



# THE ORATORY

## THE ORATORY SCHOOL (OS)

### Fire Safety Policy

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# Fire Safety Policy

## 1.1 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.

## 1.2 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.

## 1.3 Guidance

1.3.1 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.

1.3.2 The Bursar has responsibility for maintaining and ensuring the local implementation of the School fire procedures; for making and maintaining a 'fire map' of the School premises, showing places of high risk and the precautions put in place by the School. Copies of these maps are brought to the attention of all employees and others who may be affected by:-

- (a) posting a copy of the fire map on notice boards;
- (b) bringing the fire map to the attention of all employees, contractors and visitors, etc during all training and site induction sessions;
- (c) providing at least one trained Fire Marshal in every building and boarding house.

## 1.4 Fire Risk Assessment

1.4.1 All of the School premises will be subject to a fire risk assessment. This is conducted by external consultants and the person undertaking the assessment liaises closely with Heads of Department.

1.4.2 The fire risk assessment will be reviewed and / or updated every year or in the event of significant changes to the buildings or their usage.

1.4.3 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.

1.4.4 Fire hazards will be eliminated or the risk reduced to the minimum level practicable by implementing control measures and safe systems of work.

- 1.4.5 Regular weekly assessments will be made by staff, including the Fire Marshals / Estates Manager / Security to ensure that the walkways are kept clear of obstruction and tripping hazards.

## **1.5 Fire Detection**

Each of the School premises has adequate means of fire detection. The detection equipment will be maintained and regularly checked by competent persons.

## **1.6 Fire Alarm**

- 1.6.1 Each of the School premises has an adequate means of raising the alarm in the event of fire.
- 1.6.2 The fire alarm system in each location is to be tested weekly with the date and time made known. This will be managed by the Estates Manager. The alarm will be activated using a different activator point each week, where this is practicable.
- 1.6.3 The fire alarm system will be serviced annually by a competent contractor (e.g. ISO 9001 / BAFE)
- 1.6.4 Records of these tests and servicing are maintained by the Maintenance team on Smartlog.

## **1.7 Fire Fighting Equipment**

- 1.7.1 The fire risk assessment will determine the minimum level of fire fighting equipment which must be present in the School premises.
- 1.7.2 Fire extinguishers, fire hoses, wet and dry risers and/or other fire suppressant systems will be serviced by a competent contractor annually and the service date recorded on each extinguisher/hose reel/system.

## **1.8 Emergency Lighting**

- 1.8.1 Emergency lighting is installed in the school where lighting would continue to be required in the event of a mains power failure, eg stairs, passageways and emergency exits.
- 1.8.2 Battery operated emergency lighting will be tested monthly (charge & illumination) and an annual full discharge test by a competent contractor
- 1.8.4 Records of testing and servicing of emergency lights will be maintained by the Maintenance team on Smartlog.

## **1.9 Emergency Procedures**

- 1.9.1 Written emergency procedures are provided in Appendix 3. These written instructions include procedures in the event of a fire and where required, procedures in the event of a bomb warning.
- 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. This may be different from the Fire evacuation point depending on location. An example notice is included at Appendix 1 to this guidance
- 1.9.3 There must be adequate means of escape for all occupants of the school premises. These means of escape will be clearly signed with pictograms.
- 1.9.4 The means of escape will be regularly inspected by the Fire Marshals to ensure they are kept clear of obstructions and tripping hazards.
- 1.9.5 Where disabled persons use the premises, specific arrangements will be made to ensure they can escape in an emergency. For staff and pupils there will be a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) in place, visitors will be catered for by the Bursar / Maintenance Engineer when notified. Example arrangements are included at Appendix 2 to this guidance.
- 1.9.6 Teaching staff are responsible for escorting their pupils 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 staff member in charge. It is the responsibility of the staff member in charge to ensure that this information is passed to the Fire and Emergency service as soon as they arrive.
- 1.9.7 **SUMMONING THE FIRE BRIGADE:** The School Office is manned between [8.00am and 5.30pm] during weekdays [throughout the year,] [in term-time and between 9.15am and 4.30pm during half terms and holiday] apart from the Christmas and Easter closedowns. The master panel that shows the location of all the alarm call points on the networked alarm system in the school buildings is located in the school office. The School Office is always given advance warning of fire practices. If the alarm goes off for any other reason, the staff have standing instructions to summon the Fire and Emergency Service at once. One of the Caretakers or members of the Security Staff is on duty or on call [24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year, including public holidays]. He/She has standing instructions to summon the Fire and Emergency Services if the alarms go off outside the hours that the School Office is staffed, (unless warned of a planned fire practice).
- 1.9.8 Fire drills will be held every term at the School. We also practice a night-time evacuation of the boarding houses every term.

- 1.9.9 Written records of fire / evacuation drills will be maintained on Smartlog by the Maintenance Department.

## **1.10 Fire Training**

- 1.10.1 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) action to take in the event of a bomb alert.
- 1.10.2 Pupils will be informed of exits and escape routes
- 1.10.3 Fire Marshals will be trained in:-  
(a) emergency evacuation procedures;  
(b) use of fire extinguishers; emergency procedures; and  
(c) how to spot fire hazards.  
(d) the provision of "safety assistance" in the event of a fire.

Fire Marshals will receive regular annual refresher training.

- 1.10.4 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 an announcement will be made at the beginning of the event regarding evacuation arrangements.

## **1.11 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, Estates Manager and Heads of Department will:-

- 1.11.1 Comply at all times with relevant regulations on the storage, transportation, handling and disposal of flammable materials (including weapons and ammunition, hazardous substances etc);
- 1.11.2 Regularly inspect all the areas where there are potential sources of ignition and ensure that no flammable materials are stored close by;
- 1.11.3 Maintain awareness through training and refresher training of the preventative steps that need to be taken;

- 1.11.4 Consult regularly with the Fire marshals;
- 1.11.5 Include fire prevention and evacuation procedures during the induction process with all new starters; and
- 1.11.6 Pay close attention to the activities of contractors as appropriate, particularly during maintenance and building works.

## 1.12 Fire Records

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

## 1.13 Boarding and Staff Accommodation

Boarding and staff accommodation **may** not be exempt from the provisions of the Fire Safety Act 2021 as it applies to the structure, external walls (including cladding and balconies) and individual flat entrance doors between domestic premises and the common parts of a multi-occupied residential building. Depending on the nature of the accommodation the requirements may apply if it is deemed a building with multiple private dwellings by virtue of containing staff and boarding accommodation or multiples of either. In the event that the Act applies all the above related policy guidance and requirements will apply to accommodation in addition to the other areas of the school.

## Legal Requirement & Education Standards

### References:

A: Handbook for the Inspection of Independent Schools: Section B Part 3: The Regulatory Requirements of Independent Schools, March 2009 version. ([www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)).

B. Part II of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005, ([www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk))

C. Fire Safety Act 2021

D. "Fire Risk Assessment," Ecclesiastical Risk Services Ltd guidance note ([www.ecclesiastical.com](http://www.ecclesiastical.com))

E. "Fire Safety" Chapter O of the Bursars' Guide by Owen David Risk Management Ltd ([www.owendavidsafety.net](http://www.owendavidsafety.net))

F. "Fire Safety: In new and existing school buildings" DfE Guidance, ([www.gov.uk/df](http://www.gov.uk/df))

G. "Fire Safety Risk Assessment for Educational Premises" and "Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Sleeping Accommodation," DCLG publications ([www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk))

H: Education Funding Agency "Fire risk during school maintenance or building works" (Nov 2016)

## Appendix 1: Emergency Evacuation Notice

All new staff and pupils, all contractors and visitors are shown the following notice:

1. If you discover a fire, break the glass in the nearest alarm point to set off the alarm. Leave the building by the nearest exit.
2. If you are responsible for a class, make them leave quietly with you. No one should talk or run. Make your way to the assembly point at [                      ].
3. If you are teaching a class, take your register with you. Do not take anything else, and do not allow the pupils to take anything. Shut doors and windows behind you.
4. The School Office or the duty Caretaker/ night Security Officer will summon the Emergency Services if the alarm sounds.
5. If you have a disabled pupil in your class, you should [move him or her downstairs, using one of the special evacuation chairs] OR [direct him or her, together with his or her carer, to wait for the Fire and Emergency Service in the nearest designated safe refuge].
6. Take the register of your class as soon as you reach the assembly point.
7. Report anyone who is waiting to be evacuated from a designated refuge, or who is missing immediately to the staff member in charge who will inform the Fire Brigade. On no account should anyone return to any building until given permission by the Fire and Emergency Services.
8. Remain at the assembly point with your pupils until the all clear is given.

## Appendix 2: Disabled Staff, Pupils or Visitors

We have a special one-to-one induction on fire safety for disabled pupils and their carers and for disabled members of staff and occupiers of school accommodation.

Certain staff are also trained in the use of the purpose-built lightweight stairway evacuation chair which is specially designed for moving disabled people down stairs in an emergency. One of these chairs is located on the upper landing of the Morey staircase in the school, because disabled lifts cannot be used in a fire.

## Appendix 3: Emergency procedures in event of a fire

The Oratory School is made up of a number of separate buildings, each having its own fire detection and alarm system. This means that when the fire alarm is activated in one building, it alone is evacuated. It is important for all staff and pupils alike know the fire procedures and react in a responsible manner on hearing the fire alarm.

**The safe and effective response to a fire is based on a critical sequence of events.**

This procedure details what should happen during the different stages in response to a fire in the school.

**Alarm operation**

Anyone discovering an outbreak of fire must, without hesitation, sound the alarm by operating the nearest fire alarm call point and if safe to do so attempt to fight the fire.

**Calling the fire service**

All outbreaks of fire or any suspected fire, however small, should be reported immediately to the fire service by the quickest means available. Our current fire alarms are connected to a call monitoring centre who in the first instance when a fire alarm is activated call the school reception to ascertain if the alarm is real, if no answer they will call the fire brigade. Just because this is in place **you can still call the fire brigade.**

**Evacuation generic instructions.**

On hearing the fire alarm, staff and pupils must leave the building in single file and in a calm, orderly manner.

The person in charge of each class must indicate the exit route to be used and everyone must move quickly and calmly to the predetermined assembly point.

Specific arrangements must be made for pupils with physical or mental disabilities to ensure that they are assisted during evacuation. (PEEP)

No running is to be permitted. Running can lead to panic.

On staircases everyone must descend in single file. Overtaking of classes or individuals must not be permitted.

Lifts must not be used.

Anyone who is not in class when the fire alarm sounds must go immediately to the assembly point.

No one must be allowed to re-enter the building until told to do so by the fire service in attendance, or, in the case of a fire evacuation drill the senior person in charge.

Fire marshals are to sweep their building and report to the person in charge that "as far as they are aware their building is clear".

**On discovering a fire**

Close the door on the fire and activate the fire alarm by breaking the glass in the nearest call point.



Call the Fire Brigade by dialling 999.

If it is a small fire, and you feel confident to do so, tackle the fire using the nearest appropriate fire extinguisher.

If you cannot tackle the fire safely, report immediately to the main fire control panel to inform the senior member of staff on duty of the location of the fire and then evacuate the building by the nearest fire exit.

Delegate a person to await the arrival of the Fire Brigade at the top of the front drive and direct them to the location of the fire.

If a pupil discovers a fire, he should close the door on it and report the fire to the nearest member of staff.

### **On hearing the fire alarm : daytime procedure**

Evacuate the building quickly and quietly using the nearest fire exit.

Do not stop to collect personal belongings.

Classes should stay together under the responsibility of their teacher, who will then confirm their presence at the assembly point.

Go to the assembly point of the building you are evacuating.

Other staff should also proceed to the assembly point.

The senior member of staff on duty should check the fire panel to see where the alarm has been activated and then go to that location to establish whether it is a false alarm.

If no member of staff is in the house, pupils should alert the nearest available member of staff.

If it is established as a false alarm, the alarm may be silenced and the building re-entered. Do not reset the panel unless instructed to do so. Do not re-enter the building until instructed to do so.

If it is not a false alarm, proceed as for discovering a fire.

### **On hearing the fire alarm: nighttime procedures**

Evacuate the building by the nearest fire exit, ensuring that others en route are also leaving.

Take some warm clothing with you.

Proceed in an orderly fashion to the fire assembly point where the senior pupil will take the roll call. If someone is missing, report this immediately to the Fire Brigade on their arrival. Do not re-enter the building to look for them.

The senior member of House staff on duty will check the fire panel to ascertain where the alarm has been activated.

He will then check that location to establish whether it is a false alarm.

If it is a false alarm, the panel can be silenced and the building re-entered. Do not re-enter the building until told to do so.

If it is not a false alarm, proceed as for discovering a fire.

### **Evacuation**

On hearing the fire alarm, staff and pupils must leave the building in single file and in a calm, orderly manner.

The person in charge of each class must indicate the exit route to be used and everyone must be directed to a predetermined assembly point.

Specific arrangements must be made for pupils with physical or mental disabilities to ensure that they are assisted during evacuation. (PEEP)

No running is to be permitted. Running can lead to panic.

On staircases everyone must descend in single file. Overtaking of classes or individuals must not be permitted.

Lifts must not be used.

Anyone who is not in class when the fire alarm sounds must go immediately to the assembly point.

No one must be allowed to re-enter the building until told to do so by the fire service in attendance, or, in the case of a fire evacuation drill the senior person in charge.

### **Fire wardens**

Fire Wardens take responsibility for the evacuation of the building, starting the evacuation and searching the building to ensure all staff members & pupils have safely evacuated. Fire wardens will also be the last people to leave the building, as they need to check that no one is left within the building.

Fire Wardens are to sweep their building/floor and report to the senior member of staff that "as far as they are aware their building or floor is clear".

### **Assembly points.**

An area outside each school building is designated as an assembly point. They are clearly marked and easily identified by anyone who may be on the school premises. They are also far enough away from the school premises to give protection from the heat and smoke given off by a fire and are located in positions that do not put pupils and staff at risk by emergency vehicles responding to the incident.

Initial assembly points for each location are below however senior members of staff must be prepared to move an assembly point dependant on wind direction in case of smoke inhalation and heat from fire.

**History/CCF/Cube/Theatre** - The field behind the firing range at least 100m away from any building.

**Morey** - The Playing field south of the building (Reading-side)

**Tomlinson** - The Playing field south of the building (Reading-side)

**Wootten/Offices** - The stone Trig point centre of grassed area.

**Refectory/Kitchen/Chapel** - The stone trig point centre of grassed area.

**St John/Music Department** - The stone trig point centre of grassed area.

**Fitzalan** - The Chapel Path by Fitzalan (East - towards the Sports Centre)

**Norris** - The Chapel Path by Norris (West - towards Faber House)

**Sports Centre**- The golf course

**Health Centre** - The golf course

**St Philip House** - The lawn behind St Philip House library

### **Roll call**

Each class teacher should account for their pupils and report to the head of department who should once satisfied will report to the senior person present, who will have overall responsibility to ensure that a roll call is conducted in the event of a fire alarm. They should use the following instructions:

- Immediately after classes have assembled at the assembly point, a roll call or count must be made to check that no-one is still inside.
- Any visitors or contractors on the premises at that time must be included.
- The count at the assembly point must be checked with the attendance registers and visitors book to verify that everyone is out of the building.
- Attendance registers and visitors' books should be held at a central point and must be brought to the assembly point when the alarm sounds.
- Each teacher must report to the senior person present in charge of the evacuation to verify that everyone in their charge is accounted for or to inform him/her of the number of people missing.

### **Meeting the fire service**

The Estate manager/senior person present or nominated person will identify themselves to the fire service on their arrival. This will allow the fire officer to decide the necessary actions to be carried out by the fire service.

Typical information the fire service will want to know:

- Is everyone accounted for?
- If anyone is missing: how many? What is their usual location? Where were they last seen?
- Where is the fire? What is on fire? (It may not be apparent)
- Are there any hazardous substances involved in the fire or stored in the building (e.g. chemicals, solvents, radioactive substances, liquified petroleum gas or acetylene cylinders)?