



APPLEFORD SCHOOL
FIRE SAFETY POLICY, PROCEDURES AND FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT
This policy applies to the whole school, including boarding

All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours including activities away from school. This policy also takes into consideration the National Minimum Standard (NMS) for residential special schools (RSS).

We have a whole school approach to safeguarding, which is the golden thread that runs throughout every aspect of the school. All our school policies support our approach to safeguarding (child protection). Our fundamental priority is our children and their wellbeing; this is first and foremost.

Legal Status: Complies with The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations currently in force.

- Fire Safety Guidance October 2023
- National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Residential Special Schools (RSS), 2022
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Building Safety Act 2022
- The Fire Safety Act 2021
- Regulatory Requirements, Part 3, Paragraph 13 of the Independent School Standards (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 (as amended 1999)
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Fire Precautions Act 1971

Availability

- This Policy is made available to parents, staff and students in the following ways: via the Office from where a request for a copy of the Policy may be obtained.
- The Fire Safety Policy and Emergency Evacuation Procedures (available to staff via the school office) along with relevant procedural documents, are provided either electronically or in hard copy to all new employees and volunteers before commencing work at Appleford.

Monitoring and Review: These arrangements are subject to continuous monitoring, refinement, and audit by the Headteacher. The Advisory Board will undertake a full annual review of this document, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been implemented. This review will be formally documented in writing. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay. All staff will be informed of the updated/reviewed arrangements and it will be made available to them in writing or electronically.

Signed: Policy Agreed: January 2024
Date Published: January 2024
Next Review: September 2024

Signed:

Mrs Claire Cooper
Operations Manager

Mr David King
Headmaster

Dated: September 2023
Reviewed: September 2024

Introduction: The Government published the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order in 2005. It applies to the vast majority of premises. The aim of the new regime is to create a simple fire safety regime applying to all workplaces and other non-domestic premises. The regime is based on risk assessment, a duty to maintain fire precautions which are for the use of fire fighters and new duties on fire authorities for fire safety, investigation and testing.

Aim: This document states how the new regulations are interpreted at Appleford School.

Execution: The Appleford School fire safety policy regime mirrors closely the existing health and safety (H&S) systems and procedures. Fire safety is by definition a subset of the current H&S systems and procedures. The Appleford School H&S Policy states that the Directors of the School have a duty to take reasonable precautions to safeguard the lives of employees, pupils and other visitors.

Allocation of Responsibilities: Responsibilities are as follows:

	Tasks	Comments
Managing Director	Responsible in law for what happens on the premises	Dr P Gardner
Responsible Person (Head Fire Warden).	Plans, implements, monitors and reviews the policy	Operations Manager (assisted by Headmaster as required)
H&S Representatives	Assist the Responsible Person in the Management of fire safety.	Volunteer members of staff & those appointed by the Headmaster
Employees (including Pupils)	Comply with Fire policy and take reasonable steps to protect themselves and colleagues at work.	Half Termly day and night practice evacuations
Visitors	Should be briefed on any issues that will effect them, as required, when they are on site	All visitors are informed of fire evacuation procedures upon arrival to school.

Risk Assessment: An approved external Body produces the risk assessment for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions that need to be taken on an annual basis. This is held by the Operations Manager. The risk assessment is based on an understanding of the relevant legislation, guidance and good practice in the fire prevention field.

Responsible Person(s): The Regulatory (Fire Safety) Reform Order 2005 states the meaning of 'Responsible Person' as being:

- The employer, if the workplace is to any extent under their control; or
- The person who has control of the premises (as occupier or otherwise) in connection with carrying out their trade, business, or undertaking.

At Appleford, this is the Operations Manager. New fire safety guidance in force since October 1st 2023 makes reference to an intention to require Responsible Persons to ensure that anyone they appoint to undertake a fire risk assessment is competent, although this is not currently a requirement. Appleford will continue to monitor developments in this area and make policy accordingly.

Role of the Head Fire Warden

The Operations Manager who is the Head Fire Warden is responsible for ensuring that:

- The fire safety policy is kept under regular review by the Headteacher and the SMT
- The fire safety policy is promulgated to the entire school community.
- Everyone in the school including visitors and contractors are given clear written instructions on where they should go in the event of fire.
- New Staff are provided with training when joining the school.
- Procedures and arrangements for emergency evacuation are tested once a term.
- Fire risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated.
- Fire prevention measures are followed.
- Fire procedures and risk assessments are reviewed on each occasion that a building is altered or extended.

Appleford School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

- Records are kept of all fire practices.
- Certificates for the installation and maintenance of fire-fighting systems and equipment are kept.

The Main requirements of the above legislation include:

- Fire risk assessment and fire precautions to minimise the risk of fire.
- Design of buildings to prevent the spread of fire
- Means of detection and giving warning in the event of fire
- The provision and maintenance of means of escape
- Emergency evacuation procedures and means of fighting a fire
- The training of staff in fire safety and the management of fire safety

The main objectives of our school Fire Policy are:

- to safeguard persons who may be affected by fire at any of the school premises;
- to safeguard the physical assets of the school, its staff, students and visitors;
- to reduce the incidence of fires;
- to minimise the potential for fire to disrupt the work of the school;
- to minimise the incidence of unwanted fire alarm signals and false alarms and
- to protect the environment.

Fire Precautions Maintenance: The following arrangements have been made for maintenance:

	Item	By whom
Ongoing	Check signage, safety clips on fire extinguishers, ensure that fire doors are not wedged open	Fire wardens and all staff
Weekly	Test fire alarm on Friday at 1725hrs via a different call point in a different building every week.	Operations Manager Caretaker
Annually	Test fire panels and emergency lighting in accordance with BS5839 split over two visits per year.	External Contractor
Annually	Test all fire extinguishers, check all fire blankets. Report on any missing/damaged fire information signs.	External Contractor

Smoking: Smoking can be a major source of fires. The following area has been designated as smoking area at Appleford: the wooded area behind the Elm House top playground (but not during the pupils breaktimes). Smoking is prohibited in any other place; temporary relaxations of this rule may only be given by the Headmaster.

Training: The Person Responsible (Head Fire Warden) will recommend any relevant training for staff.

Practice Evacuations: There will be a number of practice evacuations each term. The aim of the practices is to familiarise pupils and staff with evacuations procedures, a full evacuation is considered successful when a building is evacuated within 4 minutes by day or night. The practice supervisor will set off the fire panel and monitor the time it takes to evacuate the buildings; these details are to be passed to the Responsible Person for record keeping purposes. The following practices should occur **every term**:

	Detail	By whom
Boarding Houses	One day and one-night time evacuation practice	House parents, or Head Fire Warden
Whole School	One daytime evacuation practice	Head Fire Warden or Headmaster

Action on Hearing a Fire Evacuation Bell or continuous Whistle: The following actions should occur when anyone hears a fire evacuation bell:

- Evacuate** all buildings in an orderly manner and carry out registers.
- Confirm** what has happened; The Head Fire Warden and/or Deputy decide whether to call the Wilts Fire and Rescue Service.

- c. **Control** re-entering to buildings. The Head Fire Warden and/or Deputy should investigate all false alarms, recording all details for record keeping purposes.
- d. **Fire fighting.** The aim is to evacuate the buildings as quickly as possible, only when that has occurred should a decision be taken to fight a fire be made. This should not stop staff from using a fire extinguisher for instance to stop a fire in a dustbin. Fire extinguishers are in place to aid your escape, not to fight fires.

Fire-fighting equipment is regularly serviced and clearly labelled. Signage is regularly checked and updated in line with current legal requirements. There is a fire drill/emergency evacuation procedure at least once a term. Neither staff nor pupils are warned of an impending practice. It is essential; therefore, that each member of staff is aware of what the evacuation arrangements are for each area of the school. These are detailed in to this document. The evacuation and safety of visitors and contractors will be the responsibility of the person who they are visiting.

The School has:

- Fire Safety Policy and Procedures
- Fire Safety Audit
- Evacuation Procedures

In accordance with statutory requirements there is an annual fire safety audit which includes checking all firefighting equipment by an approved contractor and records maintained. The fire alarm will be tested weekly from different points when the site is not in use and records maintained. All emergency lighting is tested monthly and records maintained.

Responsibility of Staff: The effectiveness of the Fire Safety Policy will depend on the full co-operation of every member of staff, without exception. Co-operation should be encouraged from the highest level. Complying with the fire safety procedures should be regarded as a basic duty by all the staff and an essential obligation for all Officers with management responsibility. The Health and Safety Manager and the Head Fire Warden are responsible for coordinating the fire evacuation of the school building in the event of a fire emergency.

Annual Review. This document will be reviewed annually as part of the H&S Annual Report.

Appendix 1

Overview of hazards, people at risk, level of risk, records and review

Identification of hazards.

- a. **General introduction.** With 11 buildings on site (Oak House, Elm House, The Beeches, Sports Hall, Willow House, The Rookery, The Orchard, The DT Block, The Shepherds Hut, The Library and The Music Hut) and 2 off site (Maddington House and Cedar House), there are a small number of people likely to be affected it is relatively easy to keep risk management under continual review. Because the premises are small the risk has been assessed as a whole not as individual building.
- b. **Sources of ignition.** The number of sources of ignition are relatively few, naked flames are carefully controlled in the kitchen, Food tech and science labs, hot surfaces are few – kitchen (well managed), electrical sockets etc are constantly kept under review to minimise risk, there are few chances of mechanically generated sparks – contractors are supervised by maintenance staff.
- c. **Sources of fuel.** There are relatively few sources of conventional fuel held at Appleford, Calor gas to supply the science labs, sports hall heating, The Beeches heating, kitchen for cooking and laundry for clothes drying. Oil is used to provide hot water and heating in Oak House. All other forms of heating are by night storage or convection heaters. (There are 2 commercial deep fat fryers in the kitchen – but they are not used every day).
- d. **Sources of oxygen.** Doors are kept shut to reduce the levels of draft (an accelerant) and slow the spread of fire; there are no stored oxygen containers on site.

People at risk.

- e. **By day.** By day there are some 155 pupils and up to 100 staff that form the base population of the school, with some 10% allowance for visitors/contractors at one time the overall number of people at risk rises to 270, however because of the siting of the building the maximum number of people at risk reduces to some 90 at any one time. For very short periods (speech day) the numbers peak to some 550 in and about the school grounds.
- f. **By night.** At night the boarding facility is split into, Cedar House for up to 5 boarders, Elm House for up to 32 male boarders, Willow House for up to 15 female boarders and The Beeches for up to 14 female boarders. All of these Houses have up to two staff that live in.
- g. **During holidays.** During holiday when Appleford pupils have returned home there are very few people on site with the exception of letting periods when the letting companies duplicate the Appleford arrangements for staff supervision ratios.
- h. **People especially at risk.** There are 2 pupils considered to be more vulnerable due to hearing problems. An individual PEEPS Plan is in place for them. Individual Risk Assessments are written for people when required.

Evaluation of risk.

- i. **Overall evaluation of risk.** The overall evaluation of the risk of a fire starting is assessed as **Moderate** because there are few ignition sources and combustible materials are kept away from them. The kitchen staff are well trained in safe working practices as are all the staff on reduction of hazards to acceptable levels. Smoking is only permitted in the designated area, electrical equipment is inspected regularly and tested, and the chance of arson is assessed as Moderate part due to the location of the school, part due to the construction of the older buildings and part due to the learning issues of the pupils.
- j. **Evaluation of risk to people from fire.** Risk to people from fire is low,
- k. **Reduction of fire hazards.** All adults are briefed on induction and annually on the importance of good housekeeping to prevent the build-up of combustible material.
- l. **Reduction of risk to people.**
 - i. **Detection and warning.** The premises are well protected with fire detection equipment, emergency lighting and warning bells.
 - ii. **Fire fighting.** In the past staff have not been trained in fire fighting, the aim was to ensure that the pupils were evacuated and accounted for and the fire and rescue service called.
 - iii. **Fire Wardens.** The school has a comprehensive list of staff who are given the task of being fire wardens.
 - iv. **Escape routes.** The school has sufficient fire signage for all extinguishers and evacuation signage is clearly displayed in all buildings.
 - v. **Signs and notices.** Signs and notices comply with H&S (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 (Last updated 01 June 2015).

Records and Review. The Head Fire Warden as the Responsible Person plans, implements, monitors and reviews the fire safety policy. She is responsible for record keeping and maintaining the emergency evacuation and liaison with other interested parties.