

St. Mary's College



FIRE SAFETY POLICY

College, Preparatory School &
Early Years Department

All sites collectively referred to in this
document as 'The College'

2023/2024

Fire Safety Policy

Date of Policy- October 2015

Date of Review- October 2023 (PD)

Next Review – October 2024

This policy has taken guidance from but not limited to:

HM Government – Fire Safety Risk Assessment for Educational Premises, June 2006

Fire Safety in New and Existing School Buildings, March 2014

DfE (2015) ‘Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions’

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974)

Management of health and Safety at Work regulations 1999

Statement of Intent

St. Mary’s College is a responsible provider of education and employer that takes its fire safety duties seriously. For that reason, this policy has been formulated to help the College comply with its legal obligations to staff and visitors under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Order). The College is committed to taking all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, students and other persons who may be affected by its activities.

This policy addresses our obligation under the Order that requires the College to:

- Develop a policy to minimize the risks associated with fire
- Reduce the risk of an outbreak of fire
- Reduce the risk of the spread of fire
- Provide a means of escape
- Demonstrate preventive action
- Maintain documentation and records in respect of fire safety management

4. Responsibilities of the Governors

The governors, in consultation with the Principal, will:

Ensure personal and whole-school familiarity with the requirements of the appropriate legislation and codes of practice.

Create and monitor a management structure responsible for health and safety in the school, including but not limited to, fire safety.

- Ensure there is a detailed and enforceable policy for fire safety, and that the policy is implemented by all.
- Help to put in place measures to identify risks relating to possible accidents and injuries, suggesting reasonable adjustments to prevent them occurring.

4.1. The Governors endeavour to provide:

- A safe place for all users of the site, including staff, pupils and visitors.
- Safe means of entry and exit for all site users.
- Equipment, grounds and systems of work which are safe.
- Safe arrangements for the handling, storage and transportation of any articles and substances.
- Safe and healthy working conditions that comply with statutory requirements, codes of practice and guidance.
- Supervision, training and instruction, so that all staff can perform their duties in a healthy and safe manner.
- Where necessary, protective equipment and clothing, along with any necessary guidance and instruction.
- Adequate funds to ensure the training of the Fire Manager and all other staff.

5. Responsibilities of the Principal

5.1. The Principal will:

- Oversee the day-to-day development and implementation of safe working practices and conditions for all staff, pupils and visitors.
- Take reasonably practicable steps to ensure the Fire Safety Policy is implemented by all members of staff across the school.
- Employ or designate a Fire Manager to be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the Fire Safety Policy.
- Take steps to ensure all members of staff, pupils and visitors are familiar with the Fire Safety Policy.

- Work with the Fire Manager to review and update this policy accordingly, every year.
- Identify risks relating to possible accidents and injuries, and make reasonable adjustments and suggestions to prevent them occurring.

3. Responsibilities of the Fire Manager

The College has an appointed 'responsible person' who is charged with the responsibility of ensuring the safety of the staff and any person who may legally come onto College property and of anyone not on the premises but who may be affected. The person appointed as the 'responsible person' is: The Principal. The responsible person must ensure that competent persons carry out Fire Safety Risk Assessments.

Fire Safety Manager

The Fire safety manager should manage fire safety by implementing the policies agreed and monitored by the Leadership team and the Governing body. To do this the manager should consult with professionals from the local authority, the local fire brigade and the College insurers.

A fire log-book in which a record of essential information such as evacuation procedures, tests on firefighting equipment, details of training sessions and results of fire drills must be maintained.

The Fire Safety Manager is responsible for all sites belonging to St. Mary's College. This includes the Senior school, the Sports Centre, the Early Years Department, the Preparatory school and the Games field

The College will appoint a Fire Safety Manager to carry out the following duties:

- To ensure the Fire Safety Policy is promulgated to the entire College community. The Fire Safety Policy must be kept under regular review by Governors and the College Leadership Team
- To check fire detection and protection systems are maintained and tested and records kept.
- To ensure that everyone in the College (including visitors and contractors) are given clear written instructions on where they should go in the event of fire.
- Liaising with colleagues to minimise the incidence of fire (fire prevention); e.g., good housekeeping and security
- To produce an Emergency Fire Plan for all sites and put up notices in each room. And to ensure procedures and arrangements for emergency evacuation are regularly tested and lessons absorbed
- To ensure fire escape routes and fire exit doors/passageways are kept unobstructed and doors operate correctly
- To be responsible for organising suitable fire safety training and to maintain records of the fire induction training given to all staff
- To ensure that fire drills are conducted on all sites.
- To ensure fire risk assessments are conducted and that they are regularly reviewed and updated.
- To ensure fire prevention measures are meticulously followed.
- To ensure fire procedures and risk assessments are reviewed on each occasion that a building is altered, extended or rebuilt, or when new buildings are acquired

- To record dates and any subsequent actions required after all fire practices
- To ensure certificates for the installation and maintenance of fire-fighting systems and equipment are kept.
- To conduct termly fire safety inspections.
- To make more frequent informal checks to confirm that the fire safety rules are being followed and to record dates and any subsequent actions required after all informal checks
- To ensure a fire safety report is included in the regular health and safety reports to the Health and Safety Officer and governing body

6. Responsibilities of Staff Members

6.1. Staff members will:

- Take reasonable care of their health and safety.
- Cooperate with their colleagues, the Fire Manager and Principal on all fire safety matters.
- Carry out their work in accordance with fire safety training and instructions.
- Inform the Fire Manager of any work situation representing serious and immediate danger, so that remedial action can be taken.
- Familiarise themselves with all their responsibilities as set out in the Fire Safety Policy, and aspects of their work relating to potential fire hazards.
- Avoid any conduct which puts themselves or others at risk.
- Follow, and help to carry out, relevant risk assessments to ensure the safety of themselves and other staff members, pupils and visitors.
- Ensure that all staff, pupils and visitors are applying fire safety regulations and adhering to all rules, routines and procedures in place.
- Ensure all equipment is in good working order and safe to use, including adequate fire safety guards. Staff will also not entertain all improper use of such equipment.
- Use the correct equipment and tools for their work and any protective clothing supplied.
- Ensure any toxic, hazardous or flammable substances are used correctly, and stored and labelled as appropriate.
- Report any defects in equipment or facilities to the designated Fire Manager and/or the designated health and safety officer.
- Take an interest in fire safety matters, and suggest any changes they think are appropriate.
- Make suggestions as to how the school can reduce the risk of fires.
- Exercise good standards of housekeeping and cleanliness.

- Adhere to their common law duty to act as a prudent parent would when in charge of pupils.
- All staff 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 in complying with any procedures that the College may introduce as a measure to protect the safety and well-being of all staff and visitors.
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7. Responsibilities of pupils

7.1. All pupils will:

- Exercise personal responsibility for the health and safety of themselves and others.
- Respond to the instruction given by staff members in an emergency, e.g. evacuation procedures.
- Observe all health and safety rules of the school.
- Not misuse, neglect or interfere with items supplied for their, and other pupils' health and safety.
- Report any defects in equipment or facilities to their teacher as soon as possible.

8. Responsibilities of visitors and contractors

8.1. All visitors and contractors will:

- Familiarise themselves with all health and safety policies and procedures including, but not limited to, the Fire Safety Policy.
- Be aware of the school's evacuation procedure and fire assembly points.
- Respond to the instruction given by staff members in an emergency.
- Put a principal person in charge, who will take responsibility for safe practice, in the event the school is used for purposes not under the direction of the Principal, e.g. building works.
- Inform the Principal of all potential risks to staff, pupils and visitors.
- Assist the Principal and Fire Manager in carrying out relevant risk assessments, suggesting ways to mitigate potential risks, before any work is carried out.
- Report any defects in equipment or facilities to the Fire Manager and/or the designated health and safety officer or, failing this, the nearest member of staff.

- Discuss any concerns regarding fire safety with the Principal or Fire Manager

9. Documentation and Records

The College documents and keeps records to prove that we have acted responsibly. The following records will be kept in good order, up to date and available for scrutiny at any time by the Fire Manager, unless otherwise stated:

- This fire safety policy
- Fire evacuation procedures
- Copies of all risk assessments
- Records of all fire training
- A record of all fire drills (at least two per year) listing all attendees, evacuation times and any comments.
- Records of tests of fire alarms.
- Record of inspection and testing of all firefighting equipment
- Records of periodic tests of emergency lighting
- Records of all scheduled and unscheduled maintenance of fire detection and alarm systems
- Records of inspection, risk assessment and maintenance of workplace and electrical equipment,
- Storage of hazardous substances and other hazards identified with fire safety
- Records of any unwanted alarm activations and action
- Plans of the College Buildings

10. Communication

The College will ensure that any person it employs (directly or indirectly) is provided with all information related to fire safety and consult with our employees on all matters of fire safety policy and arrangements. We will keep staff informed of any changes that are made to our fire safety procedures and fire risk assessment. A fire safety briefing will form part of the induction training for new members of staff. We will also ensure that all visitors to our premises are briefed in the evacuation procedures and not left alone unless they are aware of, and familiar with, all available escape routes.

11. Procedures

The College has the following procedures in order to maintain high standards of fire safety:

- The fire evacuation procedures will be practiced at least twice annually.
- All staff will be given training, including a fire safety briefing as part of the induction process, and will receive refresher training as appropriate. Further training would be required if there were any change that may affect fire safety.
- All training will be provided during normal working hours as far as reasonably possible (e.g. any after school workers may be required to attend during the day).
- All staff will be trained in the use of fire extinguishers every two years.

- All escape routes will be established, kept in good working order and free from obstruction and combustible materials at all times. Operation of fire exit doors will be tested.
- Firefighting equipment will be provided. In general, this means fire extinguishers but additional provision of fire blankets may be made where deemed appropriate by the findings of a risk assessment.
- All fire related equipment will be regularly serviced and maintained by a contractor. If any member of the College notices defective or missing equipment, they must report it to the Fire Safety Manager or Deputy Fire Safety Manager.
- All available technological solutions to fire prevention will be examined by the College and innovative practices and equipment will be adopted as appropriate – advice on available equipment and solutions will be sought at regular intervals from the Colleges' contractors.
- An appropriate fire detection and alarm system will be provided. The type and extent of the alarm system provided will be based on the findings of the relevant risk assessment.
- Alarm systems will be tested weekly. Staff will be told when a test is scheduled.
- Emergency lighting will be provided for escape routes where applicable. The need for and the extent of the system will be determined by the findings of the relevant risk assessment.
- The risk of fire spread will be controlled by the provision of fire resisting construction, and or fire/smoke resisting doors. These provisions will be kept in good order as part of our regular maintenance schedule. All staff are required to ensure that any fire door provided remains closed at all times.
- Any other safety systems provided will be checked monthly to ensure correct operation, where necessary e.g. emergency lighting, fire doors etc.
- Appropriate signs and notices will be displayed, giving clear instructions to staff and others in the event of a fire. In addition, signs will be provided to indicate the position of fire extinguishers, fire alarm call points and, to indicate the emergency exit routes.

In the normal course of their work, maintenance staff will make it their business to ensure that students, staff, visitors and other users of the College buildings keep exits and open areas clear of debris, furniture etc., that fire doors are not propped open, fire extinguishers have not been removed from their brackets and fire signs and notices have not been removed.

Risk Assessments

A competent person, shall make, record, review and, where applicable, revise Fire Safety Risk Assessments at regular intervals in accordance with The Order. They should also be carried out if there has been any significant change in the physical layout of a building or a change of use.

The Fire Safety Risk Assessments must take into consideration everyone who may come on our premises, whether they are employees, visitors or members of the public. Particular attention will be paid to people who may have a disability or anyone with special needs.

Heads of department have a duty to identify all hazardous substances and other potential or actual hazards and to make this information available to those who carry out the risk assessments.

A 'five step' approach will be taken as follows:

- Step 1: Identify potential fire hazards in the workplace.

- Step 2: Decide who might be in danger, in the event of a fire, in the workplace or while trying to escape from it, and note their location.
- Step 3: Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether the existing fire precautions are adequate or whether more should be done to get rid of the hazard or to control the risks (e.g. by improving the fire precautions).
- Step 4: Record findings and details of the action taken as a result.
- Step 5: Keep the assessment under review and revise it when necessary.

12. Preventative measures

12.1. Fire hazards, such as hot surfaces, naked flames, electrical equipment and flammable liquids, are identified by the Fire Manager and measures are put in place to ensure these risks are mitigated and controlled.

12.2. Hot surfaces, such as electrical heaters, are kept uncovered and clear at all time.

12.3. All flammable materials and fuels, such as paper, cardboard and solvents are securely disposed of.

12.4. Where possible, naked flames and radiant heaters are replaced by fixed convector heaters or central heating systems.

12.5. Relevant risk assessments are undertaken before using certain equipment, e.g. the D&T Room Risk Assessment.

12.6. Stocks of flammable liquids, materials and gases are kept to a minimum and, where possible, outside, to ensure the risk of fires can be mitigated. If storing materials outside is viable or possible, they should be kept locked in secure cupboards, away from pupils.

12.7. Flammable liquids, materials and gases are kept separate from each other in storage.

12.8. All curtains, upholstered furniture and other soft furnishings are fire retardant, or have been treated to ensure their safety.

13. Cooking facilities

13.1. To ensure potential fire hazards are mitigated whilst cooking, as part of the curriculum and in the school canteen, extra measures will be taken to ensure the safety of staff members, pupils, visitors and contractors.

- 13.2. The school canteen will be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each day, by the school's cleaners, to ensure potential fire hazards, such as excess grease, are mitigated.
- 13.3. The school's additional cooking rooms, e.g. for food technology lessons, will be cleaned after each lesson, by the teacher and the school's cleaners
- 13.4. The school's site manager will check all electrical equipment in the school canteen and classrooms termly, to ensure their usability and safety.
- 13.5. An electrical engineer will check all electrical equipment in the school canteen and classrooms annually, to ensure their usability and carry out any maintenance.
- 13.6. Flammable materials, such as flour, will be kept away from heat sources, including microwaves, cookers and radiators.
- 13.7. Food waste, including paper food wrappers, will be properly disposed of, and bins emptied daily to mitigate fire risks.
- 13.10 Staff members, including lunchtime supervisors, will report any defective equipment to the site manager, Fire Manager or headteacher as soon as possible.

14. Fire hazards

- 14.1. Relevant risk assessments will be conducted to ensure areas for concern are identified and addressed.
- 14.2. Waste paper bins are emptied daily to mitigate risks.
- 14.3. To minimise the risk of a fire, outdoor waste containers and refuse bins will be kept at least five metres from the school building at all times.
- 14.4. Lighters, matches and other sources of ignition are kept in a locked store cupboard, away from pupils and can only be accessed after gaining permission from the FSO.
- 14.5. Electrical equipment is reviewed in accordance with relevant school policy, and steps are taken, e.g. regular checks by the FSO, to ensure equipment is maintained to a high standard.

15. Procedure in the event of a fire

- 15.1. The person who discovers the fire/smoke will sound the nearest fire alarm.
- 15.2. On hearing the alarm, the building will be evacuated without delay and all pupils, staff members and visitors will proceed to their designated fire evacuation point for a register called for staff and visitors and for pupils

- 15.3. During registers, pupils will remain silent to ensure the process can be completed quickly.
- 15.4. As soon as the fire alarm sounds the fire brigade will be called by the Fire Manager.
- 15.5. People will only be allowed to re-enter the building once it has been deemed safe by the Fire Manager or other responsible person, e.g. member of the fire brigade.
- 15.6. If the building is not safe to re-enter all staff members, pupils and visitors will be sent home until further notice. Pupils may be sent to another building if it is deemed fit for purpose by the Fire Manager and a trained professional, e.g. member of the fire brigade.
- 15.7. In the event someone is injured in the fire, the Fire Manager will ring for an ambulance immediately. Whilst waiting for the emergency services, the school's first aider will administer any first aid required.
- 15.8. Measures, such as multiple fire escapes and exits are put in place to ensure all staff members, pupils and visitors can escape the school.
- 15.9. To ensure the fire alarm is heard throughout the school buildings, manual call points are fitted on numerous floors and throughout the schools.
- 15.10. Fire exits are kept clear and are clearly signed.
- 15.11. The school has a relevant and up-to-date FEP in place.
- 15.12. As part of their training, all staff members will familiarise themselves with the FEP.
- 15.13. Details of the school's fire evacuation points are available in the FEP.

16. Detection equipment

- 16.1. All areas and rooms, including offices and cupboards, within the school are fitted with a smoke detector. Larger rooms, such as the school hall, are fitted with a heat and smoke detector.
- 16.2. Areas with a greater risk of fire, such as kitchens and science labs, will be fitted with two smoke and heat detectors.
- 16.3. Detection equipment will be tested by the site manager once per half-term.
- 16.4. A trained electrical engineer will test the smoke and fire detectors at the start of every term; any required maintenance will also be carried out by the engineer.

16.5. The school's budget is adjusted to ensure the upkeep of fire detection equipment.

17. Protection equipment

17.1. Fire protection equipment is available and easily accessible all around the school.

17.2. All fire protection equipment, including but not limited to fire extinguishers, hosepipes and fire blankets are checked by the Fire Manager

17.3. The school's budget is adjusted to ensure the upkeep of fire protection equipment.

17.4. Emergency lighting is installed; in the event that normal lights fail during a fire these emergency lights will illuminate exit routes and help people escape if visibility is poor.

17.5. Emergency lighting will be tested annually by the contractor to ensure it remains in full working order.

17.6. Protective clothing, such as lab coats and goggles, will be provided and funds will be made available to replace or purchase additional equipment from the school's budget.

18. Fire drills

18.1. The Fire Manager will carry out random fire drills at least twice per year.

18.2. All staff members, pupils, visitors and contractors will be expected to take part in the drill.

18.3. Pupils will go to their class's designated evacuation point for a registration call.

18.4. Class teachers and pupils will only be allowed to return to their lessons/activities once all registers have been called.

18.5. Non-teaching staff members, e.g. the school business manager, visitors and contractors, will be allowed to return to their work once the Fire Manager has finished the registers.

18.6. Depending on the success of the fire drill, e.g. how long the evacuation took; the Fire Manager may make suggestions based on how the school can ensure the safe and quick evacuation of the school. Any improvements will be noted in the school's Fire Evacuation Record.

18.7. During the fire drill, teachers will take a zero-tolerance approach to pupils misbehaving or running.

18.8. Pupils will be expected to behave vigilantly, as they would in the event of a real fire.

19. Staff training

19.1. Staff will undergo mandatory fire safety training after joining the school. This will be led by the Fire Manager/Teacher responsible for induction and include details about the fire precautions in the workplace and emergency procedures, in accordance with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended).

19.2. Refresher training will be undertaken to ensure staff members are reminded of the procedures in place, and know what to do in the event of a fire.

19.3. All updates to the Fire Safety Policy and other relevant school documents, such as risk assessments and procedures, will be communicated to all staff members.

19.4. To help ensure staff members are knowledgeable about fire safety, the Fire manager will communicate updates and correspondence.

20. Evacuation of Disabled Persons from the School Building

Measures for people with disabilities

The Fire Manager and Principal will be notified of anyone who may be unable to evacuate the school unassisted – this person will be subject to a PEEP, created by the Fire Manager. This may include being led out by a teacher.

To avoid serious injury, extra measures, such as editing timetables and moving classes, will be taken to ensure disabled pupils, members of staff or visitors don't attend lessons up flights of stairs, unless reasonable provisions are in place.

Staff are taught to modify evacuation routes for people with disabilities as part of their training.

Visitors, pupils and staff with disabilities will be informed of the school's evacuation plans on their arrival at the school.

Students and employees with a disability should already have been identified and information held in the school office and with the SEND coordinator

Section 1 Producing a PEEP

Staff

This will be produced in conjunction with the Fire Manager and the individual's line manager

Pupil

This will be produced in conjunction with the Fire Manager and the SEND coordinator

Section 2 Identification and Implementation

Staff

Disabled staff must have identified themselves to the Principal and any specific requirements must be addressed as soon as they are known.

Existing staff identified will the PEEP in consultation with the school without delay if such a plan has not already be completed or when there is a change in a person's ability to make their way out of the building (temporary or permanent). For all new staff this forms part of the induction process. This is in confidence and it should be made clear that if they need help, it will be provided.

Some people may have difficulty in evacuation situations that they would not normally have e.g. people who have asthma may be affected in smoky conditions caused by fire, or people may be affected by the stress of an emergency situation.

Where a disabled person has elected to make an exceptional effort to get out unaided, it may not be practical for them to practice during drills. However, timing a short section of the escape will assist in establishing how long a full escape might take

Pupils

When a child is enrolled in the school, their escape plan is developed as part of the admission process. Care is taken that all disabled children are provided with a plan if they need one, whether they have been provided with a statement or not.

Pupils with learning difficulties may need to practice their routes for escape more regularly than termly. If so, this is written into their PEEP.

All people involved in the escape plans for PEEPs involving pupils will need to practice. However, to avoid unnecessary distress or risk to some pupils, simulated escape may be more appropriate.

Visitors – individual

Individual visitors to a building may fall into two groups: those who are invited to a building and casual visitors who attend of their own volition.

Occasional visitors/contractors

The HM Government publication 'Means of Escape for Disabled People', which is endorsed by the Disability Rights Commission, details escape measures for ten disability groupings:

- Electric wheelchair user
- Wheelchair user
- Mobility impaired person
- Asthma and other breathing / health issues
- Visually impaired person
- Hearing impaired person
- Dyslexic/orientation disorders
- Learning difficulty / autism
- Mental health problems
- Dexterity problems

A prominent notice at reception invites persons entering the premises to declare if they require assistance. The notice may read:

"We operate a system of assisted evacuation for disabled persons and others who may need help in an emergency. Please speak to our reception staff and we will provide you with a suitable strategy.

It is the responsibility of the disabled person to identify themselves when they are informed of the availability of a choice of evacuation plan and to cooperate with the school by giving any information necessary for the safe execution of the plan.

All staff are responsible for ensuring visitors leave the building safely, whether or not they have a disability and should point out the escape routes.

It should not be assumed that because a person has a disability that they will need or ask for a PEEP. Some will be confident that they can get out of the school building unaided. Conversely there should be an opportunity for other people who may not be considered as having a disability to request an escape plan e.g. epilepsy, asthma, heart disease or emotional problems.

A system of standard plans are in place. For invited visitors, the plans are put in place prior to the meeting, or they are presented to casual visitors when they book in at reception.

Having considered the risks, the Fire Manager will propose specific procedures for assisting in the evacuation of persons with a known disability. A "buddy" will be appointed for any student or employee requiring assistance in an emergency evacuation. Where teachers have a student with a known disability, they must ensure that that student is aware that the alarm has been triggered and that they follow the evacuation procedure accordingly.

Section 3 Specific Evacuation Requirements

Wheelchair Users/Persons with Mobility Difficulty

Wheelchair users or any person with difficulty walking (e.g. anyone temporarily using crutches) should wait until everyone else has left the room before making their way to the exit, assisted by their “buddy” or other third party if required.

Visitors with disabilities

On arrival, disabled visitors to the School should be asked to identify any special requirements in the case of an emergency evacuation. The person hosting the visitor should ensure the visitor’s safety in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Wherever possible (i.e. when on ground floors) all persons, including wheelchair users, should make their own way out of the building by utilising the fire escape routes. Whenever the route is blocked or the person is above ground floor, wheelchair users must be either assisted by their “buddy” or other third party. When evacuating the upper floors of the buildings, any pupil unable to leave without assistance should be assisted by the staff member teaching them, in line with their PEEP. Any visitor should be assisted by their host, in line with the standard PEEP

20. Monitoring and review

- 20.1. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Fire Manager, and after any changes to relevant legislation or statutory guidance.
- 20.2. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 20.3. Changes pertaining to pupils, e.g. their responsibilities, will be communicated to parents and pupils.