



# **FIRE POLICY**

## **RGS The Grange**

**July 2023**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Fire is dangerous and can destroy lives and property, and the school has procedures and systems in place to protect both, in the event of a fire. The safety of pupils, staff and visitors to the school must always be the priority and it is therefore vital that all staff know what to do if a fire is detected or when the fire alarm is activated.

This policy outlines the controls the school has put into place to manage the fire hazards that are present in the premises, as well as provide an overview of the protective measures in place that help to ensure a fire is discovered quickly and the alarm is raised; allowing the occupants of the school to evacuate safely.

Responsibility for Fire Safety at the School falls under the remit of the Director of Finance and Operations (DFO), who is supported by the Head of Estates. Day to day monitoring of fire safety systems and hazards falls to the Caretakers and Maintenance staff. Specific roles and responsibilities in the event of the fire alarm being raised are outlined in the evacuation procedures set out later in this policy.

Every member of staff has a responsibility for fire prevention (see paragraph 3.0), and for understanding their specific responsibilities in the event of a fire breaking out and at any time the fire alarm is activated.

## **2.0 FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT**

The school has appointed Hettle Andrews Risk Services to provide competent advice and assistance in the area of fire safety. Hettle Andrews Risk Services are also contracted to complete a fire risk assessment of all buildings annually, in accordance with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. A formal fire risk assessment report is provided, along with an action plan highlighting any areas of improvement. These actions and recommendations are then implemented by the school.

The fire risk assessment process is supported by the Head of Estates. It is important, however, that all staff co-operate fully with the fire risk assessment process and the implementation of the subsequent recommendations, if required.

## **3.0 FIRE PREVENTION**

Fires start and grow when there is a source of fuel or combustible material present; a source of heat or ignition; and a plentiful supply of oxygen. Minimising the presence of oxygen is not a practical solution to prevent fire, so the school focuses on removing or limiting the presence of ignition and fuel sources where possible.

Some of the key fire hazards that exist at the school, and a brief overview of how they are removed, reduced or managed, is included below:

Electrical hazards: An effective inspection and testing regime is in place for electrical equipment and the fixed electrical installation within school buildings.

- The electrical circuits and switchgear in school buildings are periodically inspected and tested, by a competent electrician, with remedial works being completed as required and records being retained of all works.
- Portable electrical equipment is inspected and tested periodically by the maintenance team, with records being held in the maintenance department.
- Any staff member wishing to bring in personal electrical appliances (i.e. anything with a plug) must ensure that they have been PAT tested by the maintenance team prior to being used on School premises.
- All users must carry out a basic visual inspection before using electrical equipment, to ensure it is safe to use.
- The use of extension leads should be avoided where possible. Where used, they should be inspected for defects or damage, and fully unwound during use.
- Electrical circuits must never be overloaded and equipment should always have the correctly rated fuse in the plug.
- Emergency switches are provided where appropriate to isolate equipment quickly and easily.
- Faulty electrical equipment is taken out of use immediately and either repaired or disposed of safely to prevent use by others.

Gas-fired equipment: All gas appliances and the gas supply system are subject to a safety check on an annual basis by a Gas Safe Registered Engineer. In addition:

- Certificates of gas safety are produced and records retained.
- Testing includes the effective combustion of gas to ensure that fire and explosion risk is eliminated.
- In school kitchens, the gas supplies are interlocked with the extraction system and are controlled by key operated switch to prevent unauthorised or accidental use.
- Heat detectors are installed as part of the fire alarm system.
- The use of naked flames within the Science faculty are strictly controlled in accordance with faculty risk assessments; Bunsen burners are checked before use by the technician.

Portable heaters: The occasional use of portable electric heaters may be appropriate, if approved by the Estates team, and used in line with the following precautions:

- Heaters with exposed heating elements are not permitted.
- Heaters must always be positioned a safe distance away from combustible materials and must never be covered.
- Heaters should not be left unattended when in operation and should be turned off after use.

Arson or malicious damage: School sites are secured as far as possible to ensure opportunities for would-be arsonists are limited, these measures include:

- Perimeter fences, walls and gates.
- Security lights and prominent CCTV cameras.
- Intruder alarms.

- Segregation and storage of waste materials away from perimeter fences.

Smoking: The School is a non-smoking site, including the use of e-cigarettes. Smoking is not permitted in any of the school buildings or on any part of the premises.

Hot works or machinery related risks: Hot works such as welding, cutting, grinding etc. are undertaken by contractors, by our own maintenance staff, and using machinery within workshops. Controls include:

- A 'Hot Work Permit' system to ensure certain control measures are always implemented (by staff or contractors) when undertaking hot work.
- Details of the Hot Work Permit system are contained within the 'Managing Contractors Policy'.
- Purpose built welding booths/ brazing hearths which are subject to periodic inspection.

Combustible or waste materials: Non-combustible materials should be used wherever possible, in construction or refurbishment works. Fabrics and upholstery should also have an appropriate level of resistance to flame and combustion.

Flammable substances: The use of flammable substances should be limited wherever possible and the following measures adopted:

- All flammable liquids should be managed, stored and used in accordance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) and the School COSHH Policy.
- Flammable substances must be correctly stored in a secure area away from sources of ignition. Appropriate ventilation must be provided to prevent the build-up of flammable vapours.
- The segregation of incompatible chemicals and substances must be carefully managed to eliminate the possibility of combustion.
- Experiments should always be adequately risk assessed in conjunction with the use of CLEAPSS guidance.
- Pupils are always to be supervised during science lessons and laboratories should be secured when not being used for lessons. Pupils must never be in laboratories without staff being present.

#### **4.0 PROTECTIVE FIRE SAFETY MEASURES**

Further protective measures are also adopted to reduce or limit the spread of smoke and flame, and to ensure that the occupants of the school are as safe as possible.

Fire alarm: Automatic fire alarm systems are installed in all major buildings, with detection via ceiling-mounted smoke and heat detection, as well as manually operated break-glass call points near to most exits. These automatic systems ensure the early

detection of fires and, more importantly, will provide early warning to the occupants of the school.

- Fire alarm systems are serviced quarterly; in addition, maintenance agreements are in place to provide for repairs and routine maintenance/ testing, where required.
- Once per week (usually between 10am and 11am on Wednesday) the fire alarm for each building is tested by the maintenance team using different call points each week, and records are kept in the fire log book.
- Fire alarm tests are carried out during the day so that staff and pupils know what the fire alarm sounds like. The weekly test is very brief and should last no more than 5-10 seconds; if the alarm continues after 30 seconds this must be considered a genuine emergency and the building evacuated.
- The school fire alarm is a continuous sounding of the electronic sounders which are positioned strategically throughout the school.
- The fire alarm is monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week by a monitoring company. When a fire alarm is activated the monitoring company alert the fire brigade, School Reception (during School hours) and the school maintenance team via the 'On Call' telephone number (07875 716215) if the School Reception is not available, or the alarm has been activated out of School hours.
- The fire brigade should also be notified by telephone, by calling 999.

Compartmentation and fire resistance: Good compartmentation and fire resistance within a building can help to contain a fire and limit the spread of the fire, smoke and flame through the building. This also helps to protect escape routes. The school has made efforts to ensure the fire resistance of the buildings is adequate, including:

- Fire doors being installed on most rooms and along escape routes to provide fire resistance and ensure fires are contained to a small area, for as long as possible. It is vital that fire doors are not propped or wedged open, as this negates the fire resistance designed into the buildings.
- Automatic fire doors and shutters have been installed in key areas to protect escape routes or segregate high-risk areas, such as kitchens. The operation of these doors and shutters are tested on a weekly basis and results recorded.

Escape routes and exits: have been carefully planned to ensure there are an adequate number, and that they are protected and available for use.

- Escape routes should always be kept clear of obstructions.
- The Maintenance Team periodically check that escape routes are available, however all RGS staff must also take responsibility for this on a day-to-day basis.
- Visitors and contractors are also responsible for ensuring that they do not obstruct or hamper any emergency escape routes.

- Emergency lighting and signage:
  - o Escape routes and exits throughout the school are provided with emergency lighting which illuminate in the event of a power failure, to enable safe evacuation of buildings.
  - o Emergency lighting is checked for operation on a monthly basis by the Maintenance team and results recorded.
  - o Once per year the emergency lighting system is serviced and the batteries discharged/ re-charged to assess their performance, with records being provided of the test results and remedial action required.
- Fire Extinguishing Appliances (FEA's) are carefully located throughout the school, and are selected to match the type of fire that is likely in that particular area.
  - o FEA's are serviced and maintained annually, under a maintenance agreement with an external contractor.
  - o Whilst provision of firefighting equipment is required of the school, the priority is always to evacuate the building. Where FEA's are used by staff, the following rules should be applied:
    - o The fire should be no bigger than a waste paper bin.
    - o The staff member should keep themselves between the fire and the exit, to ensure they are always able to turn away from the fire and escape.
    - o No more than one fire extinguisher should be used to tackle a fire; if the fire is not extinguished at this point, the member of staff should evacuate the premises.

## **5.0 FIRE SAFETY TRAINING:**

All staff are provided with an overview of this fire policy, the evacuation procedures, escape routes and exits and assembly points as part of their Health and Safety Induction to the School, and annually at the inset day in September.

All staff are also required to complete the online 'Basic Fire Safety Awareness' training package, provided by Educare. This is refreshed every three years.

Fire drills are also completed on a regular basis for each building on site. Fire evacuation drills are intended to ensure, by means of training and rehearsal, that in the event of a fire:

- People act in a calm and orderly manner and understand their responsibilities, and what they must do.
- Those people who may have designated responsibilities (e.g. Duty Fire Marshal or maintenance team) carry out their tasks effectively to ensure the safety of all concerned.
- The escape routes and means of escape work effectively and enable safe and speedy evacuation from the building.

Periodically during fire drills, the maintenance team will also block escape routes, to simulate an actual fire and to force people to develop alternative strategies to escape safely from the building.

No fire drill is to be initiated before training objectives have been agreed with the Head of Estates and Deputy Head at RGS The Grange. A debrief is to take place on completion of the exercise and a record maintained; when appropriate any particular points of note should be emailed to all staff. Responsibility for this process lies with the Head of Estates.

## 6.0 EVACUATION PLANS:

Evacuation plans have been developed for all buildings, as well as for events or productions where higher than normal numbers of people are on the premises. Details of these procedures is provided in the next section of the policy.

Evacuation routes and assembly points are detailed in the appendices, as well as being displayed within School buildings. In addition, 'Fire Action Notices' are also displayed throughout buildings advising people what to do if a fire is discovered (an example of this is provided in appendix I).

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP's) are developed and implemented for anyone who may need additional support to be alerted to a fire and/or to evacuate the building safely (e.g. persons with mobility issues, including temporary issues such as a broken leg, or with sensory impairments). Any PEEP in place must be periodically reviewed to check that they remain effective. (It is important that PEEPs are also reviewed where there is a change in circumstances, for example the buildings or environment or the condition of the person to which the plan exists).

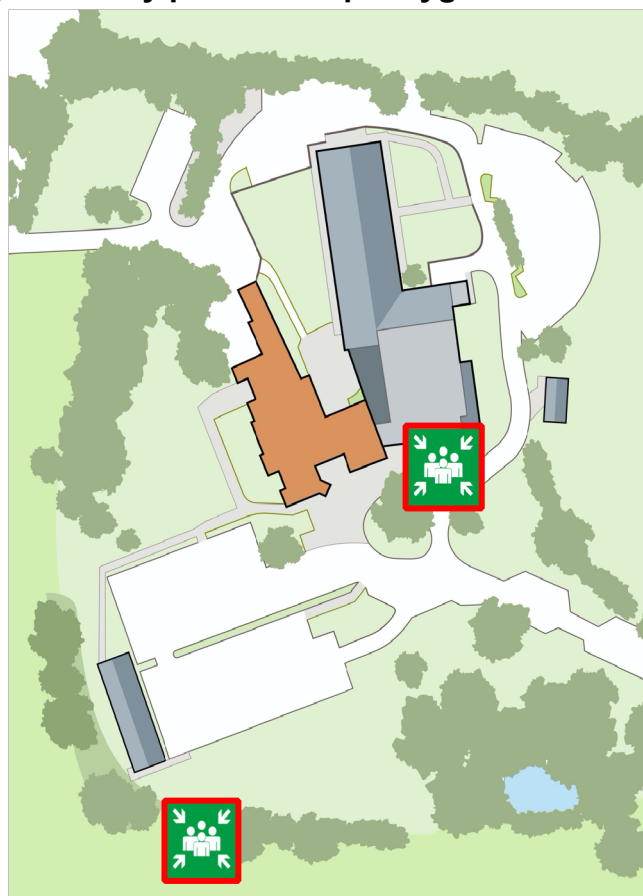
## 7.0 FIRE EVACUATION PROTOCOL:

### Assembly Points:

There are two Assembly Points at RGS The Grange:

**Old School Site (Pre-Prep and Early Years) assembly point is Lower Playground**

**New School (Prep) assembly point is Prep Playground**



## **Fire Evacuation Procedure**

### **All Staff and Pupils – upon hearing the Fire Alarm:**

- All staff and pupils should evacuate the building quickly and calmly via the nearest exit, and proceed to their designated Assembly Point.
  - Staff are expected to make sure pupils evacuate in an orderly manner and are supervised whilst they remain at the Assembly Point.
  - Any member of staff accompanying visitors to the school should accompany them to the Assembly Point
  - Any contractors/ visitors who are not normally accompanied during their time at the school, should be instructed on the location Assembly Point and advised to report there on hearing the alarms
  - Any concerns/ comments/ observations on the evacuation process should be raised with the Fire Marshal before leaving the Assembly Point.

### **Assembly Point**

**At the Assembly Point the responsibility for taking overall charge of all staff, pupils and visitors will be the Fire Marshal staff located at the Assembly Point.**

- Pupils line up in their form groups
- Form teachers take register of their form group
- Form teacher notifies Fire Marshal if there are any pupils missing

### **Fire Marshal – upon hearing the Fire Alarm / being notified of a fire:**

- Put on the hi-visibility waistcoat, ensure the radio is turned on, and make themselves clearly visible at the Assembly Point.
- Ensure those present are behaving in an orderly manner
- Collect Sign-In book from member of reception / admin team and ensure all visitors are accounted for;
- Check with all form tutors that all are accounted for at both assembly points and identify whether there are any missing persons (pupils, staff or visitors)
- Report to the fire service on arrival regarding any missing persons or other significant factors
- Liaise with the Site Supervisor at the fire alarm panel
- Keep a note of any comments, observations or concerns raised by other staff members relating to the evacuation process.

- Once confirmation has been received (**from the Fire Service representative**) that it is safe to re-enter the building, notify the Headmaster / Deputy Head / Member of SLT for permission to re-enter the building.
- Following the alarm activation, carry out a debrief and record and write a report on lessons learned

**Site Supervisor** – upon hearing the Fire Alarm / being notified of a fire:

- Put on a Hi-Vis Jacket
- Attend the Fire Alarm Panel to establish the location from which the alarm has been activated.
  - o If safe to do so, from outside the building, carry out an initial investigation with the aim to gather as much information for the fire service as possible
  - o Prevent people from entering the building
- Meet the Fire Service and accompany them to the Fire Alarm Panel and where possible, confirm to them;
- The location of the fire alarm activation, and whether there are signs of a real fire (if relevant).
- Once confirmation has been received (**from the Fire Service representative**) that it is safe to re-enter the building, this information must be communicated to the Headmaster or SLT staff member – this can be through the two-way radio system.
- Report to the Fire Marshal for a de-brief of the incident.
- Deal with any follow up actions where required

**Reception Staff / Admin. Team** – upon hearing the Fire Alarm / being notified of a fire:

- Take Sign-In book from the office to the assembly point and report to Fire Marshal

### **Events and Performances:**

School Events or Performances taking place outside of normal School House (i.e. 6pm onwards) should have a formal, written evacuation plan in place. The responsible member of staff or department shall devise this plan and submit it to the Health and Safety Manager for approval.

- Once the Evacuation Plan has been approved, the responsible member of staff should brief all of the staff members (and e.g. pupils assisting with open days) who will be present, on the content and the correct implementation of the plan.
- At the start of the event/ performance, the responsible person should make an appropriate announcement to alert visitors to the following:
  - o the sound of the fire alarm
  - o the location of fire exits and escape routes

- the location of the assembly point
- the need to make themselves known to staff if they are likely to need assistance in evacuating the premises.
- Upon activation of the Fire Alarm during events, staff should undertake the roles assigned to them in the Event Evacuation Plan (e.g. directing visitors/ attending the assembly point/ sweeping the premises/ assisting visitors to evacuate etc.), and report to the Assembly Point.
  - The Responsible Person for the Event / DFM should satisfy themselves that the building has been evacuated (as defined in their Evacuation Plan) and liaise with the Fire Brigade upon their arrival.
  - The Site Supervisor should report to the relevant building(s) and attend the respective Fire Alarm Panel to establish the location from which the alarm has been activated, and ensure the Fire Brigade are directed to the relevant building.
- Nobody should re-enter the building until confirmation has been received **(from the Fire Service representative)** that it is safe to do so.
- Responsible Person for the Event / DFM should prepare a brief log of the incident for de-brief with the Critical Incident Team at the earliest possible opportunity.

### **Hirers:**

When bookings are made for hirers of the school premises, the 'Hiring Agreement' should be provided to them, which will instruct them on what to do in the event an alarm is activated. The Evacuation Plan is to include:

- The need to ensure all members of their party are evacuated safely from the building.
- The location of exits/ escape routes and the assembly point at which they should congregate.
- An emergency contact telephone number they should call once safely at the assembly point.
- The need to wait at the Assembly Point to meet with the Caretaker / DFM and/or Fire Service representative.
- The instruction that nobody should re-enter the building until confirmation has been received **(from the Fire Service representative)** that it is safe to do so.
- The On-Call staff member responding to the incident should liaise with the Hirer and prepare a brief log of the incident for de-brief with the Critical Incident Team at the earliest possible opportunity.

Sponsor: Head Of Estates

Reviewed and Amended: **Annual Review**

Endorsed July 2017 by Bryan Radford Governor responsible for Health & Safety

**Reviewed: July 2023**

## CALL POINT & FIRE ACTION NOTICE



Appendix N. Fire Policy  
RGS The Grange

Fire Alarm – Incident Log		
Building Evacuated:	Date of Activation:	Time of Activation:
Significant Developments		
Evacuation Time:		
Location of Fire / Alarm Activation:		
Zone Cards:		
Arrival of Fire Service:		
Real or False Alarm:		
All Clear:		
Detail any other observations / communications as they occur:		
Detail any further support requested and action taken by Critical Incident Team		
De-Brief Notes		
Responsible Persons on Duty During Incident		
Duty Fire Marshal:		
Maintenance Representative:		
Critical Incident Team:		