



## Fire Safety Policy

### SCHOOL MISSION

We are inspired by St Catherine of Siena, who said 'Be who God wants you to be, and you will set the world on fire', to form young women of confidence and compassion, ready for service and leadership in the world. We fulfil our mission through these values:

**Community:** a place of cheerfulness, dignity and tolerance, where all are welcome

**Faith:** a Christ-centred school with time for reflection; a culture of gratitude and friendship

**Courage:** with self-knowledge, resilience and integrity, and a readiness for challenge

**Scholarship:** where gifts are developed through curiosity, imagination and ambition

**Service:** commitment to others, to stewardship, and to justice and hope for all

### Amendments:

*Page 8 Addition of Creative Hub*

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### Introduction

Fire presents a clear risk to the safety and well-being of pupils, staff and visitors, as well as to the School's premises and property. It is the overall aim of St Catherine's School to minimise the risks which may arise from fire, and this is achieved through a mix of prevention and protection measures.

This Fire Safety policy applies to all staff, pupils and visitors to the School, including contractors not directly employed by the School and all other users of the School's premises.

St Catherine's School will, as far as is reasonably practicable and in accordance with legal obligations and standards, ensure that they:

- carry out and keep under annual review a Fire Risk Assessment to analyse building and process fire risks, the existing preventive and protective measures and identify areas for improvement;
- provide and maintain passive and active fire prevention and protection measures according to the purpose or use of all buildings, the numbers of occupants and the activities or processes undertaken therein;
- provide comprehensible and relevant information to staff and others, through the provision and availability of emergency instructions or fire safety plans and the risks identified by relevant risk assessments;
- provide a programme of fire safety training;
- have in place a programme of works to improve or maintain the existing fire safety specifications;
- identify a sufficient number of persons, whether staff, security or others, to be present at all times the building is occupied with responsibility for initiating the fire evacuation procedure and provide information and assistance to the fire service;
- where appropriate, to prepare and keep under review risk assessments in relation to the use, storage, handling, disposal and transportation of hazardous substances and ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risks associated with dangerous substances are reduced or controlled.

### **The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 or "the Fire Safety Order" which applies across England and Wales came into force on 1 October 2006, consolidating existing fire safety laws which were scattered across more than 70 pieces of legislation. It places the responsibility for fire safety on the employer or 'responsible person' for that building or premises, who must carry out an assessment of the risks of fire and take steps to reduce or remove the risk.

The Fire Safety Order places the emphasis on risk reduction and fire prevention. Under the Order, people responsible for commercial buildings i.e. the employer, owner, or any other person who has control of any part of the premises, are required to carry out a mandatory detailed fire risk assessment identifying the risks and hazards in the premises. The risk

assessment must be recorded if you have a total of five or more employees. The responsible person for the premises is also required to:

- Consider who may be especially at risk.
- Eliminate or reduce the risk from fire as far as is reasonably practical and provide general fire precautions to deal with any risk.
- Take additional measures to ensure fire safety where flammable or explosive materials are used or stored.
- Create a plan to deal with any emergency and where necessary record any findings.
- Maintain general fire precautions, and facilities provided for use by fire-fighters.
- Keep any findings of the risk assessment under review.

The legislation is enforced in our area by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. The 'Responsible Person' for St Catherine's is the Headmistress, in addition the Board of Governors are deemed as persons having control and therefore are also 'Responsible Persons' under the Order.

This Policy explains how the School complies with the Order to ensure that, where possible, fire is prevented, that any fire risks are adequately controlled and in the event of an emergency that effective procedures are in place to evacuate the premises and summon the London Fire Brigade.

### **Fire Risk Assessment**

The School's Fire Risk Assessment meets the requirements of Article 9 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO). Specifically it identifies:

- The Hazard
- The people at risk
- The measures to evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from the risk
- The measures needed to record, plan, inform, instruct and train people in risk reduction or removal
- The arrangements for reviewing the assessment

The School's Fire Risk Assessment is reviewed annually, or more frequently if significant changes are made to the interior of buildings or new buildings are bought or added.

Copies of the School's Fire Risk Assessment are available for all staff to read, together with this document. Any comments or suggestions for improvement are always welcome. All Heads of Department should ensure that they and their Department read the sections that are relevant to them.

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

The School Office is staffed between 7.30am and 5.00pm during term-time and between 8.30am and 4.00pm during half-terms and holidays apart from the Christmas and Easter closures. The master panel that shows the location of all the alarm call points on the networked alarm system in the school buildings is physically located adjacent to Reception. The School Office is always given advance warning of fire practices. In real emergencies the Fire Brigade is summoned automatically by the ADT alarm system, there is no need for anyone to dial 999 unless to confirm to the fire service that this is an actual fire.

#### *Disabled Students, staff or visitors*

Where disabled or sensory-impaired persons study or work in the premises their evacuation needs should be discussed with them and these should be recorded in Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs). These may require changes or modifications to existing procedures, and in some cases the provision of evacuation aids.

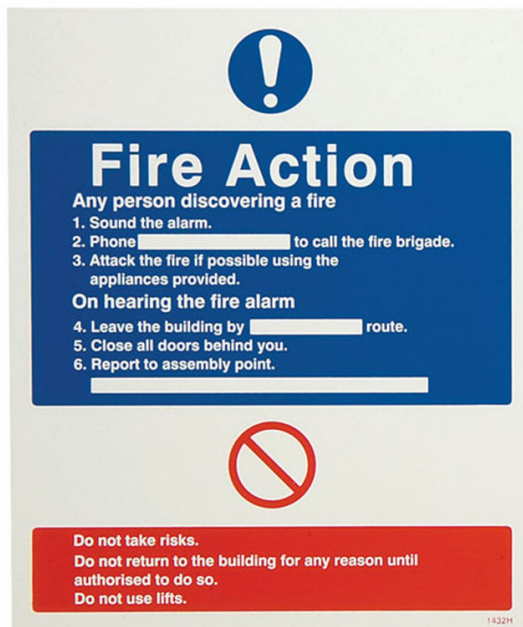
In the event that a disabled member of the public or a visitor with mobility problems visits the site they may need assistance to evacuate, therefore the writing of generic Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans is necessary. Should any visitors have specific needs then adjustments may need to be made. In some cases evacuation aids may need to be provided and/or training given to members of staff to assist visitors.

In order to assist disabled or sensory-impaired people to escape from fire, it may be necessary for staff to be trained in the correct procedures. Advice on the specific needs of disabled and sensory-impaired people can be obtained from organisations representing the various groups.

A refuge is provided in appropriate locations around the School; a refuge is a place of reasonable safety in which disabled people can wait for assistance up or down stairs by a designated member of staff or the fire wardens. Disabled people should not be left alone in a refuge area whilst waiting for assistance with evacuation from the building. Depending on the design and fire resistance of other elements, a refuge could be a lobby, corridor, part of a public area or stairway, which is sufficiently protected (or remote) from any fire risk and provided with its own means of escape and a means of communication.

#### *Visitors and Contractors*

All visitors and contractors are required to sign in at Reception, where they are issued with a visitor's badge, which should be worn at all times that they are on School property. This badge contains a card that explains fire safety procedures, which is shown to the visitors and they are also made aware of the Fire Action notice which shows the way to the assembly point. When large numbers of visitors are at the School for open days, plays, concerts, exhibitions etc. a brief announcement is made advising them of the location of the emergency exits that they should use in the event of the alarms sounding.



#### *What People / Staff Should Do If They Discover a Fire?*

- Raise the alarm by operating the nearest fire alarm call point or by shouting 'FIRE'.
- Trained personnel tackle the fire only where appropriate and safe to do so.
- If it is not safe to tackle the fire then leave the building by the nearest exit.
- Where appropriate, close doors and windows on the way out.
- Teaching staff are responsible for escorting their pupils safely out of the building in silence and in an orderly fashion.
- Ensure visitors are escorted from the building to the assembly point.
- Report to, and remain at the assembly point on the School Field.
- Return to the building only when authorised to do so.

#### *What People / Staff Should Do If They Hear the Fire Alarm?*

- Leave the building by the nearest exit.
- Close any doors en-route without delaying your escape.
- Do not delay your exit to collect personal belongings.
- Trained personnel tackle the fire only where appropriate.
- Teaching staff are responsible for escorting their pupils safely out of the building in silence and in an orderly fashion.
- Ensure visitors are escorted from the building to the assembly point.
- Pass any information regarding the evacuation to a Fire Marshal at the assembly point.
- Report to, and remain at, the assembly point on the School Field.
- Return to the building only when authorised to do so.
- ***On no account should anyone return to a burning building.***

#### **Incident Roles and Responsibilities**

### *School Fire Safety Manager*

- Co-ordinates the evacuation and receives information from the teaching staff, fire marshals and non-teaching staff as appropriate;
- Liaises with the fire brigade on their arrival.

### *Teaching Staff*

- Teaching staff are responsible for escorting their pupils safely out of the building in silence and in an orderly fashion;
- Form Tutors/Class Teachers are responsible for conducting a head count of pupils 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 School Fire Safety Manager;
- It is the responsibility of the School Fire Safety Manager to ensure that this information is passed to the Fire Marshal for that area where possible and then onto the Fire Brigade as soon as they arrive.

### *Fire Marshals*

- All Fire Marshals are to don Hi-Vis vests as soon as practicable;
- There is at least one trained Fire Marshal in every building; all Fire Marshals are “competent persons” who have been trained to provide “safety assistance” in the event of a fire. Fire Marshals receive regular refresher training;
- The Fire Marshals are responsible for conducting a ‘sweep’ of the nominated areas of the building under their responsibility; each room, toilets, etc. should be checked and doors closed once the area is deemed clear;
- Report findings to the School Fire Safety Manager at the assembly point;
- One of the Fire Marshals will be nominated to meet the Fire Service on arrival at the school reception and communicate the location of the fire/alarm and any relevant information passed by the School Fire Safety Manager.

### *Non-Teaching Staff*

- Nominated Administrative Assistants are responsible for conducting a head count of non-teaching and teaching staff on arrival at the assembly point.

### *Disabled Pupils, Staff or Visitors*

- When the fire alarm is sounded, it is the responsibility of the carer of a disabled person to take him or her to the refuge point and ensure that a Fire Marshal is aware that evacuation assistance is needed, if necessary sending this message via another member of staff. We have designated safe refuge points around the school with signs advising of their location. The refuge areas in St Joseph’s Building have an Emergency Voice Communication System (EVC) which, when operated, will ring in the Reception Area and show on the Refuge Call panel (located beside the main fire panel) the position of the disabled person.



- The teacher will ensure that the name of the disabled person and his or her carer, together with the location of their safe refuge point, are passed to the School Fire Safety Manager as soon as he or she reaches the assembly point.
- The School Fire Safety Manager is to ensure that the disabled person is evacuated from the Refuge as soon as is practical by school staff in accordance with the agreed Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).

#### *Accounting for Personnel*

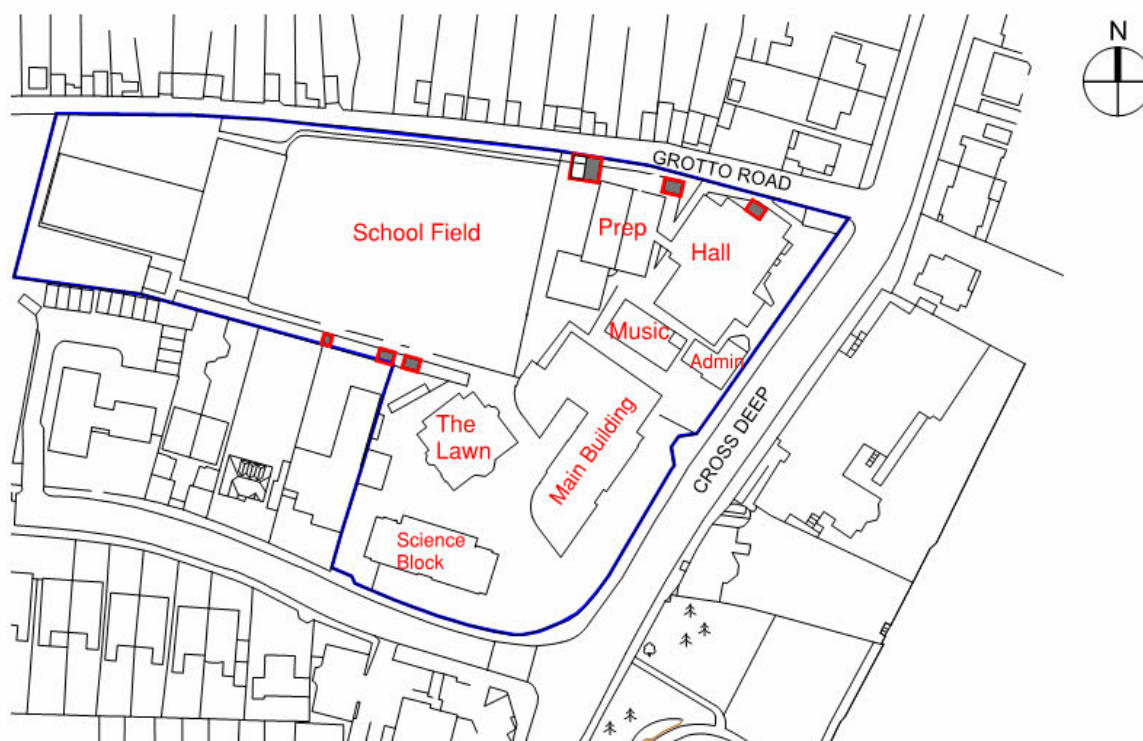
- Form Tutors/Class Teachers are responsible for conducting a head count of pupils on arrival at the assembly point, and for ensuring that the name of anyone who cannot be accounted for (and, if possible, their likely location) is passed immediately to the School Fire Safety Manager.
- Nominated Administrative Assistants are responsible for conducting a head count of non-teaching and teaching staff (Visitors, Contractors/ Site Staff) on arrival at the assembly point.
- Information on any missing persons or any disabled persons being given assistance to evacuate will be passed by the School Fire Safety Manager to the Fire Brigade as soon as they arrive. This will allow the Fire Brigade to either commit resources to the area to locate any missing persons or in the case of disabled persons to contact the specific refuge points and speak to them by the EVC.

#### *Contacting the Emergency Services*

- The responsibility for calling the fire services rests with the Alarm Receiving Centre (ADT). When a fire alarm sounds at the school, ADT will contact one of their

nominated persons to check whether this is a false alarm; if there is no answer or a fire is confirmed then they will contact the London Fire Brigade.

- Should a fire be confirmed at the School, either Reception or any member of staff should contact the fire brigade by dialling 999 and asking for the fire service; any available information should be given to the emergency operator that may assist the fire service when they attend the site.



### **Addition of Creative Hub**

From September 2024 the 'Creative Hub' at the site of the St James Hall became part of the footprint of the School. Due to size there is no electronic fire detection system at the Creative Hub, in line with Govt. Regulations.

#### *Processes, Machines or Power That Must Be Shut Down*

Staff in the following areas are responsible for ensuring any hot work equipment is turned off using the emergency shut off devices provided:

- Science Block
- Main kitchens
- Food Technology

### **Non-emergency Roles and Responsibilities**

#### *Fire Safety Manager*



The Bursar is the designated School Fire Safety Manager, who is responsible for ensuring that:

- The Fire Safety Policy is kept under regular review by Governors and the SMT;
- The Fire Safety Policy is communicated throughout the School;
- Everyone in the School (including visitors and contractors) is given clear instructions on their actions to prevent fire and in the event of fire;
- Records are kept of the fire induction training given to new staff and pupils;
- Procedures for emergency evacuation are regularly tested and lessons absorbed;
- Ensure there is at least one trained Fire Marshal assigned to every building and that deputies are nominated in case of temporary absences;
- Fire Risk Assessments are regularly reviewed and updated;
- Fire prevention measures are followed;
- Defects with fire safety equipment are corrected;
- Fire procedures and Risk Assessments are reviewed on each occasion that a building is altered, extended or rebuilt, or when new buildings are acquired.

#### *Fire Marshals*

- Are aware of their specific area of responsibility;
- Fire Marshals are to be aware of any higher risk areas in their area of responsibility and ensure that basic fire safety measures such as fire doors and extinguishers are kept in good order; any defects should be reported to the Site Manager;
- Fire Marshals are to ensure they receive regular refresher training.

#### *Reception Staff*

- Ensure visitors to the school are given basic information on fire evacuation procedures and their personal safety;
- Ensure that any visitors books and school registers are taken to the assembly point.

#### *All Staff and pupils*

All new staff (teaching and non-teaching) and all new pupils are given a briefing on the School's emergency evacuation procedures on their first day at School. They are shown where the emergency exits and escape routes are located, and walked to the assembly point. Fire action notices are displayed on the walls of all rooms and corridors, and we make certain that everyone knows what they look like, and where they should go on hearing the fire alarm. All new staff are shown how to activate the fire alarms if they see or smell a fire.

The safe evacuation of everyone - staff and pupils alike - is a priority. Protecting property comes second. No one should attempt to fight a fire at the expense of their own, or anyone else's safety. No one should attempt to use a fire extinguisher before they have been trained in its use.

#### **Fire Drills**

A Fire Drill is held at least once every term. This, combined with a programme of inducting new staff and pupils with emergency escape procedures and the presence of trained Fire Marshals in every building, helps to ensure that the School can be safely evacuated in the event of a fire.

## **Fire Safety Training**

### *All Staff*

All staff should receive basic fire safety induction training and attend refresher sessions at predetermined intervals. The training should take account of the findings of the risk assessment and be easily understood by all those attending.

Training should be given in respect of the following:

- How people will be warned if there is a fire;
- What staff, students or pupils should do if they discover a fire;
- How the evacuation of the premises should be carried out;
- Where people should assemble after they have left the premises and procedures for checking whether the premises have been evacuated;
- Identification of key escape routes, how people can gain access to them and escape from them to a place of total safety;
- Arrangements for fighting fire;
- The duties and identity of staff and pupils who have specific responsibilities if there is a fire;
- Arrangements for the safe evacuation of people identified as being especially at risk, such as those with disabilities, contractors, members of the public and visitors;
- Specific arrangements, if necessary, for high-fire-risk areas;
- Arrangements for an emergency plan to be used by a hirer of part of the premises;
- Contingency plans for when life safety systems, such as fire detection and warning systems are out of order;
- How the fire and rescue service and any other necessary services will be called and who will be responsible for doing this;
- Procedures for meeting the fire and rescue service on their arrival and notifying them of any special risks, e.g. the location of highly flammable materials.

### *Fire Marshals*

Fire Marshal training should be carried out for those people nominated to assist in the evacuation; Fire Marshals should have a more comprehensive knowledge and their training should include:

- A detailed knowledge of the fire evacuation procedures for the premises;
- Guidelines on how to identify and encourage others to use the most appropriate escape route;
- Details of their specific area of responsibility and how to search safely and recognise areas that are unsafe to enter;

- Guidelines on ways to recognise the difficulties that some people, particularly if disabled, may have in escaping and any special evacuation arrangements that have been pre-planned;
- Where appropriate, additional training ; in the use of firefighting equipment;
- An understanding of the need for reporting of faults, incidents and near misses.

All training and instruction should be recorded in a log book or similar means. The following are examples of matters which may need to be included in such a record:

- The date of the instruction or exercise;
- The duration (e.g. time to evacuate), location and the name of the person giving the instruction or drill;
- The names of the persons receiving the instruction or taking part in the drill;
- The nature of the instruction or drill.

### **Fire Prevention Measures**

The following fire prevention measures must be in place:

- Escape Routes and Emergency Exits;
- Fire notices and evacuation signs displayed in every room, corridor and stairwell;
- Fire extinguishers (of the appropriate type) and smoke/heat detectors are located in every building in accordance with the recommendations of our professional advisors (alarms can be manually activated by breaking a glass panel, and are automatically activated when smoke/heat is detected automatically);
- All stairs, passages and emergency exits are illuminated by emergency lighting
- The master panel for the alarm system is located adjacent to Reception and shows the location of a fire;
- Alarms sound in all parts of the buildings (verbally at the Creative Hub);
- Fire routes and exits are kept clear at all times. (All staff are responsible for keeping fire escape routes clear. The Site Manager, together with the Site Team, is responsible for periodically checking that escape routes are clear.)

### *Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) and Fire Prevention*

The Site Manager is responsible for:

- Arranging the testing of all fire alarms/sounders weekly (and recording all tests and defects);
- The Site Manager must also test emergency lights monthly and record the results;
- Periodic tests of fire extinguishers, fire detectors and emergency lights must also be carried out by approved contractors who will be accredited as 'competent persons';
- Ensuring that PAT testing is carried out on all portable electrical equipment by a competent electrician; the school fire safety manager is aware of the risk based

testing guidance available from the HSE (HSG 107) and testing is carried out according to the risks presented by the equipment, tests will be recorded;

- Checking with the fire safety industry regarding charging of small electrical items such as mobile phones and E-cigarettes where incorrect chargers are being used and starting fires; any fire safety policy should ensure that where staff are permitted to charge personal items on site that they use genuine chargers supplied by the manufacturers with their electronic devices or genuine replacements.
- Ensuring the fixed electrical installation is tested regularly in accordance with BS 7671 (IEE Wiring Regulations); the BS recommends that the fixed system in educational premises is tested at least every five years;
- Ensuring the lightning protection is tested as per BS EN 62305; Ensuring the build-up of grease deposits within the kitchen extract ventilation is kept to an acceptable minimum - the hoods, filters and associated drains and traps will be cleaned at least as frequently as recommended by the manufacturers; the ventilation ducting will be deep cleaned at least annually as recommended for light use systems (2-6 hrs per day) or more frequently where usage is moderate (6-12hrs every 6 months) or heavy (12-16hrs quarterly);
- Recording all tests (records kept in the Bursar's office);
- Maintain contingency plans for when life safety systems such as fire-detection and warning systems, emergency lighting or building power systems are out of order;
- Prepare post-incident and contingency plans.

#### Safe Storage

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

#### Rubbish and Combustible Materials

- Flammable rubbish is stored away from buildings in the correct containers.
- Combustible materials used in teaching, catering, maintenance, grounds and caretaking are stored in flame proof cupboards

#### *Letting or hiring the School*

Our standard contractual terms used for letting and hiring the School covers fire safety and specifies that the hirer should certify that they have read and understood the School's fire safety policy and procedures. A member of the School's Site Team is always on duty or on call when the School is let or hired for an outside function or event.

Specifically the contractual terms will cover the following items:

- A Statement of Intent regarding fire safety;
- Allocated responsibility for fire safety to a named person from the hiring organisation;
- Areas of responsibility and whether or not the hirer/contractor will be responsible for bringing their own fire extinguishers onto the site or whether they will be permitted to use extinguishers provided by the School;

- Limitations on use of the School's facilities; note that fire safety signs should not be covered or obscured by the letting company's own posters;
- Fire safety training policy for the hirer's employees upon induction, for staff required to perform additional duties such as Fire Marshals and/or firefighting using the portable appliances provided and appropriate refresher training;
- Fire evacuation arrangements;
- The means for summoning the fire service;
- The specific role of the Fire Marshal in the evacuation plan and firefighting within the premises;
- The specific arrangements for evacuating people with disabilities including those with learning difficulties and the writing of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs);
- Note should also be made of management of electrical equipment including items brought in by staff or other users of the facilities etc;
- Reporting of any defective equipment, particularly electrical equipment, to the school staff;
- Arrangements for signing in and out of the School for hirer's employees, students and visitors.

**Reviewed: September 2024**

**Next Review date: September 2025**