



FIRE RISK POLICY

Reviewed and updated autumn 2024 | Next review autumn 2025

Introduction

This policy is written as an extension to the School's policy statement for Health and Safety and is endorsed by the Governors, Head and SMT.

Policy Statement

St Nicholas' School will ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that the risk from fire will be managed in compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 which replaced previous fire safety legislation.

Management of fire risks will be undertaken in such a way as to prevent injury or ill health to pupils, employees, visitors, contractors and others who may be affected by the activities of the School.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Aims

The aim of this policy and the School's fire procedures are to minimise the risk to life and to reduce injury by maintaining the physical fire safety integrity of the School in ensuring that staff, pupils and visitors do not add to the fire risk and through safe evacuation of our buildings if a fire breaks out. The fire safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are designed to help our community to respond calmly and effectively in the event that fire breaks out in one of our buildings.

This policy aims:

- To ensure safety of staff or anyone else legally on the premises.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation.
- To ensure effective liaison with the local fire authority where appropriate.
- To undertake suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments of the premises and activities within the premises.
- To identify and implement reasonably practicable control measures to control risks from fire.
- To conduct regular fire evacuation drills and testing of emergency equipment.
- To conduct regular fire safety inspections.

Responsibilities

- The Governors and the Head will ensure that the appropriate policies, procedures and risk assessments are in place and reviewed on a regular basis.
- The Governors, Head and SMT will ensure that these policies and procedures are implemented and adhered to on a sustainable basis.

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- Heads of Department will ensure that these policies and procedures are adhered to on a sustainable basis within their area of operational responsibility.
- Heads of Department will ensure that fire precautions, fire instructions and evacuation procedures resulting from risk assessment are implemented.
- The Health and Safety Co-ordinator will ensure that an appropriate system for carrying out fire risk assessments is in place and that every room has a clear set of fire instructions displayed on the wall.
- The Health and Safety Co-ordinator assisted by the Maintenance Manager will ensure that the fire risk assessments are carried out annually by an outside contractor. Where there are significant findings, the Head will relay this information to the appropriate staff and make sure that all structural recommendations are implemented. The fire risk assessment will be reviewed when there are structural changes or new activities which could potentially carry a fire risk.
- Regular safety checks will be carried out of fire safety equipment, including fire extinguishers, emergency lighting, alarms and electromagnetic doors. These are carried out by outside contractors.
- The Head, supported by the Health and Safety Coordinator and the Maintenance team, will ensure that regular inspections are carried out on all control measures and evacuation procedures to ensure their effectiveness. They will be responsible for maintaining emergency routes and exits, signs, notices, emergency lighting where required, fire detectors, alarms and extinguishers.
- The Health and Safety Co-ordinator, Maintenance Manager and School Caretaker have sufficient training, experience and knowledge to assist in taking preventative and protective measures (including firefighting and evacuation).
- Pupils, staff, visitors, contractors and others will ensure that they participate as requested in the fire risk assessment process and will ensure that they comply with the arrangements made to control risks from fire hazards. Staff have appropriate training in the use of fire extinguishers.

Assessments

- Assessments are made annually by an outside contractor.
- Records of the assessments will be held in the Science Prep Room. The assessments will be freely available to staff.

Arrangements for disabled staff, pupils or visitors

Any disabled staff, visitors or pupils will be individually assessed and shown the location of a safe refuge area. The curriculum support room in the main house is a designated safe refuge. A second refuge point will be room 23 in the senior teaching block.

In the event that a disabled child is in School, the teacher with that child at the time of the fire alarm will stay with them. They will ensure that the name of the disabled child, together with the location of their safe refuge point using a walkie talkie, is passed to a member of staff

who will be located outside the front of the building, awaiting the Emergency Services. The member of staff located at the front of the School will identify who they are using the walkie talkie. This information will be passed to the Head as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of the Head to ensure that this information is passed as soon as possible to the Fire and Emergency Service.

For disabled staff, pupils and visitors who are able to leave the building, there is a muster point on the grass between the main School building and Branksomewood. Anyone at this muster point will be seen by the member of the staff who is at the front of the building awaiting the Emergency Services.

Any staff who have a disability that might make evacuation slower or more difficult, are asked to draw up a **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)**, in conjunction with the Head and the Health and Safety Co-ordinator. This PEEP is held in their file and updated annually.

Arrangements for visitors and contractors

All visitors and contractors are required to sign the Visitors Book & Fire Register and read instructions on what to do in the event of a fire at Reception. They are issued with a visitor's badge which should be worn at all times that they are on School property. On the back of the badge are the instructions for what to do in the event of a fire.

When large numbers of visitors are at the School for open days, plays, concerts, exhibitions etc a brief announcement is made advising them of the location of the emergency exits that they should use in the event of the alarms sounding.

Training

Staff will be provided with regular training on the fire procedures. Members of staff who join the School after the training will be advised of the relevant fire procedures as part of their induction. Training will be repeated periodically where appropriate.

A number of staff have been trained as fire marshals. They are required to check their areas and close doors and windows, if appropriate. All staff have a responsibility to evacuate the building with the children in their care, calmly, safely and as quickly as possible.

Induction for new staff and pupils

All our new staff (teaching and non-teaching staff) and pupils are given a briefing on the School's emergency evacuation procedures. Duties expected of teachers, fire marshals and the fire officer are specified in the staff handbook.

Fire Practices

Fire evacuation drill will take place each half term and will be logged and timed. Pupils will practise assembling at the muster point on the sports field, Branksomewood or outside the Sports Hall/Music Lodge. An additional muster point is located on the grass to the side of the building (please see arrangements for disabled staff and visitors). The site has a linked alarm system.

Fire evacuation instructions are displayed in every room. Half termly fire drills ensure that pupils and staff can evacuate quickly (drills are held at different times of the School day).

This combined with a programme of inducting new staff and pupils with emergency escape procedures and the presence of trained members of staff helps to ensure that the School can be safely evacuated in the event of a fire.

Fire /evacuation bags are now prominently located at strategic areas around the School and can be used and taken outside by any member of staff.

Contacting the emergency services

If the alarm goes off for any other reason, staff should contact the Head or a member of SMT if and when it is safe to do so. They will then make a decision to determine whether to contact the Emergency Services or whether the matter can be dealt with by the Maintenance Team/Caretaker.

However, any member of staff who observes a fire or has reasonable cause to be concerned about fire or another serious emergency/incident is able to contact the Emergency Services.

Fire Prevention Measures

We have the following fire prevention measures in place:

Escape Routes and Emergency Exits

- Fire notices and evacuation signs
- Fires extinguishers (of the appropriate type), smoke/heat detectors. They can be manually activated by breaking a glass panel and are automatically activated when smoke/heat builds up.
- All stairs, passages and emergency exits are illuminated by emergency lighting
- The master panel for the alarm system is located in the School Office and shows the location of a fire.
- Alarms sound in all parts of the building.

Practical Measures

- Keeping fire routes and exits clear at all times.
- Testing all fire alarms weekly (and recording all tests and defects). This is the responsibility of the Maintenance Officer/Caretaker, who also arranges for approved contractor to carry out monthly checks of fire doors, and emergency lights, six monthly professional check on fire detection and warning equipment and an annual service of alarms, smoke detectors, emergency lights, sprinklers, smoke control systems and fire extinguishers.
- Records of all tests are kept in the Maintenance Officer's office.

Dangerous substances

- Flammable rubbish is currently stored in metal bins in a compound away from the School building and is collected regularly by an outside contractor. Combustible materials used in teaching, catering, maintenance, grounds and caretaking are stored in flame proof cupboards.
- Flammable liquids used in science are stored in flame proof cupboards. The bulk of the flammable liquids are kept in a locked outside store.

A complete list of chemicals kept on the School premises is kept at the School office in a pack available for the Fire Brigade in the event of a fire.

Prevention of Arson

The School is in a rural location and therefore the likelihood of arson is very low. The School takes all reasonable precautions to minimise the likelihood of arson. This includes:

- On site security provided by alarms and close circuit cameras
- Supervision of pupils
- Close down procedures for School site
- Ensuring that waste bins are emptied daily
- Location of waste and recycling containers located away from the School buildings
- Security lighting on footpaths, entrances and on building facades, where appropriate.