SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL
SINCE 1576

Fire Policy

(Prep School and Senior School)

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This Policy applies to Sutton Valence School (including as the context requires, the Nursery, the Prep School and the Senior School. It also includes all Residential Accommodation within the School's boundary).

Part One – Organisation

1. Statement

Sutton Valence School is committed to ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that all staff, pupils, contractors and visitors are protected from the risks of fire whilst on the premises.

This policy explains how the School complies with this and its legal requirements under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 RRO to ensure that, where possible, fire is prevented and that any fire risks are adequately controlledc. This policy has regard to the RRO, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding (Standard 26) and is written as an extension to the School's Health & Safety Policy. It is supported by the Fire Safety Procedures for the Senior School and Prep School.

Sutton Valence School as (Responsible Person) Landlord to residential properties is also committed to ensuring all residential dwellings so far as reasonably practicable are protected from the risks of fire and compliant with all fire safety legislation.

Our objectives are to adhere to the law and in particular we will comply with the legal requirements for risk assessment, the installation and maintenance of fire systems, fire procedures and other fire safety documentation. Fire management arrangements ensure that every employee in this School understands precisely what they and every other individual must do in the event of fire and staff training will be provided for staff on appointment and repeated periodically as appropriate. Staff will be informed of any changes that are made to our fire safety procedures and fire risk assessment. All visitors to our premises are briefed on the evacuation procedure by the person whom they are visiting.

All staff are trained in the implementation of emergency evacuation procedures and copies of current fire risk assessments, fire and emergency response procedures and other fire safety documentation are available from the Estates Bursar. The School will comply with any recommendations made by the Fire Service and will regularly carry out and record risk assessments in relation to fire, together with fire drills and any routine tests recommend by the Fire Service. There are currently no significant recommendations of the Fire Service outstanding.

As required by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 & Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 , Sutton Valence School will provide residents of buildings containing two or more sets of domestic premises with specific information about relevant fire safety matters. This includes information about any risks to residents of the premises identified within the risk assessment,

preventative and protective measures, name and UK address of the Responsible Person, the identity of any person appointed by the Responsible Person to assist them with making or reviewing the risk assessment under article 9 of the RRO, the identity of any competent person nominated by the Responsible Person to implement firefighting and fire detection measures and any risks to relevant persons throughout the building identified by other Responsible Persons in the building.

2. Aims

- To prevent the occurrence of fire;

- To ensure the safe removal of children, staff and visitors should a fire occur. Preservation of life takes precedence over the salvaging of property;

- To ensure all personnel on site are familiar with the evacuation procedures including the assembly points;

- The Fire Policy is available on the school website and copies are also kept in the Estates Bursar's office and both the Prep School and Senior School receptions.

3. Responsibilities

The overall responsibility for all aspects of fire safety rests jointly with the Board of Governors and the Headmaster. However, responsibility for the day-to-day management of fire safety in the School lies with the Bursar who is the designated Fire Safety Officer (FSO) and holds ultimate accountability for implementing fire safety measures and ensuring compliance with fire safety regulations.

The Bursar

The Bursar will ensure that the premises and any facilities, equipment and devices are subject to a suitable system of maintenance to ensure that they remain in an efficient state of repair and that they are in full working order. He is responsible for ensuring that appropriate certificates are kept for the installation and maintenance of fire-fighting systems and equipment. The Bursar appoints appropriately qualified people to assist him in undertaking the preventative and protective measures as required.

The Estates Bursar

The Estates Bursar is the Deputy and the Competent Person who has sufficient training, experience and knowledge to assist the Responsible Person in fire safety duties. Therefore, the Estates Bursar will be responsible for the following.

- Overseeing the maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and ensuring its regular maintenance;
- Ensuring fire escape routes and fire exit doors and passageways are kept unobstructed and doors and emergency lighting operate correctly;
- Ensuring that fire detection and protection systems are maintained and tested, and proper records are kept, in liaison with the Maintenance staff;
- Ensuring any close-down procedures are followed;
- Conducting fire drills, drafting reports and recommending ways of improving the drills;
- Being responsible for fire safety training.
- Ensuring all protective and preventive measures are implemented regarding the storage or use of any flammable or highly flammable material or products.

Fire Wardens

Fire Wardens are given responsibility for a specific area, floor or building, and will have the following general duties:

- On hearing the fire alarm, they should check that the floor or section of the premises allocated to them has been fully evacuated of ALL persons including communal areas, but only IF SAFE TO DO SO; do not re-enter a building;
- Assist with the evacuation of pupils and any other persons within the building;
- Carry out firefighting, only if the way out is blocked by fire;
- Proceed to the Assembly Point, closing fire doors en route which do not close automatically;
- Ensuring that the person in charge of the evacuation is aware that their area has been checked;
- Assist with the care and control of all persons evacuated from the premises;
- Not allow anyone to re-enter the building until informed that it is safe to do so by the Fire Service or person in charge.

Members of Staff

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be aware of the Fire Safety Policy and any other related policies and procedures. All new members of staff are made aware of these policies and procedures as part of the induction process. Training is provided for staff as appropriate. Members of staff co-ordinating events such as School productions and concerts must ensure that visitors are informed about the procedures to follow in the event of a fire.

Silent Hours – Boarding Houses

The on-duty member of staff is to clear the boarding house of all pupils. All other live-in staff are to assist the duty staff with the evacuation. All families and visitors are to evacuate on hearing the alarm, for St Margaret's and Westminster the muster point is on Lower outside the Sports Hall between the hours of 08.30 – 17.00 and after 17.00 is on Prefects' Lawn. For Sutton House, the muster point is in the car park. The Head of House is to call a preliminary role call and the on-duty member of staff is to call a confirmatory role once they are satisfied the house is cleared. Further information on procedures can be found in all of the boarding houses. All activations are to be reported to the Estates Bursar as soon as possible.

4. Fire Fighting Equipment

All fire extinguishers are maintained on an annual basis by a person who is qualified to British Approvals for Fire Equipment (BAFE) standards. Maintenance staff carry out monthly checks and records of the checks are kept in the Maintenance Manager's office. All staff should familiarise themselves with the locations of the fire extinguishers. Training in the use of extinguishers should emphasise that nobody should be putting themselves at risk by fighting fires. Fire Marshalls receive regular training on the use of fire extinguishers.

5. Fire Alarm Tests

Each week the fire alarms will be tested in all buildings. This test will be undertaken by the maintenance staff. The alarms will be tested by activating a separate activation point each week. The purpose of this test is to ensure that the alarms can be heard from all areas in the School and that each of the activation points are working correctly.

The fire alarm test will occur every Wednesday afternoon in the Senior School and a Thursday morning at 7.30am in the Prep School. All staff and children should remain in the classrooms or place of work and should not evacuate the building unless the alarm bell rings continuously.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to advise the Bursar if the alarm cannot be adequately heard from their location in the school buildings.

It is the responsibility of the Estates Bursar to maintain a record of the weekly alarm tests and any actions arising. Records of these checks are kept in the Estates Bursar's office.

6. Evacuation Plans

Senior School

Every room, no matter its nature or size, should have a fire evacuation notice mounted on the wall near to the door. This fire evacuation notice gives guidance to the occupying member of staff of their role in case of an alarm activation. Responsibilities for actions in the event of fire are clearly assigned on this notice and deputies are to be advised should the responsible officer be absent. The Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils) at the Senior School and the Head at the Prep School is to assign fire officers and deputies to relevant areas and alert deputies if the fire officer is absent for any reason.

Lambe's Building in the Senior School will have an evacuation practice each term due to its size and complex layout of classrooms. For other buildings in the Senior School, annual evacuation tests will be scheduled across the terms. At the discretion of the Deputy FSO, staff may or may not be warned in advance.

The Deputy FSO will record the time taken to evacuate the buildings and liaise with the teachers to check that all staff and pupils are accounted for. Records of fire evacuation tests are kept in the Estates Bursar's office. The records include all year groups in the building at the time. This will ensure that in the first term of the new School year, new pupils will have fire practice experience. During tutor time, fire practice information will be given out to all pupils at the start of the academic year. The Deputy FSO will also arrange a fire training session for all staff in both the Senior and Prep School during the August Inset days.

Prep School

The Maintenance Supervisor is the competent person in charge of all fire alarm activations and has knowledge of how the fire alarm panel operates. The Maintenance Supervisor has a list of chemicals used and their location. The Head or their nominated Deputy is responsible for investigating an alarm activation and confirming the reasons for the activation to the Estates Bursar at the Senior School.

The Head of the Prep School or the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils) at the Senior School, or their nominated deputy, is responsible for:

- Overall control of the evacuation;
- Ensure that other people with specific duties have taken relevant action;
- Account for all persons in the premises;
- Liaise with the Fire Service;
- Initiate any additional response in relation to the care of people with special needs.

Each term a practice evacuation test will be performed at the Prep School. The full time Nursery will perform a practice evacuation test during the Easter, Summer and Christmas School holidays.

Residential Accommodation.

Residents are subject to the same evacuation strategy as the rest of the School and are required to evacuate their dwelling when the fire alarm is activated.

All accommodation areas are fitted with automatic fire detection to alert residents of any fire outside of school hours.

Evacuation Arrangements for People with Disabilities

It is the responsibility of the School to evacuate all personnel who are disabled, pregnant, elderly, have medical conditions, have sustained temporary injuries and non-English speaking in the event of an emergency. Such individuals who attend, or are employed, by the School are to have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) written for every building they use due to the different layout in every building. The individual is to have an input into the plan and highlight areas of concern due to their own experience and ability and the PEEP will be completed by the nursing staff, a copy of which is available from the Medical Centre.

It is the responsibility of residents of private dwellings to inform the School of any disabilities that may impact on the safe evacuation in the event of a fire from any dwelling situated above ground level. Sutton Valence School will endeavour to provide adaptations or equipment to aid in evacuation so far as reasonably practicable and will liaise with residents to formulate a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan where possible.

7. Action to be Taken on Discovering a Fire

In the event of a member of staff discovering a fire the following action should be taken:

- Activate the Fire Alarm by breaking the glass in the nearest Call Point;
- Evacuate the building quickly and quietly using the nearest Fire Exit and proceed to the Assembly Point;
- Call 999 Fire Service;
- Members of staff should not attempt to tackle a fire, even it if is only a small fire unless he or she has been trained to do so. Any attempt to extinguish a fire should be made using the nearest appropriate fire extinguisher. This should only be attempted when all other members of staff and children have safely evacuated the building, or if the way out is blocked by fire;
- In the Senior School, the Fire Officer for the building should immediately call the Bursar's Office on 01622 845207 or Main Reception on 01622 845200, saying which building it is in and where the fire is, if known. In the Prep School, the Fire Officer for the building should ring Reception on 01622 842117 saying where the fire is, if known.

8. Reporting Fires

- If a fire is detected, i.e. not a drill or upon investigation not a false alarm, then the emergency services are to be called. Any member of staff can call **999** if they see a fire;
- Any fire alarm activation is to be noted and reported to the Estates Bursar as soon as possible for recording in the official logs;
- A minor incidence, such as a smoking toaster is also to be reported in order that a log is kept, and the equipment checked out;
- Any major incident or damage caused by a fire is to be reported as soon as possible to the emergency services and insurance company;
- At the Senior School, the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils) or his Deputy, is to meet the fire service at the main gate with the building plans. The Estates Bursar has a list of all chemicals for the maintenance, grounds, gardens and science departments and their location. All chemicals are kept in suitable COSHH cabinets to reduce the risk of fire from dangerous substances. At the Prep School, the Head or their deputy is to meet the fire service.

9. Managing Building Work and Alterations

School sites increase the risk of fire with quantities of combustible materials and accumulated waste. All contractors should book in and out with the maintenance team. They are to be given information about the site's fire evacuation procedures so they can follow the procedure in the event of a fire evacuation. Contact with the contractors is to be maintained throughout the whole task and all means of escape are to be maintained at all times. A copy of the School's Fire Policy is available with the signing in book for contractors to view.

All contractors should produce risk and COSHH assessments and method statements for the practices they are to carry out during the period of the refurbishment or new build. A hot work permit must be completed by the contractor prior to any hot works carried out. This is to alleviate the risk of fire from hot work such as flame cutting, soldering, welding, paint stripping, and the use of blow lamps or portable grinding equipment. Additional risks that can occur during building work include:

- Temporary electrical equipment MUST be 110volt or less;
- Blocking of escape routes including external escape routes;
- Introduction of combustible materials into an escape route;
- Loss of normal storage facilities;
- Fire safety equipment, such as automatic fire-detection systems becoming affected due to the dust and general work on the building site;
- Fire-resisting partitions being breached, or fire doors being wedged open;
- Additional personnel who may be unfamiliar with the premises.

10. Fire Risk Assessment

The Fire Risk Assessments are undertaken by Natwest Mentor.

In line with amendments to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by section 156 of the building safety act all findings will be recorded.

All actions raised from the fire risk assessment will be completed within the agreed timescales recorded on the fire risk assessment, where delays or procurement of equipment or materials cause delays, beyond the agreed date, this will be recorded on the fire risk assessment and agreed with Natwest Mentor.

In assessing all school properties, the official UK Government Guidance will be used in line with requirements of Article 50 the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 as amended.
The assessment will be reviewed every 24 months by Natwest Mentro and any changes will be recorded, and relevant actions raised.

Natwest Mentor will update the Risk Assessments every two years.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually in the Summer Term. It will be presented to the Governors' Health and Safety Committee for approval.

Part Two - Fire safety arrangements

This section of our policy sets out the way in which we will comply with our duties under the **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** and should be read in conjunction with our fire record book and fire procedures referred to below. We have appointed the following persons to assist us in fulfilling our obligations:

Fire safety issue	Task	Person/s responsible
Responsible person for day-to-day fire safety of the school	Responsible Person Role and Authorisation	Bursar
Fire Wardens	Fire Warden Role	Trained staff as per list
Fire procedure	Ensuring that an up-to-date Evacuation Procedure is documented and available for staff	Estates Bursar
	Ensuring that fire procedures for all classrooms, offices and reception are clearly displayed	Estates Bursar
	Ensuring that there is a means of checking visitors have left the building (e.g. register, visitor badges)	School Secretary
	Co-ordinating with other organisations which share the premises in terms of outside lets	Sports Hall Administrator
	Ensuring that a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan is completed for any member of staff or pupil needing assistance or special arrangements to aid evacuation	School Nurse
Fire safety risk assessment	Writing a fire safety risk assessment	Natwest Mentor
	Implementing recommendations	Estates Bursar
	Checking that recommendations have been implemented	Estates Bursar
	Arranging for review at least annually	Estates Bursar
Emergency contacts list	Keeping an up-to-date Emergency Contacts List and ensuring it is readily available at reception	Estates Bursar
Out of hours response to alarm	Ensuring that the Out of Hours Emergency Procedure is kept up to date with appropriate persons allocated to respond to out of hours call outs, e.g. in event of an alarm	Estates Bursar
Smoking	Ensuring compliance with smoke free legislation, i.e. signage and no smoking rules	Estates Bursar
Fire officer visit	Completing details of any visit by the fire authority using the Fire Safety Officer Inspection document	Bursar

Fire safety issue	Task	Person/s responsible
Fire alarm	Arranging servicing of alarm by competent contractor	Estates Bursar
	Weekly test by operating a different call point each time, pre-warning staff of the test, checking alarm audibility and completing the Fire Alarm System Check Sheet	Maintenance Dept at both the Senior and Prep School
	Completing a Fire Evacuation Record for any planned or unplanned fire drills	Estates Bursar
Emergency lighting	Arranging annual electrical test and inspection of emergency lighting	Estates Bursar
	Monthly activation test and annual discharge test of emergency lighting and completing Emergency Lighting Check Sheet	Estates Bursar
Electrical systems and equipment	Arranging inspection and test of the electrical installation every 5 years	Estates Bursar
	Arranging portable appliance testing to a schedule	Estates Bursar
Lightning protection	Arranging annual inspection of lightning protection	Estates Bursar
Gas boiler/ equipment	Arranging annual service of gas-fired equipment	Estates Bursar
Fire extinguishers	Arranging for annual servicing of extinguishers	Estates Bursar
	Carrying out fire-fighting equipment inspections and recording on the Fire Fighting Equipment Check Sheet in the fire record book	Maintenance Dept at both the Senior and Prep School
Fire signage	Ensuring that fire action notices are displayed with details completed of the assembly point and procedure for calling the Fire and Rescue Service	Estates Bursar
	Ensuring all signs are displayed as necessary to identify fire-related equipment etc.	Estates Bursar
Monitoring	Undertaking checks of escape routes and completing the Escape Route Check Sheet	Maintenance Dept at both the Senior and Prep School

Staff training and drills	Conducting termly fire drill and recording details on the Fire Drill Observation Sheet	Estates Bursar
	Ensuring that all new starters receive fire safety instruction.	Estates Bursar
	Ensuring that fire marshals are trained in their role and completing the Fire Training and Instruction Record Sheet	Estates Bursar
Contractors	Ensuring that contractors working on gas and electrical systems are suitably qualified	Estates Bursar
	Ensuring that where contractors need to conduct hot works a Hot Work Permit is completed.	Estates Bursar
Policy	Annual review of Fire Safety Policy	Estates Bursar
Fire advice	Fire advice to be provided	Estates Bursar

Duties of all staff

All employees have a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that they do not place themselves or others at risk of harm. They are also expected to co-operate fully with us in complying with any fire procedures that we may introduce to protect the safety and well-being of our staff, pupils and visitors.

All employees have a responsibility to make sure they are familiar with the layout of the buildings, noting where fire exits are and where they lead. They must also ensure the correct use of fire doors, that all fire exits and evacuation routes are clear at all times and that no combustible or flammable materials are stored in corridors or on stairs.

This policy forms part of all employees' conditions of employment. Failure to comply with it may be treated as a disciplinary matter.