



ALDENHAM  
— FOUNDATION —

# **Fire Safety Policy**

**Revised October 2024**

**by the Bursar**

## **Scope**

This guidance is applicable to all premises under the control of the Foundation and details the approach to the control of risk from fire.

## **Objectives**

To ensure that risks from fire are identified and that arrangements are in place to control those risks. To enable the Foundation to comply with its duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and other education specific guidance.

## **Guidance and responsibilities**

The Foundation has in place procedures for:

- Carrying out fire risk assessment.
- Preventing fires.
- Evacuation in the event of a fire.
- Maintaining and checking all fire detection, alarm and fighting systems.

The Governors direct that the Head of Foundation shall ensure that the arrangements in this policy are carried out. The Health & Safety Governor liaises closely with the Bursar and reports to the Full Governors on developments, concerns, incidents and training.

### **Foundation Safety Officer**

The Bursar is appointed as the Foundation Safety Officer (FSO) to promote an active and effective fire safety culture at the Foundation. He has executive authority within the Foundation in fire safety matters. In practice this means that the FSO can take action to prevent danger when there is an immediate serious risk to life or property.

The FSO liaises with the Fire and Rescue Service and maintains this policy in accordance with their recommendations and all relevant legislation.

Particular duties of the FSO are:

- In the event of a fire during the working day, to act as Fire Incident Controller to organise assistance and provide salvage advice to the Fire and Rescue Service;
- To ensure the preparation of a fire safety training syllabus and training programme for all staff, and to see that it is delivered;
- To act as Chairman of the Foundation Health & Safety Committee and to provide that Committee with reports on any fires and other fire safety matters;
- To enable the Foundation Health & Safety Committee to act as a forum for consultation on fire safety matters and to disseminate fire information;
- To nominate persons to take fire safety responsibilities (Fire Wardens) for each building and to ensure that they have the necessary resources and information on fire safety matters to enable them to fulfil their duties;

- On leaving a building, Fire Wardens will ensure that the premises are evacuated;
- To ensure that appropriate fire safety arrangements are in place during special events and during the hire of facilities within the Foundation; and,
- To liaise with the Foundation's insurers and ensure that their recommendations are responded to.
- To keep the Head of Foundation and Governors informed by regular briefing of developments, concerns, training and incidents in fire safety arrangements.

The Foundation's Head of Estates assists the FSO in achieving his responsibilities and in particular that:

- Building work complies with the fire safety requirements of the Building Regulations by consultation with Building Control and Building Completion Certificates issued by them;
- There are up to date schematic drawings of all premises showing fire safety arrangements to satisfy the needs of the Fire and Rescue Service;
- There are adequate means of detection, alarm, escape, firefighting (including water for the Fire and Rescue Service), access for the Fire and Rescue Service, emergency lighting and signs on all Foundation premises. These arrangements are to be inspected, maintained, upgraded and tested in accordance with the requirements of the Foundation's insurers, best practice and the relevant Standards, copies of which are held by the Head of Estates;
- There are completed fire risk assessments for all Foundation properties;
- Appropriate fire training is provided for all staff and onsite contractors;
- All fire records are maintained;
- Monitor all fire test records to ensure they are completed correctly and on time; and,
- Liaise with Emergency Services on behalf of FSO.

Note: The Head of Estates is to inform the FSO and Heads of the respective School's, as necessary, on any failure to comply.

### **Fire Risk Assessment**

All of the Foundation premises are subject to a fire risk assessment. This may be conducted by an external consultant or other competent person such as the Head of Estates who is trained and deemed competent. The Head of Estates will liaise with Heads of Departments in respect of the recommendations and future works.

The fire risk assessments are reviewed and / or updated every year or in the event of significant changes to the buildings or their usage.

A copy of the fire risk assessment reports are available on site (from the Head of Estates and the Compliance Officer) and school staffs' attention is brought to any hazards found in the assessment.

Fire hazards are eliminated where possible and the risk reduced to the minimum level practicable by implementing control measures and safe systems of work.

Regular inspections will be made by staff, including the Fire Wardens, Head of Estates, Compliance Officer, Maintenance Supervisor, Head of Grounds and Gardens, Head Porter, Housemasters,

Housemistresses and House Matrons to ensure that:

- Fire Extinguishers are in place and not tampered with;
- Fire Escape routes are kept clear and free of flammable materials;
- Fire Doors are all fully self-closing;
- Fire Escape Stairs are kept free of slipping or tripping hazards;
- Security against arson is maintained; and,
- Any evidence of smoking is reported to the FSO.

### **Fire Detection**

The Foundation has adequate means of fire detection. The detection equipment is maintained and regularly checked by competent persons.

### **Fire Alarm**

- The Foundation has an adequate means of raising the alarm in the event of fire.
- The fire alarm system in each location is tested as part of the fire drill procedure. This will be managed by the Head of Estates. The alarm will be activated using a different activator point each, where this is practicable.
- The fire alarm system is serviced twice a year by a competent contractor.
- Records of these tests and servicing are maintained in a fire logbook held in the Fire Records Cabinet adjacent to the main Fire Alarm Point.

### **Fire Fighting Equipment**

- Under no circumstances should you attempt to tackle a fire larger than a small wastepaper bin. The fire will be tackled with the correct fire extinguisher. Please refer to the training completed on Educare.
- Fire extinguishers, wet and dry risers and/or other fire suppressant systems are serviced by a competent contractor twice a year and the service date recorded on each extinguisher/system, in the Fire Records Cabinet adjacent to the main Fire Alarm Point.

### **Emergency Lighting**

- Emergency lighting is installed across the Foundation buildings where lighting would continue to be required in the event of a mains power failure, e.g. stairs, passageways and emergency exits.
- Battery operated emergency lighting will be tested monthly, quarterly or annually depending on the risk assessment for that building (charge & illumination) and an annual full discharge test by a competent contractor.
- Records of testing and servicing of emergency lights are maintained by the Head of Estates.

### **Emergency Procedures**

- Written emergency procedures are provided to all staff in the Staff Handbook. These written instructions include procedures in the event of a fire.
- Notices are displayed in each building of the premises of the Foundation detailing the

action to take in the event of a fire and highlighting the fire evacuation point.

- There are adequate means of escape for all occupants of the premises of the Foundation. These means of escape will be clearly signed with pictograms.
- The means of escape are regularly visually inspected by the Fire Wardens to ensure they are kept clear of obstructions and tripping hazards. Any issues identified and not easily rectified will be reported immediately to the Maintenance department and a record kept.
- Where disabled persons use the premises, specific arrangements will be made to ensure they can escape in an emergency. Please refer to the Disability Policy. For staff and pupils there will be a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) in place, visitors will be catered for by the Bursar / Head of Estates when notified.
- Teaching staff are responsible for escorting their pupils safely out of the building in silence and in an orderly fashion. They are responsible for conducting a head count 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 Bursar/Head of Estates. It is the responsibility of the Bursar/Head of Estates to ensure that this information is passed to the Fire and Emergency service as soon as they arrive.

### **Summoning the Fire and Rescue Service**

- Aldenham Senior School Office is manned between 7.30am and 5.30pm during weekdays in term-time.
- Aldenham Prep School Office is manned between 7.30am and 5.00pm during weekdays in term-time.
- St Hilda's School Office is manned between 7.30am and 6.00pm.

### **Half Term**

- Aldenham Senior and Prep School are manned between 8.30am and 4.00pm during half terms and holiday apart from the Christmas and Easter closedowns.
- St Hilda's is manned between 9.00am and 3.00pm during half terms and holiday apart from the Christmas and Easter closedowns.

Either the Head of Foundation or the Bursar is available during weekends. Fire alarm panels are located where appropriate in each building. The School Office is always given advance warning of fire practices. If the alarm goes off for any other reason, the School Office staff have standing instructions to summon the Fire and Emergency Service at once. In the event that the fire alarms are activated outside the hours the Senior and Prep School offices are staffed (unless warned of a planned fire practice), the Head Porter will summon the Fire and Emergency Services. If for any reason the alarm does not sound but a response is required, any member of staff should phone 999.

The respective Heads for each School conduct fire drills every term.

Boarding Housemasters and Housemistresses conduct an out of hours fire evacuation drill twice a term; once in the morning and once in the evening. Boarding Housemasters and Housemistresses (HSM) shall ensure that matters, including material matters, which increase the fire risk or prevent the efficient evacuation of the house, are resolved immediately. HSM produce a fire and evacuation report which is submitted to the Bursar for review and audit purposes.

### **Fire Training**

All staff will undergo annual refresher training on EduCare. Staff will be informed in relation to:

- Action to take if they discover a fire, including how to activate the fire alarm
- Action to take on hearing the alarm, including location and use of exits and escape routes

Pupils will be informed of exits and escape routes and are periodically tested by fire alarm tests and evacuations.

Fire Wardens will be trained in:

- Emergency evacuation procedures;
- Use of fire extinguishers;
- When the use of a fire extinguisher is appropriate;
- Emergency procedures; and
- How to spot fire hazards.

All visitors to the Foundation must report to the Senior School, Prep School or Head of Estates for construction/maintenance. They are provided with a visitor's badge and receive instructions in the event of an evacuation. Visitors to the site are generally accompanied or supervised at all times. On occasions when maintenance or construction staffs are working unaccompanied, they are given an induction talk for their area of work on fire safety.

## **Fire Prevention**

The Foundation takes all reasonable precautions to prevent a fire from breaking out and recognises that for a fire to take place oxygen, flammable materials and a source of ignition must all be present. The processes of prevention are aimed at preventing one or more of these elements being together. To ensure the processes are being implemented the Bursar, Head of Estates, Head Porter and Heads of Department will:

- Comply at all times with relevant regulations on the storage, transportation, handling and disposal of flammable materials (including weapons and ammunition, hazardous substances etc.);
- Regularly inspect all the areas where there are potential sources of ignition and ensure that no flammable materials are stored close by;
- Maintain awareness through training and refresher training of the preventative steps that need to be taken;
- Consult regularly with the Fire Wardens;
- Include fire prevention and evacuation procedures during the induction process with all new starters; and,
- Pay close attention to the activities of contractors as appropriate. For example, the issue of 'Hot Works permits and inspections of the on-going work as necessary, including 'cool down' periods is 1 hour.

## **Fire Records**

Records are kept of training; inspections; evacuations and maintenance of systems and equipment. These are held by the Bursar (training and evacuations) and the Head of Estates (inspections and maintenance systems).

