



ORCHARD HOUSE
SCHOOL

FIRE POLICY and PROCEDURE

September 2025

FIRE POLICY STATEMENT

Introduction

Orchard House School actively seeks to create and maintain a working environment safe from the risks of fire, and to comply with legislation with specific relevance to fire safety including the following:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO) is the primary legislation for fire safety. The Fire Safety Order applies not only to persons at work, but to all persons lawfully on the premises and those that may be affected by fire on the premises. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into effect on 01st October 2006 and replaced all pre-existing fire safety legislation with a risk-based regime. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to all operational / non-operational buildings and schools.

The responsibility for the safety of the occupants and those who might be affected by fire rests with the defined 'Responsible Person', the Head of Orchard House School. The Head will implement the Fire Safety Policy through the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Health and Safety Committee.

What to do in case of a fire

1. In order that children and staff should be able rapidly to evacuate the school's premises in the event of fire, it is a requirement that the school should hold a minimum of one fire drill a term. The procedure for the fire practice and how to respond to a real fire is set out in this policy document.
2. **On discovering a fire**, the first key point for any member of staff is this:

ACTIVATE THE FIRE ALARM at the nearest break-glass call point. Do not attempt to extinguish the fire, except in a case where common sense dictates that this will be both easy and also safe. Do not worry about calling 999, the school's fire alarm does this automatically and the school office will also take care of summoning the fire brigade.

3. Every crisis needs someone known as the Incident Controller to control it and to command the response. The school's Head is normally the Incident Controller at any crisis and for both a Fire Practice and for a real fire. In

the absence of the Head, the School Secretary acts as the Incident Controller in the case of fire.

4. In the event of a real fire, it should be noted that staff are not encouraged to fight it and must not do so if they are in charge of children. Rather, their primary duty is to ensure the complete evacuation of the building by the children, their colleagues and any visitors in the shortest time possible. (However, if a staff member is not in charge of children and believes that he or she can tackle a very small incident with appropriate fire fighting equipment to hand, he or she may do so: but no members of staff should ever put themselves or any others at risk.)
5. **The standard for evacuation for the school is that the buildings should be evacuated and checked as clear within two minutes from the alarm sounding, with the school register for the building concerned called and marked clear by the Head or the senior teacher or secretary (as the Incident Controller) by the end of the third minute.**
6. Fire practices will not normally be forewarned to the staff other than for the first practice of the academic year, which must take place within ten days of the return of children to school in any September.
7. All members of staff must be made aware of this policy. They must also be briefed by the Head on their exit routes and assembly points.
8. It is school policy that all staff should be trained in fire procedures and fire-fighting annually. In addition, all new staff, whether full or part time, must be shown how to operate a fire extinguisher.

SECTION A - HOW TO HOLD A FIRE PRACTICE

1. The secret to holding an effective and efficient fire practice is to plan it carefully. Choose the day on which you wish to hold the practice and ensure, in terms of the children's attendance at the school, that it is appropriate. Do not hold fire practices at the same time each time: rather, vary the times of fire practices so that the staff and children become used to responding quickly whatever should be the circumstances.
3. Notify the school secretary that you propose to have a fire practice and tell her the precise time when you propose to set off the alarms.
4. Ensure five minutes before setting off the alarms that you or the school secretary telephones the Central Station (tel: 0844 879 1703) and, by giving the relevant password for the school/building, tells the operator that there will be a fire practice at HH.MM hours and that as a consequence the automatic signal from the school is to be disregarded until Central Station receives a further telephone call from the school to put the school's fire alarm auto-response system back on alert.
5. Always choose a different call point from which to set off the alarm: taking your stopwatch with you, go to the call point you have selected and set off the alarm by unlocking it. **Start your stopwatch.**
6. Observe the evacuation of the building carefully, noting blockages in circulation, any confusion, lack of urgency, or unnecessary talking by children or staff.
7. Note when the forms have reached their assembly points (which must be more than 50 metres from the buildings) and in particular whether this was less than two minutes from when the alarm was first sounded.
8. Turn off the alarm system's sounders by cancelling the alarm.
9. Move to your Central Control Point and await confirmation by each form teacher that his or her form is complete. Await confirmation by each Floor Fire Marshal that his or her floor(s) have been fully evacuated (usually the building is signalled clear by the handing to you of all the fire marshall batons). Note when you have confirmation that the building is clear and all people have been accounted for and ensure this time was less than three minutes from when the alarm was first sounded.
10. Telephone the Central Station to confirm it received the automatic fire alarm signal, at what time, and to put the system back on alert. Check this has been done and that the fire signal was received: this is important.
11. Allow everyone to return to the school buildings.
12. At a staff meeting ask all members of staff whether they had encountered any problems in the course of the evacuation and whether they have any suggestions that may result in a faster and more efficient evacuation on the next occasion.
13. Write up the Fire Log immediately after the fire practice. Note the call point used to trigger the sounding of the alarm and all the timings. If the evacuation time standards were not met, ensure that another fire practice is held within **seven** working days.

SECTION B - INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCHOOL SECRETARIES

1. If a fire practice is to be held, the Head will inform you moments before the practice. A member of the facilities team will telephone the Central Station to alert it that a practice is to be held and that the automated fire signal is to be ignored for a short time. To avoid a false alarm to the Fire Brigade, it is essential that this call be made using the correct password or automated data entry code.
2. Upon hearing the fire alarm, immediately pick up your SMK master key, the contact lists, the Staff Lists, a mobile phone and the laminated plans of the building. (The contact lists, Staff Lists and laminated plans must be kept in one folder marked "FIRE", readily accessible in the school office at all times.)
3. If you have not been informed that there is a fire practice, **assume it is a fire: immediately upon hearing the fire alarm sounding telephone 999 and summon the fire brigade. Do NOT wait to find out whether or not it is a false alarm.**
4. Whether it be a practice or not, make a brief paging announcement over the telephone system twice as follows: **"Fire Fire Fire. The fire alarm has sounded: please evacuate the building quickly and quietly."**
Taking with you a mobile phone, the SMK key and the "FIRE" file (containing the the laminated plans of the building, class contact lists, the Staff Lists), and the signing-in device for checking that nobody is trapped within the building; join the Head at the Central Control Point as quickly as possible.
5. Assist the Head in learning from the fire marshals that the buildings are clear of all people and from the form teachers that the registers have been called and any absentees reconciled and accounted for.
6. In the event of a real fire rather than a practice, hand the Head the laminated building plans so that the Head may give them to the Fire Brigade upon its arrival. You may need to give the Brigade Commander your SMK key to allow the brigade to enter the service cupboards and turn off all power (similarly for the same reason the commander may need the key to the gas cupboard to shut off all gas). If there is a real fire, at the Head's direction move the all forms away from their assembly points to a more distant holding zone designated by the Head.
7. If the Head has decided that normal school is unlikely to be resumed, using the Green Lists initiate the internal cascade phone system (see "Crisis Policy") to ask parents to collect their children. (Keep the telephone tree within the school)
8. When the Head is satisfied that the fire practice has been completed, he or she will ask you or a member of the facilities team to call the Central Station to ask it to put the building back on risk. **Be sure to do this (or that the Head has done it) and make sure Central Station received an alarm signal.**
9. Note any points you wish to bring to the attention of the Head to improve subsequent fire evacuations.

SECTION C - INSTRUCTIONS FOR FORM TEACHING STAFF

1. The objective of a fire practice is to ensure that the children respond effectively and rapidly – and without any excitement or panic whatsoever – to the requirement to evacuate the school.
2. Upon hearing the alarm, **assume it is a fire** rather than a drill. Immediately ensure the children under your control line up in the classroom quickly and quietly.
3. Gather and take with you your form's laminated daily register, which should show by exception those children who are absent from the school that day.
4. Ensure if possible while the children are lining up that doors and any open windows are shut.
5. Lead your form from the building as quickly and quietly as possible (but without any running) to your designated assembly point. The teacher should **lead** (this is because, if a pupil were allowed to lead, he or she might panic and begin to run - the teacher may not be able to stop them and in addition, depending upon the circumstances of the fire, the teacher may need to change the exit route to be used).
6. If there is more than one teacher or adult with a group, one should lead and the other should bring up the rear. If there is only one member of staff, a child should be paired to accompany the end child and the teacher must check that the pair has exited safely, thus guaranteeing that the phalanx is fully and safely evacuated.
7. Fire extinguishers in the school are there to provide a means of securing the route of escape by damping down fire in order to exit, rather than to put out any fire: the Fire Brigade will do that, a teacher's job is to save life, not property.
8. Smoke is the greatest danger of all and thick smoke can kill in a very short time. If you cannot see an exit because of thick smoke, do not try to move through it.
9. If a corridor is filled with smoke and you cannot get through or out by another way, close the door firmly, stand by the window and wait for the Fire Brigade to rescue you
10. Whenever the fire bells sound, the Fire Drill **must** be executed, even if it seems an obvious error or malfunction, or even if the bell stops ringing during the evacuation of the building. Children must never be given the impression that a fire alarm may be ignored.
11. For the purpose of this section, any visitors (whether children or adults) who happen to be in your classroom when the alarm sounds are to be treated as part of your form. You are responsible for evacuating them as well as the children.
12. With the teacher leading, the class **must walk in silence** to its designated assembly point (see appendix relevant for the school) and line up form by form.
13. At the assembly point, call your register. Each form's teacher must take a roll call and report any children not present to the Head or the deputy

- in charge. Await the return to you of any children either absent with any peripatetic staff or who have been visiting the cloakrooms.
14. If the roll is reconciled the class teacher should raise his or her hand or in some other effective manner signal to the Incident Commander that all children are present or have been accounted for. In the alternative, report quickly and efficiently the names of any child or persons who are missing.
 15. If the alarm sounds outside lesson time, the form teacher will attempt to call the roll. If the form teacher is not present, the teacher in charge must substitute and, if bereft of a laminated sheet or other register sheet, obtain such a sheet from the school secretary who will be standing by the Incident Commander at the muster point.
 16. Children having individual lessons should rejoin their forms as quickly as is feasible commensurate with orderliness and safety and will then be included in the roll call for the form concerned
 17. Await further instructions.
 18. Do not under any circumstances leave the children in your form unsupervised – rather, use others to take your messages for you.
 19. Special care is needed with any disabled child: the full time carer is responsible for evacuating that child without impeding the overall speed of the whole school's evacuation. (For any disabled child, refer at the start of that child's education and thereafter at the beginning of each subsequent academic year to the Head for instruction and/or training.)
 20. No one may re-enter the building until permission to do so is granted by the Incident Commander.

SECTION D - INSTRUCTIONS FOR PERIPATETIC STAFF OR STAFF TUTORING A CHILD OR SMALL GROUP

1. Upon hearing the fire alarm, immediately ensure the child or children under your control line up quickly and quietly.
2. Escort the child(ren) outside the building as quickly as possible and take him (them) to the assembly point of his (their) form.
3. Hand the child/children into the care and control of their form teacher(s) and wait with them for further instructions.
4. The form teacher may ask you to go to the Head (as the Incident Controller) to confirm that his or her form is complete with the roll reconciled.
5. Other form teachers may also ask you to report the status of their forms to the Incident Controller – please help them with this task.

OTHER STAFF

SECTION E - INSTRUCTIONS FOR STAFF ACTING AS FIRE MARSHALS

1. You will have been allocated a designated area to check and it is your job quickly to ensure that it has been evacuated. This is a very important check and it is very likely that you will also have been trained to pick up and use a Fire Marshal's Baton, to hand to the Incident Commander to signify the area you have been allocated has been checked and is clear of people.
2. Check your area rapidly: this should not take longer than twenty seconds.
3. If you find children (or adults) order them **immediately** to evacuate the building – in the case of children, take charge of them and return them to their form teacher at the earliest opportunity (probably at the relevant form assembly point).
4. Evacuate the building quickly and calmly, and as quietly as possible.
5. Confirm in person by handing over your designated baton or by messenger to the Incident Controller (Head) at the Central Control Point that your area is clear.
6. If it has not been possible to check your area, **YOU MUST INFORM THE INCIDENT COMMANDER** that this check has failed – and in this circumstance, **do not hand** the Incident Commander the baton.

SECTION F - INSTRUCTIONS FOR KITCHEN STAFF

1. Upon hearing the fire alarm, immediately shut down all cooking operations and check that the emergency gas shut-off valve has closed off automatically.
2. Turn off all extractor vents and if possible shut the windows but do not delay unduly.
3. Evacuate the building, ensuring the kitchen door is closed behind you.
4. Check all kitchen staff are clear of the building and report to the Head that the kitchen area is clear.
5. After the fire practice and upon returning to the kitchen ensure **ALL** burner and oven controls are set to 'Off'. You may then re-open the main gas valve.
6. Re-light the ranges and ovens normally, restart the convector ovens.

SECTION G - INSTRUCTIONS WHEN FINDING A FIRE AND OTHER NOTES

On discovering a fire, the first key point for any member of staff is this:

ACTIVATE THE FIRE ALARM at the nearest break-glass call point. Do not attempt to extinguish the fire, except in a case where common-sense dictates that this will be both easy and also safe. Do not worry about calling 999, the school's fire alarm does this automatically and the school office will also take care of summoning the fire brigade.

Staff leaving the school during the school day

If any member of staff needs to leave the premises during the school day he or she must inform the deputy Head or senior person normally in that building and also the school office. He or she must sign out of the Fire Register in reception area, so that, in the event of a fire, the Fire Service should not have to put themselves at risk looking for a missing person in the building who is in fact elsewhere.

Pupils leaving the school during the school day

Any pupil who leaves during the school day after registration e.g. for a dental appointment must be sent to the office to be signed out. If they return during the school day this must also be noted. Within the classroom, it is best practice to mark such absentees as absent upon the laminated class list.

Other than for a normal recurring timetabled activity, if a whole class or part of a class leaves during the school day this must also be notified to the school office.

These measures should ensure that there is an accurate record of all staff and children present in the building.

MAINTENANCE OF FIRE SYSTEMS etc.

SECTION H - FIRE ALARM MAINTENANCE - LEE SECURITY

1. Lee Security (London) Limited on tel. no. 0844 800 3411 is responsible for the maintenance of the intruder and fire alarm systems at the school.
2. Lee Security is contracted to attend the school twice each academic year (early September immediately before the children return and over the Spring half term) for routine preventative maintenance of the intruder alarm and the Redcare signalling equipment. The fire alarm systems are serviced and checked four times a year.
3. In the event of any problems with the fire detection and alarm systems, Lee Security should be contacted immediately by telephone and the conversation confirmed by e-mail to sales@leesecurity.com. A copy of the e-mail should be filed in the Fire Log.
4. Whenever Lee Security attends the engineer will write up and leave a copy of his service call. This must be filed in the school's file for Lee Security, with a copy filed in the Fire Log.

SECTION J - FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT – Flameguard Fire & Security Limited

1. Flameguard Fire and Security is responsible for maintaining the firefighting equipment at all schools. The contact number is 01787 827090. Flameguard visit once a year, usually in late August just in advance of the start of the new academic year. A copy of the technician's visit reports should be sent to the bursary and a further copy put on the building's fire file.
2. Flameguard is also responsible for the supply of fire signs etc. and for the replacement of any Fire Log once it is full.
3. All staff will receive fire training at the start of the new academic year or when they join the school. After fire training each year (usually in September), Flameguard will take away the training extinguishers depleted in the training sessions. The Head has a attended training on "How to be an effective Fire Marshall Level 2.
4. When any fire-fighting equipment is serviced at any of the school's premises, the service call sheet detailing the maintenance must be recorded in the Fire Log.

SECTION K – ROUTINE SCHOOL MAINTENANCE

The Head is responsible for ensuring that he or she or the maintenance staff follow these regular and routine maintenance procedures:

1. In order to ensure all alarm bells are functioning, the fire alarm system's test routine should be used at exactly the same time each week to sound all bells for no more than 5 – 10 seconds. Staff should immediately report to the school secretary the failure of any sounder they are normally used to hearing. This weekly sounder test must be written up in the Fire Log. Use a different call point each week when setting off the test. Note in the Fire Log the reference number of the call point used.
2. Both before the start of each term and also over each half term, all emergency luminaires must be tested for 30 minutes duration by the caretaker or maintenance staff. This test must be written up identifying each luminaire in the Fire Log.
3. Each summer holiday, the emergency luminaries must be tested by the Maintenance Team to full discharge and a note made of their duration to failure. Again, this test must be recorded for each luminaire in the Fire Log.
4. The Heads and the deputy Heads are also responsible for ensuring that escape corridors, fire doors and fire exits are kept clear of obstructions at all times. Heads, deputy Heads and SLT members must be vigilant at all times to ensure that their colleagues are helping to keep fire exit routes clear of clutter: a ruthless approach must be adopted towards clearing away by way of example to gym kit, bags, and musical instruments etc. where these might be causing any obstruction to a fire route. Similarly, Heads should ensure there is never any 3-D flammable artwork displayed on any escape corridor or stairs unless this artwork is behind a purpose-approved fire-protection plastic screen.

THE FIRE LOG

SECTION L – MAINTAINING THE FIRE LOG

1. At and after each fire practice, the Head must record in the Fire Log the following:
 - a. Day, date and time of alarm
 - b. Weather conditions
 - c. Call point used
 - d. Time at which Central Station instructed to ignore automatic fire alarm signal and by whom so instructed
 - e. Time at which automatic fire signal received at Central Station
 - f. Time at which Central Station instructed to put school back on risk and by whom so instructed
 - g. Time taken to evacuate building
 - h. Time at which building called 'clear' by Fire Marshals
 - i. Time at which school's full roll called, reconciled and completed
 - j. Any inefficiencies or matters which warrant attention
2. An example of a fire practice control sheet to capture these items is attached at Appendix A.
3. The Fire Log should also record all service visits for the alarm system and fire fighting equipment.
4. The routine tests of sounders (weekly) and the termly test of the emergency luminaires should also be recorded in the Fire Log.

SECTION M - FIRE RISK EVALUATION

1. The fire risk evaluation for the school will be updated annually by the designated trained school secretary. This update will usually be prepared each September and will then be reviewed by the Managing Governor. Changes to risk or risks to be eliminated are to be noted in a different colour and, when resolved, signed off and dated by the school secretary.
2. A copy of the school's current fire risk evaluation is to be kept in the school office in the Fire Log.

Policy to be approved by the governors

APPENDIX I - ORCHARD HOUSE SCHOOL

DESIGNATED PEOPLE AND OTHER ITEMS

Note 1

The Head is Henrietta Adams

The Deputy Heads are: Crystal Waldmeyer and Ciaran McAuley

The school secretaries, all of whom hold current First Aid certificates, are: Pippa Woodroffe, Emma Down, Carol D'Praser and Audrey Zeitoun

Mrs Mercedes Remuinan holds a First Aid at Work certificate and is the designated person at 2 Rupert Road

The lead Premises Manager is Slawek Faryniarz. In the absence of Slawek Faryniarz, Robert Gumieniak (Maintenance) or Mr Az Mohamed will provide cover.

Note 2

The members of the Health & Safety Committee are:

Henrietta Adams

Emma Down

Ursula Happawana

Slawek Faryniarz

Rosamund Brown

Note 3

The designated appointed First Aider is Pippa Woodroffe.

Note 4

First Aid boxes are located in the following locations at all school sites:

- The school office
- The kitchens
- All classrooms
- Outside playgrounds
- PE shed (3 boxes)
- The Study

The appointed First Aider checks and maintains these boxes. If any supplies are used out of a box, the appointed First Aider as shown above must be informed.

Note 5

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is Ciaran McAuley

Note 6

The school's Radiation Protection Supervisor (RPS) is Mr Kevin Chung.

Note 7

The staff have all received training in the use of a defibrillator.

Note 8

In the event of a sick child requiring the use of one of the school's folding sick beds, a member of the SLT will assume responsibility for that pupil until he or she is collected. The Head or deputy Head will decide where best in the building to accommodate the child, ensuring appropriate supervision and adequate and appropriate access to both a lavatory and a sink.