

# Fire Safety Policy

# AIMS & PRINCIPLES

***St Paul's Cathedral School is a Christian, co-educational community which holds to the values of love, justice, tolerance, respect, honesty, service and trust in its life and practice, to promote positive relationships throughout the school community and where the safety, welfare and emotional well-being of each child is of the utmost importance.***

*The school aims to instil a love of learning through a broad curriculum. It aims to give each pupil the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially, personally, physically, culturally and spiritually. All pupils are encouraged to work to the best of their ability and to achieve standards of excellence in all of their endeavours.*

*Through the corporate life of the school, and through good pastoral care, the school encourages the independence of the individual as well as mutual responsibility. It aims to make its pupils aware of the wider community, espouses the democratic process and encourages a close working relationship with parents and guardians.*

## **Part I: Fire Safety**

The priority of St Paul's Cathedral School is to minimise the risk to life and to reduce injury by maintaining the physical fire safety of the school, in ensuring that staff, pupils and visitors do not add to the fire risk and through safe evacuation of our buildings if a fire breaks out. The fire safety policy, procedures and risk assessments at this school are designed to help our community to respond calmly and effectively in the event that fire breaks out in one of our buildings.

The fire safety policy is kept under regular review by Governors, the SLT and Fire Wardens.

### **Fire Safety Officer**

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

- The fire safety policy is kept under regular review by Governors, the SMT and Health and Safety Committee;
- The fire safety policy is promulgated to the entire school community;
- A Fire awareness brief happens at every school INSET.
- Everyone in the school (including visitors and contractors) have clear instructions on where they should go in the event of fire;
- Records are kept of the fire induction training given to new staff and pupils;
- Procedures and arrangements for emergency evacuation are regularly tested and lessons absorbed;
- Fire risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated;
- Fire prevention measures are meticulously followed;
- Fire procedures and risk assessments are reviewed on each occasion that a building is altered;
- Records are kept of all fire practices, including night practice evacuations from boarding accommodation;
- Certificates for the installation and maintenance of fire-fighting systems and equipment are kept.

### **Head of Maintenance (Caretaker)**

The Head of Maintenance is responsible for deputising for the Bursar in the role of Fire Officer. He conducts:

- the weekly alarm checks and inspects the portable appliances.
- ensures that Hot work permits are in operation for maintenance works.
- Checks all obstructions are removed from evac routes.

## **Head of Boarding**

The Head of Boarding is responsible for ensuring that all boarders and Resident staff understand prevention measures and what to do when the alarm sounds.

He organises the night-time evacuation practice.

## **Catering Manager**

As catering is outsourced to an agency provider (currently Sodexo), the Catering manager is responsible for briefing all catering staff on the evacuation procedure and other aspects of the school's Fire and Health & Safety policy. The Area Manager of the Caterer is to confirm in writing annually that this has been done.

## **Fire Wardens**

The Fire Wardens are the Bursar, Head of Maintenance and a member of the Resident Team. On hearing the Fire alarm, the Wardens attend the Fire Panel and organise the sweep clear of the South and North Tower and supervise the check of pupil and staff nominal rolls.

Wardens are briefed at every September INSET and trained every 3 years.

## **Emergency Evacuation Instructions**

All staff are given the following instructions:

If you discover a fire, break the glass in the nearest alarm point to set off the alarm. Leave the building by the nearest exit, or the one indicated on the instruction in your room. If you use an exit with class lists hanging by the door, pick it up and hand it to the School Secretary on arrival in the Cathedral Garden.

If you are responsible for a class or individual children, make them leave quietly with you. No one should talk or run. Make your way to the assembly point in the Cathedral garden.

If you are in the main playground and the alarm goes, there is a key to the gate to the Cathedral garden just inside Room 9.

Do not take anything and do not allow the pupils to take anything. Shut doors and windows behind you.

The school office or duty teacher will summon the Emergency Services if the alarm sounds.

If there is a disabled person with you, ensure that you or another adult assists them to exit the building as quickly as possible.

Collect your class list from the Secretary as soon as you reach the assembly point.

Report anyone who is missing immediately to the Bursar or one of the Deputy Heads, who will inform the Fire Brigade. On no account should anyone return to any building until given permission by the Fire and Emergency Services.

Remain at the assembly point with your pupils until the all-clear is given.

If the alarm is set off in the hours 08.00-08.40 or 15.40-17.00, when parents are collecting children and it is not clear who is still on the premises:

Go directly to the Cathedral Garden with any children in your care (taking your club register if you have it, or collecting it from the office on your way out).

Ask any parent whom you pass on your way out to leave the building.

Report any children who you know are missing to the Deputy Head.

The Head, Deputy Head (Academic) and Bursar will sweep the building for anyone left behind. Staff teaching on the upper floors in the South and North Tower sweep that building.

On returning to the school following a fire drill or alarm, the Caretaker and Fire Officer will ensure that all exit doors and gates have been secured. If neither is on the premises, it is the responsibility of the senior teacher on duty.

## **Part 2: Fire Safety Procedures**

### **Briefing New Staff and Pupils**

All new staff (teaching and non-teaching) and all new pupils, including EYFS pupils, are given a briefing on the school's emergency evacuation procedures on their first day at this school. We show them where the emergency exits and escape routes are located, and walk with them to the outside assembly point. Fire action notices are displayed on the walls of all rooms and in all public areas, 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 briefed to activate the fire alarms if they see or smell a fire.

The safe evacuation of everyone is our priority. Protecting property comes second. No one should attempt to fight a fire at the expense of their own, or anyone else's, safety. We offer a fire awareness briefing at Induction and regular refresher briefings and notices of procedures. No one should attempt to use a fire extinguisher before he or she has been trained in its use.

## **Summoning the Fire Brigade**

The school office is manned between 8.00am and 5.00pm during weekdays throughout the year apart from the Christmas closedown. The master panel showing the location of the alarm call points on the alarm system is physically located in the entrance hall. The school office is given advance warning of fire practices. If the alarm goes off for any other reason, the staff have standing instructions to summon the Fire and Emergency Services, dial 999.

If the alarm goes off outside school hours, the member of staff on duty, or any resident member of the staff in the holidays, is responsible for calling the Fire Brigade. The Bursar is on call for emergencies at all times.

## **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. They are made aware of the emergency evacuation procedures and are told the assembly point is the Cathedral Garden.

When large numbers of visitors are at the school for open days, plays, concerts 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. A risk assessment is produced for events.

Staff are responsible for briefing their guests and visitors on the fire procedures.

## **Disabled Staff and Pupils**

An adult who is not responsible for any children will always be allocated to a disabled person in case of emergency.

## **Responsibilities of Classroom Staff**

Classroom staff are responsible for escorting their pupils safely out of the building in silence and in an orderly fashion. They are required to complete a register 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 or Deputy Head. It is the responsibility of the Bursar to ensure that this information is passed to the Fire and Emergency service as soon as they arrive.

***On no account should anyone return to a burning building.***

## **Responsibilities of Maintenance & Cleaning Staff**

The Fire Wardens and maintenance & cleaning staff are trained regularly in use of fire extinguishers and on the safe evacuation of a building. They receive regular refresher training.

## **Fire Practices**

We hold at least one fire practice every term. We also practise a night-time evacuation of the boarding house every term. This, combined with a programme of inducting new staff and pupils with emergency evacuation procedures, helps to ensure that the school can be evacuated safely in the event of a fire.

## **Part 3 - Escape Routes and Emergency Exits**

We have the following fire prevention measures in place:

### **Escape Routes and Emergency Exits**

- There are at least two escape routes from every part of the main building and the Boarding House.
- Fire notices and evacuation signs are displayed in every classroom and public area.
- Fire extinguishers (of the appropriate type) and smoke/heat detectors are located in each building in accordance with the recommendations of our professional advisers. The alarm can be manually activated by pressing a fire button, and it is automatically activated when smoke/heat builds up. Smoke control systems are located in our boarding accommodation.
- Stairs, passages and emergency exits are illuminated by emergency lighting.
- Automatic door closures that are activated by the fire alarms are fitted on doors at either end of the Gallery and in the boarding house.
- The master panel for the alarm system is located in the main entrance hall and shows the location of a fire. It is fitted with an uninterrupted power supply (UPS).
- **There is a second panel in SAH** which covers the staff flats and Boarding House
- Alarms sound in all parts of the building.
- Fire routes and exits are kept clear at all times. The caretaker, assisted by the domestic staff, is responsible for checking that escape routes are not obstructed, that the emergency lights work, and for reporting defects. Some emergency exits are alarmed; these release automatically when the fire alarm is sounded.
- The fire alarms are tested regularly by the Head of Maintenance and Bursar. The Bursar arranges for an ISO9001 certified/BAFE approved contractor to carry out:
  - a. Six-monthly professional checks on fire detection and warning equipment, including fire doors, automatic door closures and emergency lights:

- b. An annual service of alarms, smoke detectors, emergency lights, smoke control systems and fire extinguishers.
- Records of all tests are kept in the Bursar's office.
- There is a plan of the school in a fire-proof glass-fronted display board in the main entrance.
- The kitchen is fitted with heat alarms and 30-minute fire doors.

## **Electrical Safety**

- The school has current electrical test certificates for both buildings. It uses engineers to inspect and maintain its electrical installations.
- Regular portable appliance testing takes place by an outside organisation (AGG).
- Records of all tests are kept in the Bursar's office.
- The staff are reminded to check that all computers, projectors, printers, electronic whiteboards and scientific and other equipment have been switched off at the end of the day.
- The catering manager checks that all kitchen equipment is switched off at the end of the day.
- All staff and pupils are reminded that only PAT tested equipment (of a proprietary make) is to be used, particularly for phone charging.

## **Gas Safety**

- All gas appliances (boilers and kitchen equipment) are regularly maintained and serviced by Gas Safe registered engineers. Records of all tests are kept in the Bursar's office.
- All kitchen and science laboratory equipment must be switched off at the end of the day.

## **Rubbish, Highly Flammable and Combustible Materials**

- Flammable rubbish is stored away from buildings in metal rubbish containers.
- Highly flammable and combustible materials used in teaching, catering, maintenance and caretaking are stored with caution.

## **Part 4: Fire Risk Assessment**

### **Fire risk monitoring**

The school employs competent persons from PIB Consulting to undertake an annual FRA (Fire Risk Assessment). PIB are on contract to deliver an onsite comprehensive FRA.



The Head of Maintenance (Caretaker) conducts weekly alarm checks on both fire panels, weekly fire extinguisher checks and 6-monthly checks of fire safety systems. These are logged in the Inspection folder, held in the Bursar's office. The Bursar will periodically monitor these checks.

PIB conduct an annual FRA – findings are reported to the Governors via the Bursar's H&S termly report.

### **Components of the FRA**

The school's fire risk assessment 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.

All risk assessments follow a standard grid procedure for evaluating risk, and we review this regularly. Generic risk assessments are used for classrooms and public areas, and for local educational visits. Risk assessments are carried out every year and when changes are made to the interior of buildings.

Risk assessment forms are on the Staff-Shared area of the school network, together with guidance on the assessment process. The Bursar is available for support and advice.

## **Part 5: Boarding House and Evenings in Main Building**

### **Emergency Instructions**

In the event of a fire alarm during night hours boarders should put on dressing gowns and slippers and walk out of the building in silence. They must not take any other possessions as this would cause a delay in the procedure.

Main Building: During the evening while choristers are still in the main building, they should evacuate the building in the normal way, and then assemble on the forecourt, **not the Cathedral Garden** as it will be closed. The duty member of staff – or senior member of staff present – will then take them to a place of safety, depending on where the fire has broken out. The place of safety is likely to be:

- a. The boarding house; or
- b. The Cathedral undercroft.

Boarding House: The gate leading to the bottom of the ramp will have opened automatically and boarders should go through this and down the steps. The duty member of staff – or senior member of staff present – will then take them to a place

of safety, depending on where the fire has broken out. The place of safety is likely to be:

- a. The main school building; or
- b. The Cathedral undercroft.

As they leave the building, the Nurse/First Aider will take the boarding house register from the hook at the exit from the building, to ensure that no child has been left in the boarding house. If the duty member of staff is coming from the main building s/he will bring the register from the top of the fire panel in the entrance hall.

The overnight duty member of staff will conduct a sweep from the top dormitories downwards, physically checking each bed.

### **Briefing New Staff and Pupils**

All new boarding staff and pupils are given a briefing on the boarding house emergency evacuation procedures as part of their induction. In the first week of the autumn term, or after a new arrival at the boarding house, there is a practice fire drill to familiarise them with the procedures.

A fire practice will be held during the evening and after bedtime at least once each term.

### **Fire Escape and Safety Measures**

In view of the small footprint of the boarding house, there are two escape routes from each floor. This is down the stairwell at the east and west side of the dormitory area. It is extremely important, therefore, that:

- a. the stairwell and communal areas between the dormitories and flats on the top floor are kept clear of combustible materials;
- b. No obstructions are placed on any of the stairwells or at the base of the stairs;
- c. The corridor out of the Gap Flat is kept clear at all times.

## **Part 6: Fire Evacuation Procedures in the Cathedral**

It is very important that school staff are aware of evacuation procedures in the Cathedral if they are there in charge of children.

During the day, if you are in the Cathedral with children and the fire alarm goes, you should follow the instructions of the Stewards and evacuate the building with other members of the public. **DO NOT** attempt to leave the building through our south-east door unless instructed to do so by a Steward.

If you are in the Choir Practice Room, with or without an organist, leave the room immediately and follow the route out of the building directed by the Stewards. If the fire alarm goes in the early morning or evening when no Stewards are around, take the children out through the Undercroft. Resident staff should familiarise themselves with this route.

If, when you unlock the South-East door you hear the fire bell going, **DO NOT** go any further. Turn around and leave the building immediately, ensuring that no children have run in ahead of you.

All resident members of staff and pupils should be familiar with the sound of the fire alarm that is regularly tested. The Head of Boarding should ensure that new resident staff and new pupils familiarise themselves with the sound.