



Fire Risk Prevention Policy & Procedures

Policy number	BS030 / ISI 12a-b
Applies to	Whole School
Endorsed by	CMT
Responsibility	Director of Finance & Operations
Date reviewed	April 2021
Next review	April 2022

Fire Prevention & Safety Policy

Fire remains as one of the single most serious risks facing the School. Bedford School needs little by way of a reminder given the experience of the Great Fire in 1979 when the Main School was gutted by fire which had been started by an arsonist.

This policy sets out the approach that Bedford School (the School) has to assessing and securing fire safety and is based on the following legislation and guidance.

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999
- ISI Guidelines for schools
- Harpur Trust Health & Safety Policy

The school's priority is to minimise risk to life and to ensure that there are adequate fire prevention methods in place and clear organisational arrangements in case of fire. The primary function of the Schools total fire safety management, documented through a range of policies, plans and procedures, is to ensure that general fire precautions are in place to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of staff, pupils and visitors. The secondary function is to preserve the Schools buildings, contents and other resources.

The School campus extends to over 60 acres on six sites and School departments, sports fields, conservation land and boarding houses are dispersed around those sites. The School has adopted a fire safety management strategy which is based around individual buildings. Each building or cluster of buildings will have a Fire Management Strategy which includes a Fire Risk Assessment and a Fire Emergency Plan appropriate to that building or cluster of buildings.

Fire safety in each boarding house is dealt with separately and remains the responsibility of the resident Boarding House Master. Each house has a Fire Management Strategy. A summary of these responsibilities is referred to under the procedures.

The policy will be reviewed annually or on any changes in relevant legislation.

Fire Prevention & Safety Procedures

Context

The primary function of the Schools total fire safety management, documented through a range of policies, plans and procedures, is to ensure that general fire precautions are in place to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of staff, pupils and visitors. General fire precautions include:

- Measures to reduce fire risk and also the spread of fire
- Effective means of escape
- Firefighting equipment

- Fire detection and warning systems
- Measures to mitigate the effects of fire.
- Instruction and training

The designated Responsible Person is the Director of Finance & Operations.

The designated Competent Person is the Director of Finance & Operations who is assisted by the Deputy Bursar.

Fire Management Strategy

Documentation

Comprehensive packs have been prepared for each building including Boarding Houses. Copies are held in the relevant department(s) as well as in the Bursary. The following information is included in each one:

- Fire Risk Assessment - This is reviewed annually
- Fire Emergency Plan - This sets out the procedure to be adopted should a fire break out in the specific building
- General Procedures for Raising the Alarm
- Action Plan - Recommended improvements or identified hazards.

There is a designated person responsible for implementing the plan in each building which is usually the Head of Department or Boarding House Master. If more than one department is involved, there will be a separate designated person with responsibility for all departments involved.

The document refers to Heads of Department but in this document this includes any person who manages an area or department within the school such as a Head of Department, a member of CMT or SLT, Boarding House Master, Day House Master, Head of Faculty, Sports Centre Manager, Lead Nurse, Catering Manager or Director of IT.

Personnel Definitions

Fire Marshal – A Fire Marshal is usually the Head of Department or other line manager as above who is primarily responsible for fire prevention in the buildings and other areas which they manage. They must regularly undertake fire risk assessments and check things such as stairwells, doors and access routes for obstruction, ensure fire extinguishers are in place and that access doors are operating correctly.

Fire Warden – A Fire Warden is responsible during an actual fire or fire drill. Their role is to ensure everyone evacuates the buildings and that fire doors are shut, gas switched off etc. Every staff member is required to assume the role of Fire Warden when they are in a building and are not responsible for escorting students or groups of visitors out to the assembly point.

Being a Fire Marshal does not prevent you from being a Fire Warden.

Fire Procedures – Raising the Alarm

The Alarm

The warning, in case of fire, shall be given by a prolonged bell which is a continuous siren, bell or hand cranked alarm. This is normally the electronic fire alarm as used for fire alarm drills but if this is out of action, it may be activation by way of a manual alarm. All alarms can be easily recognised by staff and pupils and can be heard clearly in all parts of the building.

Any person discovering a fire should immediately raise the alarm (as below) so that evacuation procedures may commence. Members of staff should only attempt to fight a fire once evacuation procedures have been started and should **only do so** if they are not putting themselves or others in any danger and they are trained in the proper use of fire-fighting equipment. Members of staff should not attempt to fight a fire on their own; another member of staff must be present. **On no account should students fight or help to fight, the fire themselves.**

Upon discovering a fire, the most senior person present is to:

- Operate the nearest fire alarm call point immediately. See Figure 1 for an example of an alarm call point. This will raise the alarm to initiate evacuation in the building and alert the fire brigade to attend through our monitoring system.
- Having raised the alarm, instruct the Bell Room – (dial 0 from a phone in a safe location) to call the Fire Brigade to provide further details on the alarm. If the Bell Room is closed, call the Fire Brigade direct – dial “999” – and give the full name and address of the building and other pertinent details.
- If appropriate, a responsible student should raise the alarm by alerting others and should seek assistance from a member of staff as quickly as possible.



Figure 1: Typical Fire Alarm Call Point

On Hearing the Alarm

Upon hearing the fire alarm, teachers or fire wardens are to implement evacuation procedures.

- Switch off electrical or gas appliances, close windows and shut all doors (Do not lock them!)
- Leave the building by the nearest fire exit
- Teachers should remain with their class and have them stay together and exit promptly
- Go to the designated Assembly Point for that building. Keep student groups together and do not run. Advise students not to use mobile phones during the emergency.
- Lifts must not be used when the fire alarm is sounded.

Evacuation

During Lessons

All teachers in charge of a class will be responsible for seeing that the whole class is evacuated safely along the designated evacuation route to the defined Assembly Point for that building. Members of staff have a duty to guide visitors in their classroom to the nearest assembly point with the class.

During Lesson Change

Evacuation procedures will be based on the next class. That is, the teacher of the upcoming class will initiate evacuation procedures as if a lesson had already started.

During Breaks

If a fire alarm sounds during a break, any teachers in the Dining Hall or other rooms automatically become responsible for the evacuation of the building and guiding all students and visitors to the closest assembly point.

For staff and students in the playground or on the sports fields, teaching staff are responsible for guiding any students and visitors to the nearest assembly point or ensuring they assemble away from the buildings. For example, if you are on the main sports field, you would assemble near the pavilion or chapel.

Staff not teaching

Whether teaching or support staff, staff who are not in charge of a class of students or group of visitors become Fire Wardens by default. This means you must check the building you are in to ensure no person remains in the building especially checking toilets and locker areas, ensure all doors are closed (not locked) and, if applicable all gas mains and electrical appliances are turned off.

Follow-on instructions

Once an evacuation has been completed subsequent movement will be decided by the Head Master, Vice Master, Prep School Headmaster or Director of Finance & Operations. By default this role automatically goes to the most senior person on site at the time.

Arrangements for Visitors & Contractors

The Fire Warden in a building or surrounding area is responsible for ensuring that any visitors and contractors have safely evacuated the building/area and instructing them to report to the person in charge at the assembly point.

It is School policy, in the event of a fire alarm, not to leave disabled pupils in the building but to see that they are teamed up with other boys and escorted out. Lifts must not be used when the fire alarm is sounded.

Fire Training

- All teachers will receive formal fire awareness training every two years, usually as part of the INSET programme
- All new staff will receive basic instructions on what to do in the event of a fire as part of their induction
- Regular training on the use of fire extinguishers is arranged for boarding house staff as well as other members of staff.
- Fire drills take place termly in all buildings, arranged centrally by the Bursary, with details reported back to the Bursar and reviewed by the School H & S Committee each term.
- Boarding houses carry out one fire drill at night per term.

Fire Prevention

Escape Routes and Emergency Exits

There are generally at least two escape routes from every part of all 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 accordance with the recommendations of our professional advisers. All stairs, passages and emergency exits are illuminated by emergency lighting.

Alarms

Most buildings are equipped with heat and smoke detection alarm systems which are automatically activated when smoke/heat builds up. They can also be manually activated by breaking a glass panel on the front of a fire alarm call point. These are tested weekly by the School maintenance team. Those buildings which are not alarmed are equipped with claxon hooters or hand bells for raising the alarm.

Emergency Lighting

Emergency Lighting is tested monthly by a competent engineer.

Fire Marshals

Each building has a nominated Fire Marshal, whose duties includes maintaining oversight of fire prevention and fire warning measures through undertaking both formal and informal fire risk assessments on a regular as well as ad hoc basis. . These include overseeing the maintenance of clear fire escape routes and exits on a routine basis. The duties of a Fire Marshall are set below.

Routine Protective Checks

Heads of Departments are responsible for ensuring that the following measures remain effective:

- Escape routes and exits are kept free of obstructions
- Appropriate signage is in place

- Notices are displayed to assist with evacuation
- Fire doors are not blocked or held open
- Fire Extinguishers are appropriately placed and not tampered with
- All staff and pupils are familiar with and rehearsed in:
 - Principal and alternative escape routes
 - Location of Fire Alarm call buttons

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.
- Annual portable appliance testing takes place
- Records of all tests are kept in the Maintenance Department.

Lightning Protection

All lightning protection and earthing conforms to BS EN 62305 (2006) or equivalent. It is tested annually by a specialist contractor. Records of all tests are kept by the Maintenance Department.

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 Maintenance Department.
- 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.
- Emergency cut off valves are in position in each laboratory.

Safe Storage of Flammable and Combustible Materials

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

Combustible materials used in teaching, catering, maintenance, grounds and caretaking are stored away from likely areas of ignition if not in flameproof cupboards or containers

Chemicals and medicines held in the medical centre are securely locked away

Weapons and ammunition used by the CCF are kept in a securely locked, fire resistant store that is located within a permanently locked room, the door of which is fitted with an alarm and is fire resistant.

Flammable rubbish is stored away from buildings in a secure rubbish compound.

Boarding Houses

The Housemaster is responsible for all aspects of fire safety in the Boarding House. This includes:

- A Fire Risk Assessment is to be prepared, reviewed half yearly and held in the House for ease of reference. It is to be made available to the Fire Officer during any inspection.
- Ensure that all fire doors are kept closed at night, this task being undertaken by themselves, another member of staff or delegated to a pupil under supervision.
- Make arrangements for night-time fire practices at the agreed frequency and ensure they are duly logged.
- Ensure that all pupils and sleeping in domestic staff in the house are fully familiar with all fire instructions and that they are rehearsed. This should include alternative fire escape routes.
- Regularly monitor all the dormitories as to correct use of authorised electrical equipment. Equipment brought in to the House must be of a regular standard of manufacture and maintenance. All portable appliances will be tested early in the academic year by an outside contractor.
- Ensure that all means of escape in case of fire are kept free and unobstructed at all times.
- Consult the Head Porter if there are any problems with the servicing of fire extinguishers.
- Ensure that the appropriate fire notices are up-to-date and clearly displayed.

Letting or Hiring of School Facilities

Standard contractual terms that we use for letting and hiring the School cover fire safety and specify that the hirer should certify that he/she has read and understood the School's fire safety policies and procedures.

A Duty Manager is always on call when the School is let or hired for an outside function or event. Fire Marshals are also on duty for large functions. Children attending any residential courses must be rehearsed in fire drills during the first day of their course.