

WHOLE SCHOOL FIRE SAFETY POLICY

1 Introduction

Our priority is to minimise the risk to life and to reduce injury, by maintaining the physical fire safety of the School, by ensuring that staff, students and visitors do not add to the fire risk, and through safe evacuation of our buildings if a fire breaks out. This Policy, together with procedures and risk assessments at New Hall School, is designed to help our community to respond calmly and effectively if fire breaks out in one of our buildings.

2 Roles and responsibilities

During term time and during the School day, until 6.00pm, the Deputy Principal/Heads of Preparatory/Pre-Prep Divisions act as designated Fire Officers in the event of an emergency evacuation of the Senior/Preparatory Divisions. The Head of Nursery Division will act as the Designated Fire Officer for the Nursery.

If the Deputy Principal/Heads of Preparatory/Pre-Prep Divisions is absent, the Vice Principals fulfil this role in their absence. If the Head of Nursery Division is absent, the Nursery Manager fulfils this role in their absence. Out of School hours (before 8.00am and after 6.00pm), the Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer acts as the designated Fire Officer, with the Night Porter and Heads of Boarding fulfilling the role in their absence. Out of term time, this role may be fulfilled by other resident staff members.

The designated Fire Officer is responsible for ensuring safe and complete evacuation.

The Deputy Head of Operations and H&S Officer is responsible for ensuring that:

- the *Fire Safety Policy* is kept under regular review by Governors and the Senior Leadership & Management Team ("SLMT")
- the *Fire Safety Policy* is promulgated to the entire School community
- everyone in the School (including visitors and contractors) is given clear instructions on where they should go in the event of fire
- records are kept of the fire induction training given to new staff and students
- fire risk assessments are reviewed and updated regularly
- procedures and arrangements for emergency evacuation are regularly tested
- fire prevention measures are meticulously followed
- fire procedures and risk assessments are reviewed on each occasion that a building is altered, extended or rebuilt, or when new buildings are acquired
- records are kept of all fire evacuation practices (including overnight practice evacuations from boarding accommodation)
- certificates for the installation and maintenance of fire-fighting systems and equipment are kept

3 Emergency evacuation notices

The following notice (*extract from Staff Handbook Section 8*) is displayed in all rooms, corridors and stairwells.

4 Action in the event of fire

Fire practice follows the same action

SEQUENCE: (1) ALARM (2) EVACUATION (3) ASSEMBLY (4) REGISTRATION

- (1) **ALARM:** Anyone (student or staff) discovering an outbreak of fire should, without hesitation, break the nearest fire alarm call point and exit the building.
- (2) **EVACUATION:** Immediately the ALARM sounds, make your way silently via the nearest exit route to your ASSEMBLY POINT. Remember to close windows and doors. The last person through should ensure that the fire doors are closed.
- (3) **ASSEMBLY:** Students and their tutors assemble in designated areas:
Senior Divisions
8.15am-4.15pm: Beyond the Ha-ha
4.15pm-6.00pm: Day students will line up beyond the Ha-ha
4.15pm-8.15am: Boarders will line up at the agreed boarding muster points
Staff who are not tutors assemble in designated areas in front of the Ha-ha

Swimming Pool – Swimming Pool car park

Preparatory Divisions – The Cedar Plot

Nursery – On grass area beside Tennis Changing Rooms, and in the Sports Hall during inclement weather, provided that the Sports Hall has been given the all-clear.

- (4) **REGISTRATION:**
8.15am-4.15pm: Students will be registered by lining up alphabetically in tutor/class groups. The tutor is to take the register and remain with tutees. Heads of Year will collect registers and report to the Fire Officer.

Outside the times above: The house staff (for boarders) or staff on duty leading activities or supervising study (for day students) are responsible for registration. Any available tutors are to assist.

Nursery children will be grouped in class groups and the register taken by the Senior Practitioner for the session in each room.

Staff: Staff report via fire marshals, with final reports made to the Fire Officer.

Re-Entry to buildings: Except for a search for missing persons, no-one is allowed to re-enter a building to retrieve their clothing, books etc. until permission is given by the Fire Service, or, in the case of a fire drill, the Fire Officer.

5.1 Senior Divisions

At least twice in the Michaelmas Term (within the first fortnight after the start of the term and after half term) and once in the other terms, the School will hold a fire practice for day students and a separate nighttime practice for boarders. The timing of the practice will be known only to the Fire Officer (Deputy Principal), the Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer and the person to whom sounding the alarm has been delegated. It is the responsibility of the Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer to organise the fire practice and direct operations.

5.1.1 Records

A record will be kept by the Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer of the date and time of every fire practice and the exact time taken to clear the buildings. This data will be available to the Principal and members of the Health & Safety Committee.

5.1.2 Time allowance

The maximum time allowed to complete the fire practice is five minutes. If the School is not cleared within this time, allowing for special difficulties peculiar to the occasion, the fire practice will be considered inadequate and further practices held until a satisfactory standard is achieved.

5.1.3 Warnings and system tests

The warning in case of fire will be given by a siren, which is not used for other purposes and can be easily recognised by staff and pupils and heard in all parts of the buildings. Whilst the fire alarm system is zoned, all Senior School buildings are to be evacuated in the event of the alarm sounding.

The fire alarm system will be tested weekly, and records of these tests will be retained by the Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer.

5.1.4 Finding a fire

Any person (staff or student) finding a fire, must immediately raise the alarm so that the evacuation procedures may commence. If the Senior Divisions fire alarm sounds when Reception is staffed, the Reception Administrator will contact the Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer who will call the fire brigade (if necessary) after checking the location of the fire. If the fire alarm sounds outside normal working hours, Resident Staff/Heads of Boarding will summon the Fire Service. Staff will undertake duties specified by the Fire Evacuation Procedures and 'sweepers' for Fire Alerts.

5.1.5 In the event of a fire

In the event of a fire the designated Fire Officer or Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer will meet the Fire Service on arrival and inform the officers of the source of the fire.

Arrangements will be made locally for all appliances using gas or electricity to be switched off and laboratory experiments rendered safe, as time allows.

Under no circumstances during the fire practice or actual fire emergency should any unauthorised person enter the School premises. Except for search for missing

persons, no-one is allowed to re-enter a building to try to retrieve possessions (e.g. clothing or books) until permission is given by the Fire Service or, in the case of a Fire Practice, the Deputy Principal/Fire Officer/Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer.

5.1.6 *Roll Call*

Teachers in charge of classes will be responsible for ensuring that their whole class is evacuated safely along the designated route to the roll call area. In the event of an actual fire any subsequent movement will be directed by the Fire Service.

The roll call will be based on tutor group registers, signing out books and visitor books which will be brought to the roll call area by Reception staff.

The Reception Administrator will check, using the visitor sign-in portal, that all persons not being part of the everyday population of the School have vacated the building and have gathered at the assembly point.

5.1.7 *Directions and alternative routes*

Directions for the evacuation of students and others (the Fire Evacuation Notice) are displayed in a prominent place in all rooms. If the nearest evacuation route is blocked, the students will be instructed to leave by the nearest safe alternative exit.

Alternative routes will be practised in simulated situations during fire practices. The first fire practice of the School year will not require the use of alternative routes.

5.1.8 *Fire Exit*

Fire exits should not under any circumstances be locked during School hours or obstructed in any way. Designated fire exits leading off the premises are provided with an emergency door release. The Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer will make arrangements for these to be checked regularly.

The notice *Fire Evacuation Procedures* will be published at the start of each year. Copies of the notice will be circulated to all staff and displayed prominently in each classroom.

5.2 **Preparatory Divisions**

At least twice in the Michaelmas Term (within the first fortnight of term and again after half term) and once in the other terms, a fire practice is held. The timing of the practice will be known only to the Fire Officers (Heads of Preparatory Divisions) and the Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer. It is the responsibility of the Heads of Preparatory Divisions to organise the fire practice and direct operations.

5.2.1 *Records*

A record will be kept by the Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer of the date and time of every fire practice and the exact time taken to clear the buildings. This data will be available to the Principal and members of the Health & Safety Committee.

5.2.2 *Time allowance*

The maximum time allowed to complete the fire practice is three minutes. If the Preparatory Divisions are not cleared within this time, allowing for special

difficulties peculiar to the occasion, the fire practice will be considered inadequate and further practices held until a satisfactory standard is achieved.

5.2.3 *Warnings and system tests*

The warning in case of fire will be given by a siren, which is not used for other purposes and can be easily recognised by staff and pupils and heard in all parts of the buildings.

The fire alarm system will be tested weekly, and records of these tests will be retained by the Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer.

5.2.4 *Finding a fire*

Any person finding a fire must immediately raise the alarm so that the evacuation procedures may commence. Staff will undertake duties specified by the Fire Evacuation Procedures.

5.2.5 *In the event of a fire*

In the event of a fire the designated Fire Officer or Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer will meet the Fire Service on arrival and inform the officers of the source of the fire.

Arrangements will be made locally for all appliances using gas or electricity to be switched off and experiments rendered safe, as time allows.

Under no circumstances during the fire practice or actual fire emergency should any unauthorised person enter the School premises. Except for a search for missing persons, no-one is allowed to re-enter a building to try to retrieve possessions (e.g. clothing or books) until permission is given by the Fire Service or in the case of a fire practice, the Heads of Preparatory Divisions.

5.2.6 *Roll Call*

Teachers in charge of classes will be responsible for ensuring that their whole class is evacuated safely along the designated route to the roll call area. In the event of an actual fire any subsequent movement will be designated by the Fire Service.

The roll call will be based on class registers, the signing out book and the visitors sign-in portal, which will be brought to the roll call area by the Preparatory Divisions' Reception Administrator.

The Preparatory Divisions' Reception Administrator will check that all persons, who are not part of the everyday population of the Preparatory Divisions, have vacated the building and have gathered at the Assembly Point.

5.2.7 *Directions and alternative routes*

Directions for the evacuation of pupils and others (the Fire Evacuation Notice) are displayed in a prominent place in all rooms. If the nominated evacuation route is blocked, the pupils will be instructed to leave by the nearest safe alternative exit.

Alternative routes will be practised in simulated situations during fire practices. The first fire practice of the School year will not require the use of alternative routes.

5.2.8 *Fire Exit doors*

Fire exit doors should not under any circumstances be locked during School hours or obstructed in any way. Designated fire doors leading off the premises are provided with an emergency door release. The Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer will make arrangements for these to be checked regularly.

The Fire Evacuation Procedures will be published at the start of each year.

5.3 **Nursery**

A fire practice is held each month during the year. The timing of the practice will be known only to the Fire Officers (Head of Nursery Division) and the Health & Safety Officer. It is the responsibility of the Head of Nursery Division to organise the fire practice and direct operations.

5.3.1 *Records*

A record will be kept by the Health & Safety Officer of the date and time of every fire practice and the exact time taken to clear the buildings. This data will be available to the Principal and members of the Health & Safety Committee.

5.3.2 *Time Allowance*

The maximum time allowed to complete the fire practice is three minutes. If the Nursery is not cleared within this time, allowing for special difficulties peculiar to the occasion, the fire practice will be considered inadequate and further practices held until a satisfactory standard is achieved.

5.3.3 *Warnings and system tests*

The warning in case of fire will be given by a siren, which is not used for other purposes and can be easily recognised by staff and pupils and heard in all parts of the buildings.

The fire alarm system will be tested weekly, and records of these tests will be retained by the Health & Safety Officer.

5.3.4 *Finding a fire*

Any person finding a fire must immediately raise the alarm so that the evacuation procedures may commence. Staff will undertake duties specified by the Fire Evacuation Procedures.

5.3.5 *In the event of a fire*

In the event of a fire the designated Fire Officer or Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer will meet the Fire Service on arrival and inform the officers of the source of the fire.

Arrangements will be made locally for all appliances using electricity to be switched off.

Under no circumstances during the fire practice or actual fire emergency should any unauthorised person enter the Nursery premises. Except for a search for missing persons, no one is allowed to re-enter a building to try to retrieve possessions (e.g. clothing or books) until permission is given by the Fire Service or in the case of a fire practice, the Nursery Manager.

5.3.6 *Roll Call*

All practitioners in charge of a room will be responsible for ensuring that the whole class is evacuated safely along the designated route to the roll call area. In the event of an actual fire any subsequent movement will be designated by the Fire Service.

The roll call will be based on class registers, the signing out book and the visitors sign-in portal, which will be brought to the roll call area by designated staff from the Nursery Reception.

The Nursery Administrator will check that all persons, who are not part of the everyday population of the Nursery, have vacated the building and have gathered at the Assembly Point.

5.3.7 *Directions and alternative routes*

Directions for the evacuation of pupils and others (the Fire Evacuation Notice) are displayed in a prominent place in all rooms. If the nominated evacuation route is blocked, the pupils will be instructed to leave by the nearest safe alternative exit.

Alternative routes will be practised in simulated situations during fire practices. The first fire practice of the School year will not require the use of alternative routes.

5.3.8 *Fire Exit doors*

Fire exit doors should not under any circumstances be locked during School hours or obstructed in any way. Designated fire doors leading off the premises are provided with an emergency door release. The Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer will make arrangements for these to be checked regularly.

The Fire Evacuation Procedures will be published at the start of each year.

5.4 **Briefing new staff and students**

All new staff (teaching and non-teaching) and all new students are given a briefing on the School's emergency evacuation procedures on their first day at School. They are shown where the emergency exits and escape routes are located and where they should go on hearing the fire alarm. Fire action notices are displayed on the walls of all rooms and in all corridors. All new staff should know that they must activate the fire alarm if they see or smell a fire.

The safe evacuation of everyone is the priority. Protecting property comes second. No one should attempt to fight a fire at the expense of their own, or anyone else's safety. Fire awareness INSET training is given, including the basic use of fire extinguishers. Regular refresher training is also offered. No one should attempt to use a fire extinguisher before they have been trained in its use.

5.5 **Contacting the Fire Service**

5.5.1 *Senior Divisions*

If the Senior Divisions fire alarm sounds when Main School Reception is staffed, Reception staff will contact the Fire Service if a fire is confirmed. They will then bring the Reception internal radio to the Fire Officer at the Assembly Point. If the Fire Officer is not there, it will be handed to the senior person present. The Reception Administrator will distribute the fire registers for completion. If the Swimming Pool fire alarm sounds the Swimming staff will evacuate the pool and

will contact the Fire Service. The most senior staff member or deputy will act as Fire Officer.

5.5.2 Preparatory Divisions

If the Preparatory Divisions fire alarm sounds when Preparatory Reception is staffed, Reception staff will contact the Fire Service if a fire is confirmed, and the Heads of Preparatory Divisions will co-ordinate the evacuation.

5.5.3 Nursery Division

If the Nursery fire alarm sounds when Nursery Reception is staffed, Reception staff will contact the Fire Service if a fire is confirmed, and the Nursery Manager will co-ordinate the evacuation.

If the fire alarm sounds outside of normal working hours or during holiday periods, the designated Fire Officer on site will contact:

- the on-call member of the Estate team (07595 099 574)
- the duty SLMT staff member if a fire is confirmed

Any staff on site must contact the designated Fire Officer to check that s/he is aware of the alarm on the emergency number (07850 306301).

The priority for students and staff is evacuation.

5.6 Visitors and contractors

All visitors and contractors are required to sign in at Reception, where they are issued with a visitor's badge, which should always be worn when they are on School property. They are made aware of the emergency evacuation notice (see above) and are advised of the assembly point.

When large numbers of visitors are at the School for 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.

5.7 Disabled staff, students or visitors

A special one-to-one induction on fire safety for disabled students and their carers and for disabled members of staff or visitors is arranged where necessary and an Individual Evacuation Plan is prepared.

5.8 Responsibilities of teaching staff

Teaching staff are responsible for escorting their students safely out of the building in silence and in an orderly fashion. They are responsible for conducting a head count on arrival at the assembly point, and for ensuring that the name of anyone who cannot be accounted for (and, if possible, their likely location) is passed immediately to the Fire Officer. It is the responsibility of the Fire Officer to ensure that this information is passed to the fire and emergency services as soon as they arrive.

On no account should anyone return to a burning building.

5.9 Responsibilities of Fire Marshals

We have trained Fire Marshals in every building and boarding house. All Fire Marshals are "competent persons" who have been trained to provide "safety assistance" in the event of a fire. Fire Marshals receive regular refresher training.

5.10 Fire practices

We hold a fire practice at least twice in the Michaelmas Term, and once in the other terms, at each of the Senior and Preparatory Divisions. The School holds a fire practice for day students and a separate early morning/nighttime practice for boarding students. This, combined with a programme of inducting new staff and students with emergency escape procedures and the presence of trained Fire Marshals in every building, helps to ensure that the School can be safely evacuated in the event of a fire. The procedure for the fire practice is that the alarm is sounded by a member of the Estate staff at a time agreed with the Fire Officer), the timing for the evacuation is monitored by the member of Estate staff involved in the practice. They also arrange for one fire exit to be temporarily disabled for this drill. When the fire practice has finished the estate staff record the practice evacuation time in the fire logbook which is located below the main alarm panel. The Nursery Division will aim to practice a fire evacuation at least three times per term where practical.

6 Fire prevention measures

The following fire prevention measures are in place at the School:

6.1 Escape routes and emergency exits

- There are at least two escape routes from every part of all main buildings.
- Fire notices and evacuation signs are displayed in every room, corridor and stairwell.
- Fire extinguishers (of the appropriate type) and smoke/heat detectors are located in every building in accordance with the recommendations of our professional advisors. They can be manually activated by breaking a glass panel, and are automatically activated when smoke/heat builds up. Smoke/heat detection and control systems are in place throughout the School.
- All stairs, passages and emergency exits are illuminated by emergency lighting.
- All fire escape routes are protected by designated fire doors. Where these incorporate automatic door closures the holdback devices are released by the fire alarms.
- The master panel for the alarm system is located in the corridor next to the office of the Principal's PA with a repeater panel located in the Porters' Office, which shows the location of a fire. It is fitted with an uninterrupted power supply (UPS). Nimbus Notify will send a notification to Fire Officers' mobile phones.
- Alarms sound in all parts of the buildings. In the following areas they are supplemented by visual alarms (flashing beacons):
 - Food preparation areas
 - Laundry areas
 - Swimming Pool
 - Art & Design workshop
 - Other noisy environments
- Fire routes and exits are kept clear at all times. Paxton door locks are released in the morning, unlocking buildings, and Porters are responsible for checking that escape routes are not obstructed. A designated member of the maintenance team is responsible for checking that the emergency lights work and for reporting defects.
- Fire alarms are tested weekly (and all tests and defects recorded). This is the responsibility of the Estate Manager.

- The Estate Manager arranges for an ISO9001 certified BAFE approved contractor to carry out:
- Six monthly professional check on fire detection and warning equipment.
- An annual service of alarms, smoke detectors, emergency lights and fire extinguishers and hoses.
- The Estate Manager is responsible quarterly checks of fire doors and automatic door closures.
- Records of all tests are kept in the Estate Manager's office.
- Displays in corridors, theatre scenery, stage curtains and props are treated with fire retardant spray.

6.2 Electrical safety

- The School has current electrical test certificates for all its buildings. It uses NICEIC qualified electrical engineers to inspect and maintain its electrical installations, all of which are RCB protected and meet the requirements of BS7671 IEE wiring regulations.
- Regular portable appliance testing takes place by an external contractor. A member of the maintenance team has also been trained in this role.
- Records of all tests are kept in the Estate Manager's office.
- The Catering Manager checks that all kitchen equipment is switched off at the end of the day.

6.3 Lightning protection

- All lightning protection and earthing conforms to BS 6651-1999. It is tested annually by a specialist contractor. Records of all tests are kept in the Estate Manager's office.

6.4 Gas safety

- All gas appliances (boilers, kitchen equipment etc) are regularly maintained and serviced by Gas Safe registered engineers. Records of all tests are kept in the Estate Manager's office.
- All kitchen equipment is switched off at the end of service.
- All laboratories are checked daily to ensure that the central gas supply is turned off.

6.5 Safe storage

- Staff must ensure that flammable materials used in teaching or maintenance are locked in purpose-made, flame-proof containers at the end of every day.

6.6 Rubbish and combustible material

- Flammable rubbish is stored away from buildings in the rubbish compound.
- Combustible materials used in teaching, catering, maintenance, grounds and caretaking are stored in flame proof cupboards.

7 Letting or hiring the School
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Our standard contractual terms that we use for letting and hiring the School cover fire safety and specifies that the hirer should read and ensure that they understand the School's fire safety procedures as displayed in each room. The Estate Manager or Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer ensures that a fire drill is carried out in the boarding houses and main school

building for all new delegates on residential courses at the School. The Estate Manager, or Deputy Head of Operations & H&S Officer, or Events Manager and/or their deputy is always on call when the School is let or hired for an outside function or event.

8 Fire risk assessment

The School's Fire Risk Assessment meets the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO). Specifically identifies:

- the hazard
- the people at risk
- the measures to evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from the risk
- the measures needed to record, plan, inform, instruct and train people in risk reduction or removal
- the arrangements for reviewing the assessment

New Hall School has a professional fire risk assessment, which is updated annually and if significant changes are made to the interior of buildings, or if new buildings are bought or added.

Copies of New Hall School's fire risk assessment are held by the Estate Manager. Any comments or suggestions for improvement are always welcome. All Heads of Department should ensure that they and their department read the sections that are relevant to them.