



PROSPECT HOUSE  
SCHOOL

FIRE POLICY

September 2022

## Introduction

It is the overall aim is to minimise the risks to staff, pupils, visitors and members of the public in the immediate vicinity of the school, which may arise from fire, and to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

This will be achieved by:

- conducting, recording and acting upon regular fire risk assessments
- regular fire drills, recorded and commented on
- ensuring suitable precautions are taken to avoid fires occurring
- regular maintenance and checks on all equipment and services
- clear roles and responsibilities for all staff

## FIRE POLICY STATEMENT

1. In order that children and staff should be able to rapidly evacuate the school's premises in the event of fire, it is a requirement that the school should hold a minimum of two fire drill practices a term. The procedure for these fire practices 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. (If a staff member is not in charge of children, however, 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. Student teachers changing class to a class new to them must be briefed by the class teacher as soon a change is initiated on the class's procedures, exit routes and assembly point.
8. It is the school's 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 the film Fire Extinguishers (viewable as streaming video within each school from Google Drive) and trained on how to operate a fire extinguisher.

## SECTION A - HOW TO HOLD A FIRE PRACTICE (HEAD, DELEGATED SENIOR TEACHERS)

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 classes have reached their assembly points 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 class teacher that his or her class 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 and will ask you to 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 gas cupboard key, the school registers, the Class Lists, the Staff Lists, a mobile phone and the laminated plans of the building. (The Class Lists, Staff Lists and laminated plans must be kept in one folder marked "FIRE", readily accessible in each 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. Taking with you a mobile phone, the SMK key and the "FIRE" file (containing the school registers, the Class Lists, the Staff Lists, and the laminated plans of 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 class 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 all classes 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, send a text /email to all parents or if need be 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 will ask you 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 CLASS 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 class's laminated daily register from the office member, 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 class 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 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, as 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 class. 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) and line up class by class.
13. At the assembly point, call your register. Each class'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. Office staff will also take out the signing in book and visitors' book for checking nobody is trapped within the building.
15. If the roll is reconciled, the class teacher should raise his or her register or in some other effective manner to 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.
16. Children having individual lessons should re-join their class as quickly as is feasible commensurate with orderliness and safety and will then be included in the roll call for the class concerned.
17. Await further instructions.
18. Do not under any circumstances leave the children in your class 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 or her (them) to the assembly point of his or her (their) class.
3. Hand the child/children into the care and control of their class teacher(s) and wait with them for further instructions.
4. The class teacher may ask you to go to the Head (as the Incident Controller) to confirm that his or her class is complete with the roll reconciled.
5. Other class teachers may also ask you to report the status of their class 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 class 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, and 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 by the front door, so that, in the event of a fire, no firemen 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 in the 'Fire Book'. If they return during the school day this must also be entered in the 'Fire Book'. 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. Messrs. Lee Security (London) Limited (contact Mr Ezzard Lee (Managing Director) or Miss Jackie Crowson (Operations Director) on tel. no. 0844 800 3411) is responsible for the maintenance of the intruder and fire alarm systems..
2. Lee Security is contracted to attend each 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 email to sales@leesecurity.com. A copy of the email 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 – Chubb Fire & Security Limited (CFS)

1. CFS is responsible for maintaining the fire fighting equipment at the school. The contact number is 0344 879 1755. CFS 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. CFS is also responsible for the supply of fire signs, etc., and for the replacement of any Fire Log once it is full.
3. After fire training each year (usually in September), CFS will take away the training extinguishers depleted in the training sessions.
4. When any fire-fighting equipment is serviced at 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 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. A good point to do this exercise is immediately after the weekly staff meeting. 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 luminaires 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 Head and the Deputy Head and Head of Lower School are also responsible for ensuring that escape corridors, fire doors and fire exits are kept clear of obstructions at all times. The Head, Deputy Head 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, the Head 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.
- 2. A copy of the school's current fire risk evaluation is to be kept in the school office in the Fire Log.