



Fire Safety Policy

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1. Policy statement

The GFM Fire Safety Policy sits as part of the GFM Health and Safety Policy to provide structure and expectations regarding fire safety across the schools in the Trust.

This policy follows risk assessment and mitigation in line with the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order (2005) and focuses on the prevention of and protection from risk of fire for children, students, staff and visitors.

Step 1 - Identifying fire hazards

Step 2 - Identifying people at risk

Step 3 - Evaluating, removing, reducing and protecting from risk

Step 4 - Recording, planning, informing, instructing and training

Step 5 - Ongoing regular review

2. Policy aims

The GFM Fire Safety Policy is explicit in its aims:

- no life be put in jeopardy
- possessions and equipment are replaceable and no person's life or an injury to a person is worth their rescue
- regular testing and risk assessment is systematised and robust
- testing and risk assessment leads to follow up and action so appropriate fire safety measures are in place
- responsible persons are appropriately trained and supported in their roles and responsibilities
- all staff are informed, trained and supported in their responsibilities with fire safety
- evacuation and fire safety practices and drills are systematised and robust review processes
- fighting any fire is only undertaken when the alarm has been raised, when there is no risk to a person or persons and that person has received appropriate training.

Other relevant documents and policies

Please also read the following GFM policies:

- Health and Safety
- Health and Safety Risk Assessment
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Visitor Protocols.

3. Introduction

It is our priority to minimise the risk of fire, and in doing so, minimise risk to life or injury by maintaining the fire safety of each GFM school and on each GFM site. Fires in buildings can spread quickly and delays of minutes can lead to unnecessary spread of fire and smoke. The spread of smoke can be particularly dangerous, rapidly blocking escape routes and potentially causing loss of life by toxic fumes.

The Fire Safety Policy with associated procedures and risk assessments are designed to help our community mitigate risk, and respond calmly and purposefully in the event that fire breaks out in a GFM building. In the event of a fire, safety and preservation of life will override all other considerations. The safe evacuation of all pupils and staff is our priority. Buildings and property come second and no one should attempt to fight any fire at the expense of their own, or anyone else's, safety. It is the duty of all staff to study and make themselves familiar with the school's emergency evacuation procedures. As part of the regular review of the school's risk assessment, the school's arrangements for ensuring fire safety will be under continual review.

The purpose of this policy is to cover the areas which are under the control of the Trust. They do not cover the design of structural fire precautions.

4. Fire Risk Assessment

The Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety) 2005 requires organisations to undertake fire risk assessments for their workplace.

A risk assessment approach to fire safety requires schools to identify potential fire hazards and determine the methods of controlling those hazards, for example with the installation of fire doors.

The Trust uses a combination of external third parties and in-house health & safety management to review systems and procedures and produce a Fire Risk Assessment for each site every three years. This is used as a template to undertake annual checks depending on the number of issues raised and based on the area of compliance for example, blocked fire corridors.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of various staff within the Trust are detailed below:

5.1 All Staff

Staff in each GFM setting are informed, trained and supported and as a result see it as the responsibility of each member of staff to take appropriate actions to mitigate risk of fire, to act in a calm and purposeful way in the event of a fire and support and enable young people to do the same.

5.2 Staff with responsibility for visitors

The named 'Person of Contact' for a visitor is responsible for their safety when on the school site (see GFM Visitor protocols).

5.3 GFM Executive and The GFM Board

The GFM Executive and The GFM Board has the ultimate responsibility for fire safety in the school, to review this policy and to monitor the effective working procedures of each school and site (including reviewing the reports of incidents, near misses or concerns raised by any member of the school.)

Schools' Executive will assist the responsible persons in the carrying out of their responsibilities.

5.4 School Leadership

The School Leadership, assisted by the Associate Headteachers, are responsible to The Executive for fire safety within each school and GFM sites.

The School Leadership consults with colleagues at least once per term and are responsible for ensuring agreed actions are completed within agreed timescales.

5.5 Emergency Controller

This will be the senior person on duty, taking responsibility for the smooth running of the evacuation procedures and fire drills. They will:

- identify themselves on arrival to the Fire Officers and give information as required
- complete the Fire Evacuation log book (Appendix 3) immediately after the exercise and pass it to the responsible person (school leadership, Estates Manager, etc.) to process any actions)
- act as point of contact for all of the Fire Wardens
- arrange for a deputy, or deputies to carry out the above duties if they have to leave the site.

5.6 Fire Manager (Health & Safety Manager)

The person responsible for fire management, provides oversight and links to school leads and other responsible persons (for example, estates) in conjunction with school and Executive leadership. Key activities include:

- ensuring that this policy is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, highlighting any new risk or update to the relevant stakeholder, supporting the Executive and Board with a formal annual review

- updating the Executive and the Audit and Risk Committee on lessons learned from reviews and drills, and on how the policy is working in practice
- ensuring that clear procedures are in place during the school day as well as out of hours in the event of a fire (see Appendix 2 for Fire Plan template used across sites)
- ensuring records are kept of the fire induction training given to all new staff, children and students, linking with the Trust Induction team
- ensuring that procedures and arrangements for emergency evacuation are regularly tested and reviewed
- reviewing and updating Fire Risk assessments on a regular basis
- ensuring that records are kept of all fire practices, including a record of 'lessons learned' and agreed reviews and actions in follow up
- ensuring that appropriate liaison takes place with third parties; the emergency services and the School's insurers to ensure that best practice for fire prevention and procedures is in place and the integrity of all fire prevention systems and equipment is maintained in good working order
- alongside the Learning and Development team, communicating the Fire Safety Policy on a regular basis across the Trust, ensuring that appropriate basic fire training is provided at least annually and is provided to all new employees on commencement of employment and that information and training around mitigating fire risk is provided on a regular basis
- appointing Fire Wardens and ensuring that adequate training is received.

5.7 Head of Estates

Assists the responsible persons and School Leadership with all aspects of fire safety. They will:

- specifically ensure that contractors working for the GFM are given written documentation detailing the procedures that they are required to follow whilst working on a GFM site, informing them of the school and Trust procedures in an emergency situation
- ensure that the management of the fire system (detection and fire-fighting equipment) is maintained, up-to-date and in line with current regulations and the fire risk assessment
- ensure that all statutory maintenance, servicing and compliance checks are carried out
- assess any alterations to the layout, systems installed or operational use of the premises and update the Fire Manager where necessary in order to update policy and procedural documents
- assuming Emergency Controller duties when on-site during non-school days
- oversee the reactivation of the Fire Control Panel.

5.8 Union Representatives

Union representatives will support, assist and act as a critical friend to the School Leadership and persons responsible for the implementation of all aspects of fire safety.

5.9 Audit and Risk Committee of The Board

The Committee holds to account the Executive and School Leadership for the effective implementation of all aspects of the Fire Safety Policy.

6. Maintenance of Fire Precautions and Systems

Systems and procedures need to be regularly checked and inspected to ensure that they do not deteriorate and fail to detect fire. It is important that fire doors close effectively, escape doors open easily, corridors and escape routes are not obstructed, fire detection and alarm systems, fire extinguishers and emergency lighting are maintained and notices remain relevant and legible. The Estates Manager has responsibility for arranging and / or ensuring that appropriate testing and maintenance is undertaken.

Each GFM site is equipped with fire warning devices designed to activate the school's alarm system in the event of a fire. The warning of a fire is outlined in each site specific plan (following the template in Appendix 2).

7. Detecting the Fire and Raising the Alarm

Unless the fire is promptly detected and everyone is alerted it may grow and prevent people from escaping. A clear procedure for the action to be taken when a fire is discovered, as well as when the alarm sounds, is therefore vital. This is detailed in each site's Fire Plan (as in Appendix 2)

8. Evacuation of the Premises

If full evacuation is required, as soon as the alarm is raised the premises should be evacuated in accordance with the site's specific fire evacuation procedures in a pre-planned way with children/students/staff/visitors assembling at defined locations and accounted for.

An evacuation drill will be carried out, where appropriate, on a termly basis either in the form of an accidental or planned practice evacuation. After each evacuation, staff are required to give feedback on any observation that will help inform the continuous improvement of Fire Plans. The conditions and timings of the practice will be varied, for example by changing access to exit routes in order to ensure any gaps in procedures are identified and mitigated against.

9. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

It is important that identification of any children, students or staff who need physical assistance to exit the buildings is undertaken in order to provide a plan of evacuation -

known as a Personal Emergency Plan (PEEP) in place for each. The child/student/staff member will need a person or small team of staff allocated to assist them out of the building in an emergency. PEEPs may be required for:

- mobility impairments
- sight impairments
- hearing impairments
- cognitive impairments
- other circumstances.

A temporary PEEP may be required for:

- short term injuries (e.g. broken leg)
- temporary medical conditions
- those in the later stages of pregnancy.

10. After School Use of Buildings

This area covers all school clubs and community groups, They shall follow the same evacuation and emergency procedures as outlined in the Fire Safety Policy. This includes:

- a designated Emergency Controller must be identified, the person would normally be the club/community hirer leader
- the emergency controller will also assume the role of admin support and be responsible for taking the register
- the emergency controller will allocate the role of sweep to a member of their team - this will be the community staff if a community hirer
- if the event is in a number of different buildings, each area must have a designated staff member who will ensure that all users in that area are evacuated and accounted for
- a register of all people attending the club/community group should be taken before the event starts
- in the event of a fire the standard school fire plan should be followed, using the designated fire routes.

11. Out of hours

In the event a fire occurs out of hours , the sites are fully covered by a monitoring company who will inform the emergency services in the first instance and then the keyholder in order for appropriate action to be taken.

Appendix 1: Fire Prevention Measures

Staff are informed, supported and expected to follow good housekeeping practices, including those listed below, which can eliminate or reduce many fire risks:

- sources of ignition should be controlled. Heaters should not be covered up and electrical sockets should not be overloaded, portable heaters should be turned off at the end of the school day
- a Fire Risk Assessment is carried out every three years by an external, specialist contractor. This will provide guidance on improvements and updates required against documentation and systems and procedures to mitigate against fire.
- electrical appliances are tested by an NICEIC qualified electrical engineer
- catering equipment is switched off at the end of every day
- lightning and earthing protection conforms to BS 6651-1999 which is tested annually by a specialist contractor
- all gas appliances are tested and serviced by Gas Safe Registered Engineers
- portable electrical equipment should be checked regularly; plug in items brought in from home should not be used until they have been PAT tested by the school
- rubbish should not be left lying around
- care should be taken to avoid large flammable displays along escape routes
- escape routes should always be kept clear and fire exit doors never blocked
- outside rubbish storage (bins) should always be located away from buildings
- the safe storage areas for flammable chemicals (such as for Science, Art and Design, cleaning, the pool) will be used whenever necessary
- exit routes are regularly walked by the Responsible persons with Associate head teachers at each site to ensure that they are, and remain, clear of obstruction
- external doors and internal corridor doors are kept open whilst the school is occupied to maximise the airflow through the building (COVID 19 measures) and are closed at the end of the school day or when the building is secured.

Records Maintained

- Gas Safety Certificates
- PAT Testing Certificates
- Lift Service and Statutory Inspection Reports
- Fire Log Book which contains records of fire safety issues at each site and includes details of fire drills, hot works permits, the storage of hazardous materials
- Lightning Conductor Testing
- Fire Fighting Appliances Service Records
- Electrical Installation test certificates including five year fixed wiring test certificates

Appendix 2: Fire Plan - Template

General Emergency Evacuation procedure for: (school day 0800-1630)
Premises address and contact number:
Plan Date:
Review Date:
Roles:
Fire Wardens: (Position/Names) Emergency Controller: (Position/Name) Estates Manager: (Name) Fire Manager: (Position/Name) Deputy Controller (in event of absence): (Position/Name)
Sound of the Alarm:
Raising the alarm:
Actions to be taken on hearing the alarm:
Special arrangements:
Assembly points and fire routes:
Fire fighting arrangements:
All Staff:

Appendix 3: Fire Evacuation Log Book Template / Example

Fire Log Book - Fire Alarm at Bay House

Date		Location of fire		Evacuation Start time		End time	
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Series of events (Provide a sequence of the what happened, include the timings)

Time	Event

Notes

Write a brief description of what happened and why.

Review

This document should be signed off by two people including the Senior Leader

Name	Role	Signature	Date
Name	Role	Signature	Date
Approximate cost			