maintained to facilitate a quick and safe escape.
- Fire doors are not propped, wedged or hooked open except with a 'hold open' device which allows the door to close fully into the frame when the fire alarm is activated.
- All emergency exit doors are easily openable by the occupants' own unaided efforts at all times when the premises are occupied. Final exit doors are fitted with emergency exit type door furniture, easily operable from the inside without the aid of a key, but properly secure from the outside.
- Fire fighting equipment and emergency fire safety signage must be clearly visible and not obstructed at all times. Fire fighting equipment must only be used for their intended purpose, and never to prop doors open
- Good standards of housekeeping are maintained in their areas.

Fire Risk Assessment

A comprehensive fire risk assessment of the school premises is carried out by the Domestic Bursar, Senior Deputy Headmaster and a specialist fire safety consultant, every two years. This risk assessment has been formally recorded, is regularly reviewed in order to keep it up to date, and remedial actions are completed on a prioritised basis. For further information, please refer to the Fire Risk Assessment.

Fire Procedures - to ensure the safety of those legally on the school premises

Fire procedures are developed and reviewed each term by the Health and Safety Committee. Trustees monitor the policy and its implementation at the termly LAG meetings as well as at the meetings of the Full Board of Trustees.

The Health & Safety at Work Act imposes a duty on everyone at work:

- to take reasonable care for the health and safety of other persons who may be affected by their actions, or lack of them
- to cooperate with their employer to ensure that they comply with any action the employer takes to protect the health and safety of employees
- not to intentionally or recklessly interfere or misuse anything or procedure provided in the interest of health and safety.

All staff, including peripatetic staff and contractors who work regularly on the school's premises, e.g. caterers, wil be trained on the emergency evacuation procedures as part of their induction training. They must remind themselves of the procedures by reading the fire safety notices which are displayed in prominent locations around the school.

All pupils will be trained on the emergency evacuation procedures by their class teachers and the boarding staff on the first day of the academic year (or on their first day at school).

All visitors to the school will be made aware of the Fire Evacuation Procedure on arrival and where the assembly point is.

All occasional contractors and people who hire the school premises will be provided with information regarding emergency evacuation procedures as part of their contract or hire agreement.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

The school's emergency evacuation procedures should include:

- How people will be warned if there is a fire (what the alarm sounds like)
- What staff or pupils should do if they discover a fire
- How the premises should be evacuated
- The arrangements for the safe evacuation of people identified as being especially at risk, such as young children, those with disabilities, and visitors.
- Where people should assemble after they have left the premises
- Procedures for checking whether the premises has been fully evacuated and ensuring that no-one is allowed to enter or re-enter the buildings after the fire alarm has sounded until the 'all clear' has been given either by the Fire Rescue Services, the Head or the Heads representative.
- The identification of key escape routes
- Arrangements for fighting fires (only by people trained to do so, providing the fire is small and it is safe to do so.)
- The duties and identity of staff with specific responsibilities if there is a fire
- Any machines/appliances/processes/power supplies that need to be stopped or isolated if there is a fire
- Specific arrangements, if necessary, for high-fire-risk areas
- Emergency plan to be used by people/organisations letting part of the premises
- Contingency plans if the fire detection and warning systems are out of order
- How the fire and rescue service will be called and who will be responsible for doing this
- Procedures for meeting the fire and rescue service on their arrival, ensuring that they can access all buildings, they are given the access codes for doors secured with digi-locks, and are notified of any special risks, e.g. the location of highly flammable materials.
- What information and training staff and pupils need and the arrangements for ensuring that this is provided
- Post-incident plans for dealing with situations such as getting pupils/students away from the building; inclement weather and removing and securing personal belongings and valuables still in the building.

Disabled and non-ambulant pupils, staff and visitors

The school is responsible for making suitable arrangements for the safe evacuation of disabled and non-ambulant persons during any emergency. Appropriate Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) will be in place where necessary to aid the safe evacuation of disabled or non-ambulant persons.

Staff Training

- All staff receive fire safety training as part of their induction and by completing an e-learning module through the Educare Online Platform. This training is updated at least every two years. In addition relevant staff will receive practical training in using fire extinguishers, and all staff will receive regular updates/e-bulletins/reminders on good housekeeping etc which promote fire safety.
- The school operates a system of fire wardens with responsibility and oversight for different areas of the premises
- A log of all staff training is kept in the school office.

Provision and Maintenance

The school has a thorough system for the provision and maintenance of the following:

- emergency exits – on a daily basis ensuring escape routes and emergency exits are clear of any obstructions and free from fire safety hazards. Ensuring that external fire escapes are regularly checked and cleaned of debris
- fire doors – checked at least 6 monthly to ensure they are not damaged, fit/close correctly, will open easily. Alarm activated door closers/holders should be checked to ensure they activate when alarm sounds
- external steel fire escape staircases – should be inspected every 3 years by a competent structural engineer
- signage/notices - regular checks to ensure that signage is in place on all exit routes, by all fire alarm call points and by each extinguisher; that it is clear, not obstructed and in a good state of repair
- emergency lighting – each light tested for functionality on a monthly basis (any necessary repairs carried out as soon as possible) and a check/servicing every 6 months by a 'competent person'*. Annually a 3 hour battery discharge test should be completed
- fire alarm system / call points / detectors – a daily visual check of the alarm panel; call points tested weekly so that each individual call point is tested at least once a year and call points in higher risk areas are tested at least once a term, and then a full system test and servicing every 6 months by a 'competent person'
- fire fighting equipment, e.g. extinguishers and fire blankets - visual check each month to ensure in the right place, easily accessible and in good condition, and then an annual check and service /replacement by a 'competent person'

A log of all the above checks and servicing must be maintained and ready for inspection by the fire service or any other inspecting body.
* A 'competent person' is someone with the appropriate qualifications and training to carry out the role, for example ISO9001 certified or BAFE approved.

Fire Drills

- As a <u>minimum</u>, the school will arrange a practice emergency evacuations:
  (i) at least once a term within the first 4 weeks of term;
  (ii) in boarding houses, in addition to (i), on the first night of each term new pupils are admitted;
  (iii) in residential accommodation used during school trips, on the first night in the accommodation

(iv) in buildings with staff residential accommodation, in addition to (i), at least annually during the late evening / night time.

- Practices should happen occasionally without notice. They should take place at different times of the day, and include times when it might be difficult to account for everyone on the premises, e.g. before registration in the morning, so that procedures for these circumstances can be developed and rehearsed. Practices should be take place in such a way as not to alarm nervous and excitable children

- The target time for each building to be fully evacuated is **2.5 minutes** during the day time and **10 minutes** at night (when people are sleeping on the premises). It may take a couple of minutes more to complete the roll call. If an evacuation takes longer than the target time, further practices must be held until the time taken to evacuate is satisfactory.

- Every member of staff, pupil and visitor should be instructed to evacuate the building by the nearest exit route on hearing the alarm.

- When the alarm is activated, each member of staff who is in charge of pupils at the time is responsible for ensuring those pupils arrive safely at the assembly point.

- When the buildings have been evacuated a roll call should be initiated. Detailed local rules are needed to ensure that the roll call is as accurate as possible.

- The practice evacuations and weekly tests of fire alarm call points should be used to highlight any issues which need to be improved to ensure a quick and safe emergency evacuation. Remedial actions should be taken promptly. The results of the drills and tests and actions taken to improve procedures should be reported to the next Health & Safety Committee meeting.

- Records must be kept of the date and time of every practice evacuation, the time taken to clear the building and any issues noted / lessons learnt during the drill.

Fire Safety Information - What to do in the event of a fire

Calling the Fire Brigade

a) Any person **finding a fire** shall:

(i) immediately raise the alarm by breaking the nearest emergency break glass point. Verbally raise the alarm if the alarm does not immediately activate;

(ii) if possible without taking personal risks telephone (9)999 from the nearest telephone to call the Fire Rescue Services;

- When the operator answers, state:

"FIRE AT Cothill House, Nr Abingdon, OX13 6JL"

- Do not replace the receiver until the address has been repeated back to you.

(iii) if trained and if possible to do so without taking personal risks, tackle a small fire with the appliances provided;

(iv) Evacuate the building using the nearest available emergency exit and go to the assembly area.

(v) As soon as possible (after evacuating the building) report the location of the fire to the person in charge.

(vi) DO NOT re-enter the building until the 'all clear' has been given either by the Fire Rescue Services~~,~~ the Head, or the Heads representative.

b) Any person **hearing the fire alarm** shall:

(i) Leave the building quickly and calmly by the nearest available escape route, wherever possible assisting in evacuating pupils and visitors as you go,
(ii) Switch off equipment and close windows if it is safe to do so as you leave,
(iii) Close doors behind you if you are the last person leaving the room,
(iv) Walk calmly and without hesitation to your nearest fire exit,
(v) Assemble at the identified assembly point and wait for further instruction.

- DO NOT run or panic,
- DO NOT stop to collect any personal belongings,
- DO NOT use any lifts,
- DO NOT re-enter the building until the 'all clear' has been given either by the Fire Rescue Services~~,~~ the Head, or the Heads representative.
- Unless you are certain that the alarm is being tested, ALL instances of the fire alarm activating must be treated as if it were a real fire. NEVER presume it is a 'false' alarm.

Annex A

Fire Drill Report

Please circle the following general information:

Day Night Planned Unplanned Real fire Boarding Main School

Date:	
Time:	
Weather:	
Preparation:	
Time taken:	
Notes:	
Action taken	
Signed:	
Dated:	