

Bedales Schools’ Fire Safety Policy

INCLUDING EYFS

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Author	Health and Safety Manager
Review body (individual or group)	Head of Estates and Facilities
Approval Body	Bursar
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Fire Safety Policy

Fire Safety

Fire is a major hazard creating significant risk to the safety of both occupants and buildings. Bedales Schools acknowledge and accepts its responsibilities under current fire legislation (The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and amended 2021) and will proceed with due diligence to address these by the provision of suitable, sufficient and risk appropriate fire precautions. This management approach will reduced the risk of fire ignition, enable the safe and timely evacuation of Students, Staff and Visitors in the event of a fire, and minimise fire damage to the premises.

Policy standards

The following standards shall be adopted to discharge this policy.

Fire Precautions

- Suitable means for giving warning in case of fire will be provided by an alarm system
- Clearly marked escape routes, exits and means of protection will be provided to enable occupants of buildings to evacuate quickly and safely in the event of fire
- Sufficient emergency lighting will be provided where necessary and maintained in good order
- Fire instruction and directional signage will be provided
- Good quality firefighting equipment will be available and maintained in good order
- Structural fire precautions for all buildings will, so far as is reasonably practicable, comply with current best practice in the construction industry with the control measures to be adopted based on 3-yearly Fire Risk Assessments
- All systems and provisions will be maintained in all premises and records kept as proof of compliance
- Staff will be provided with comprehensive and relevant information and training
- Inspections will be carried out by the Fire Service on an ad-hoc basis

Management System

Bedales Schools have a Health & Safety management provision in place which is overseen by the Health & Safety Manager. The arrangements for fire safety are included in the Health & Safety policy.

Fire Risk Assessment

The School's Fire Risk Assessments meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Specifically they consider the following:

- Occupants especially at risk from fire
- Sources of ignition
- Sources of fuel and fire burden
- Dangerous substances, chemicals and materials
- Preventive and protective measures

- Means of escape
- Fire safety signs and notices
- Means of giving warning in case of fire
- Measures to limit fire development and spread
- Management of fire safety
- Procedures for serious and imminent danger
- Maintenance of premises and fire protection equipment
- Training and information for Students and Staff

Fire Risk Assessments are carried out by an independent 3rd Party Fire Risk Assessor. Priority is given to Boarding houses, refurbished buildings and buildings of public occupancy, followed by smaller less hazardous buildings or those with lower occupancy levels.

Following assessment, action plans are developed to implement any necessary new or additional control measures identified. Tickets are raised on the Schools CAFM system to ensure the remedial actions are tracked and carried out.

Boarding houses and places of public access are then reviewed internally by the Health & Safety Manager on an annual basis between formal assessments, or more frequently if significant changes are made to the building, or an incident requires it.

Monitoring and Review

- A monitoring and review system is in place with a two way reporting process operating throughout the management chain
- The Board of Governors will be suitably informed on the findings of monitoring and the recommended actions
- Students and Staff will be informed of any significant findings that may affect them with any recommended actions

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors are the 'responsible person' as set out in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in relation to all its workplaces. All documentation relating to Fire protection measures and records of maintenance are made available on request.

The Bursar

The Bursar takes delegated responsibility for the Board of Governors compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 including the obligation to:

- Provide strategic direction and oversee all policies and procedures relating to fire protection
- Ensure that robust fire safety management systems and arrangements exist throughout the 3 schools
- Support the Board of Governors in meeting their safety responsibilities for the Schools as a whole
- Ensure that there is an appropriate and resourced response to 'in-house' and Fire Service inspections

- Ensure a process is in place to respond to any significant findings identified by Staff or Health & Safety Manager, which fall within Senior Management authority. This process also needs to give due consideration to any significant findings of Fire Risk Assessments
- Establish an annual capital program of improvements to address significant findings in priority order
- Ensure agreed actions are communicated back to the school to feed into local fire safety action plans

Health and Safety Manager

Ensure that a Fire Safety Management Plan is maintained for all Bedales Schools premises as follows:

- Fire risk assessments are completed for all school buildings and information of significant risks brought to the attention of Staff and any others at risk
- Ensure Fire Marshals have been appointed and have authority in either fire evacuations or monitoring and maintaining fire safety arrangements
- Ensure that any significant findings are recorded and establish an action plan to address those findings which cannot be immediately rectified
- Ensure that they inform the relevant manager of any findings that fall outside of their local remit
- Cooperate fully with Fire Service inspections
- Ensure an emergency evacuation plan is produced for all premises
- Ensure practice fire drills are undertaken, evaluated and any issues addressed, and that these are recorded. Boarding house practice drills are carried out once per term but **due to the Coronavirus Pandemic in 2020 the 'Whole School' evacuation practice was postponed in the Autumn Term to prevent a mass gathering and mixing of students and staff. This is still being postponed but Boarding house practice drills have continued individually**
- Monitor Fire Safety training, on-line for all staff and specifically face-to-face for those with more Fire related responsibilities such as Fire Marshals and Theatre Ushers
- Ensure fire safety equipment is maintained and tested by competent persons with suitable and sufficient records kept. All extinguishers are checked annually by a 3rd Party Contractor and replaced every 5 years

Staff and Students

- Adhere to the fire safety instructions and procedures implemented by the Schools without question. This will include swift evacuation on the sound of the alarm, not tampering with or sounding alarms inappropriately and by reporting the whereabouts of any student 'slow to arrive' at the muster point
- Bring defects and matters of concern to the attention of their line manager/tutor, who should ensure the Health & Safety Manager and/or **Facilities helpdesk** is informed immediately
- Ensure that all fire routes and exits are kept clear at all times, fire doors are not wedged open and firefighting equipment is not interfered with

- Never tamper with equipment or set off an alarm (e.g. by smoking/vaping) when there is no risk of fire – this could endanger themselves or others on the premises

Teaching and Pastoral Care Staff

Teaching and pastoral care staff have additional responsibilities for:

- Ensuring their students are safely escorted out of a building in an orderly fashion on hearing the alarm. There must be no running or pushing particularly on stairwells (lifts are not to be used)
- Conducting a roll call on arrival at the assembly point and ensuring that the name of anyone who cannot be accounted for (and, if possible, their likely location), is passed immediately to the head of the relevant School, the Fire Marshal, or the Bursar – to ensure that this information (in the event of a real fire) is passed to the Fire Service as soon as possible

Visitors and Contractors

- All Visitors and Contractors are required to sign in at either the main school reception or the Facilities reception where they will be issued with a Visitors or Contractors badge. They will also be shown the emergency evacuation procedures and location of the relevant assembly points.*
- Badges MUST be worn at all times when on school premises and returned to the relevant reception when leaving (during the signing out process)
- Bring defects and matters of concern with regards to fire safety to the attention of their school contact to enable the appropriate action to be taken
- Carry out their undertakings in a safe manner that considers not only their own safety but that of others

*Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic of 2020-21 the manual 'signing in and out' of visitors and contractors was suspended to prevent unnecessary touching of items and potential spread of the virus. Reception staff will issue the badge on visual confirmation of arrival – badges will be sanitised upon return.

Disabled Students and Staff

A special one-to-one induction on fire safety for disabled students and their assistant (if applicable), and for disabled staff is provided during the first few days on site. From this meeting a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is developed by the Health & Safety Manager. The assistant will ensure that they inform the Health & Safety Manager and/or duty facilities staff of their location and whether they need help to evacuate safely.

Ultimately, it remains the responsibility of the School Teachers, House parents, Line Managers and Fire Marshalls to ensure the safe evacuation of everyone.