



# HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

*'Kindness, aspiration & self-belief'*

## FIRE SAFETY POLICY

(with reference to the Fire Safety Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005)

<b>Policy Holder</b>	The Bursar
<b>Date Approved</b>	September 2025
<b>Governor Approval</b>	Full Board
<b>Date for next review</b>	September 2026

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This policy is made up of the following sections:

1. Roles and Responsibilities
2. Fire Safety Emergency Evacuation Procedures
3. Fire Safety Systems
4. Safety Checks and Safety Equipment Locations
5. Fire Risk Assessment
6. Fire Drills, Training & Review

### INTRODUCTION

The school's priority is to minimise the risk to life and to reduce injury by maintaining the physical fire safety of the school. This is managed by ensuring that staff, pupils and visitors are aware of our fire safety procedures, through the safe evacuation of our buildings if a fire breaks out as well as installed compliant and appropriate fire safety systems and best practice procedures.

The Governors of Holmewood House School recognise and accept our collective responsibility as employers for providing, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy school for all of our employees, pupils, parents and visitors. The Governors are committed to ensuring that the school operates in accordance with current legislation and, where necessary, additional resources will be provided to facilitate this.

The school's fire risk assessments meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO). Specifically, they identify:

- 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

## **I ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **I.1 Board of Governors**

The Governors recognise their personal responsibility for the Fire Safety of the school and its users and occupants. To discharge this responsibility, they ensure regular review of fire safety matters at the H&S Committee and a Governor with specific responsibilities for Health and Safety matters sits on the H&S Committee and liaises with other Committees as required.

### **I.2 Head**

On a 'day-to-day' operational basis, the Head is directly responsible to the Governors for the safe functioning of the school's activities including fire safety.

### **I.3 Bursar (as Health & Safety Manager)**

The Bursar is responsible for ensuring that operations under the school's control are conducted without detriment to the health, safety and welfare of users of the school's facilities as far as is reasonably practicable. The Bursar monitors the effectiveness of this Policy, including ensuring employees are fully aware of their responsibilities through regular updates and communications.

### **I.4 Operations Manager**

Operations Manager is responsible:

- To advise Governors and SLT in the regular review the Fire Safety policy
- To ensure that the policy is effectively communicated to the school community
- To ensure that appropriate fire drills are followed in line with this policy and records kept
- To ensure fire risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated
- To ensure sufficient and suitable training and record keeping for fire wardens, first responders and fire marshals.

### **I.5 Maintenance Manager**

The Maintenance Manager is responsible for ensuring that all fire safety systems are maintained and checked as required by current legislation.

The Maintenance Manager will maintain all documents from the servicing and repairs/maintenance of these systems including weekly tests and termly fire drills.

## **1.6 Fire Marshals (Deputy Head/SLT)**

In the event of a fire, the Fire Marshal takes operational control for the response to the emergency including control of the Assembly Point. Any subsequent movement of staff and pupils will be decided by the Fire Marshal. They are responsible for:

- Ensuring the roll call of all pupils and staff is completed in an orderly, efficient and calm manner and that results are recorded.
- If a fire is confirmed, the Fire Marshal will contact the Fire Services and maintain contact with emergency services.
- Once roll call is complete and all First Responders have reported back, if it is safe for staff and pupils and the alarm has ceased, then the Fire Marshal will direct staff and pupils to return to their buildings.
- The school is responsible for ensuring that there is an effective system for the class register to be returned to the school Office and thereby available for roll call purposes in the event of fire drill.

The Fire Marshal will inform the Fire Brigade in the event of a fire during the normal working day, but during non-working hours the responsibility passes to the Duty Staff or Security. However, in the absence of an individual, the senior member of staff present is to call the Fire Brigade.

The Fire Marshals are also responsible for dynamic monitoring of the situation so in the event of the fire taking hold/smoke moving towards the assembly point, they can move those assembled to a safe area.

## **1.7 First Responders**

First Responders are responsible and trained to enter their nominated buildings or areas to perform checks for any remaining personnel or identify any signs of fire or smoke. Upon completing their checks, they are required to report their findings to the Fire Marshal by 2-way radio.

## **1.8 Fire Wardens**

At the time of an alarm, fire wardens have specific responsibility to check the exit route as they evacuate, pushing open doors of toilets or changing rooms and calling to check they are vacant. They report any irregular findings to the First Responders (i.e., cubicle locked in the toilets on the first floor etc) or Fire Marshal.

## **1.9 Teaching Staff**

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that their form is safely evacuated via the shortest (or safest in the event of an adjacent fire) route to the assembly point.

The list of children is taken to form tutors at the assembly point to check that all children are accounted for or marked as absent.

Drama Teachers will escort any pupils to the assembly point where they will join their form.

Peripatetic Music Staff will register as ADMIN at the assembly point entrance by the Sports Hall.

Swim School children will exit the pool but remain poolside and a member of swim staff will report to the Fire Marshals that they are all accounted for. If the fire is in the swimming pool building, the children will evacuate without changing from their swimming gear but will be given foil capes to keep warm and a dynamic risk assessment will be carried out so they are not left outside at the without suitable clothing.

## 2 FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

### 2.1 Emergency Evacuation Procedure (refer to Upon Hearing the Alarm procedure on SharePoint)

All staff, visitors and pupils are advised of the following procedure in the event of a fire emergency:

- If a fire is discovered, the break glass in the nearest alarm point should be deployed.
- Upon hearing the alarm, leave the building by the nearest exit. Only exit the building that is in alarm. If a fire is found, the First Responders will activate all alarms across Prep so that all buildings can be evacuated and registers taken.
- Make your way to the Assembly Point
- Admin take the logging in iPads to the assembly point (see the school map and key on page 6 of this document)
- Form teachers line up their class
- Staff wait at the appointed gate until called forward to register with SLT who hold the staff logging in iPads. (academic via one gate, support via another)
- Await instruction from the Fire Marshals (BSLT Member) only First Responders (nominated members of the Estates Team) and Fire Marshals are authorised to act during a drill.

The warnings in case of fire or emergency evacuation will be given by a loud siren which is quite unlike the lesson change bell used throughout the school, and which is easily recognised by staff and pupils alike. This siren is clearly audible in all parts of the school and is not used for any purpose other than as a fire or emergency evacuation warning. Evacuation during the day is to the emergency evacuation assembly point. Evacuation out of hours is managed by dynamic risk assessment carried out by Duty Staff and Security/SLT so they can assess the safest place for people to line up given that there may be heavy traffic movements at the time. Boarding has their own evacuation point for out of hours evacuation.

Arrangements are made locally for all appliances using gas or electricity to be switched off and rendered safe so far as is possible before evacuating buildings in the event of a fire.

The First Responders, in conjunction with the Fire Marshals and, if they are called out, the Fire Service, will make a judgement call as to whether to move the assembled children and adults should the fire/smoke pose a risk to those at the main assembly point. In Prep, everyone would be moved to the South Lawn and in Pre-Prep to the Nursery, and Nursery to Pre-Prep. Dynamic assessments would take place throughout the evacuation.

### 2.2 Doorways, Escape Routes and Emergency Exits

- Doorways providing exit from the school should, so far as is possible for the purpose of security, never be locked during school hours. Internal doors designated as fire doors are never to be blocked, wedged open nor should they be locked.
- There are at least 2 escape routes from most parts of each building
- Fire signage is displayed in each building, fire doors are labelled
- Stairs, passages and emergency exits are illuminated by emergency lighting
- Some doors are fitted with magnetic door openers that will close in the event of an activation
- Means of escape are checked by fire wardens as they move around the site and by the Maintenance Manager when carrying out a weekly drill
- Changes to evacuation routes because of building alterations will be communicated when necessary

- There is no legal requirement to have zoned maps/escape routes in buildings as long as the emergency lighting and fire signage is correctly displayed/installed.

## 2.3 Prep Assembly Points



Key: -

3	Pond	11b	Learning Strategies
4	Adventure Playground	12	Medical Centre
5	Walled Garden	13	Mansion House & Boarding
6	Science Block	14	Squash Courts
7	DT Block	15	Sports Hall
8	Art Studio	16	Swimming Pool
9	Jubilee Theatre	17	Forest School
10	Collings Building	18	Nursery ASSEMBLY POINT IN GRAVEL GARDEN
11	Cloisters	19	Pre-Prep ASSEMBLY POINT IN PLAYGROUND
11a	Learning Hub	20	Dance & Drama Studio

## 2.4 Pre-Prep and Nursery Assembly Points

The Fire Assembly Points for Pre-Prep and Nursery:

- Nursery go to Pre-Prep main playground
- Pre-Prep assembly in their main playground
- In the event that either of those buildings experience a real fire, the children will be moved to the alternative evacuation site as advised by dynamic risk assessment of the situation.

## 2.5 Visitors/Contractors

Visitors and contractors are required to register at Reception where they will be issued with a visitor's lanyard, which should be worn at all times. All visitors are directed to view a map showing location of the assembly point/s and visitors are escorted to the assembly point by the person they are visiting. Contractors are also asked to view the Contractor Safety Card when they sign in.

Visitors sleeping on site are advised of the following by the Head of Boarding or person responsible for the visitor:

- What do the fire alarms sound like? (a siren not a bell)
- How to operate a call point (it may look very different to the type they are used to)
- Show all available evacuation routes, highlight dead-end conditions
- Explain the importance of good housekeeping (fire risk, trip risk, charging devices)
- Strictly no smoking and no on vaping site, no electronic devices to be left plugged in and unattended
- Explain assembly point locations (day & night locations) and behaviours at assembly point (quiet and await further instruction from a school or fire service representative at the assembly point)
- Visual check of any electronic equipment (Boarding/Gaps)

## 2.6 Boarding Procedure

New boarders are inducted into the fire process by the Boarding Housemaster and there is a practice every term in a night-time situation and all findings are documented by Head of Boarding on the Fire Drills Log on the H&S Folder.

The main assembly point for boarders is in front of the Mansion House where the assembled group will await further instruction from the First Responder, Housemaster or Fire Service.

Any other members of staff living in the Mansion assist with any evacuation at night.

## 2.7 Medical Centre Fire Evacuation (incl. Vulnerable Persons/PEEPS)

Staff in charge of the Medical Centre Staff must adhere to the following:

Medical Centre staff should carry out a dynamic risk assessment to see if the person in their care needs to be moved somewhere else should they be so unwell they cannot wait outside. If a patient in their care is sufficiently well and mobile, then they should evacuate to the main assembly point and report to the Fire Marshal. If they move the patient, they must let the Fire Marshal know so they can be accounted for during registration.

- It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that all adults and children including vulnerable persons and those with PEEPS are removed to the fire assembly point on the Old Tennis Courts
- Nobody should wait in a refuge e.g. the wide part of an external stairwell, as the purpose of a stairwell refuge is to provide a safe space for anyone under supervision of a PEEP to stand whilst the main flow of people evacuating have passed, and then be helped by their allocated PEEP Buddy to the assembly point
- If you are writing a PEEP, please ensure that you write a sufficiently detailed evacuation plan to ensure that the person with the PEEP has suitable buddies/assistance to get them to the assembly point. This should include waiting in the refuge if required, then being assisted to the assembly point
- The lift must never be used in event of fire
- The wellbeing and sensory rooms can only be occupied when a teacher is in the adjacent room. Therefore, the school are always aware when the rooms are occupied and by whom.

## **2.8 Out of Hours Evacuation (between 4.30pm and 7.30am for Prep)**

### **Out of Hours**

Duty Staff/SLT and Security have responsibility for managing any evacuation that occurs after the First Responders have left site at 16.30. This process should be done through dynamic risk assessment as there may be stationary or moving cars in the assembly point and so those at the assembly point may need to be moved to a safer area. The alternative location is in front of the Squash Courts so that the flow of people moving towards the assembly point is maintained.

### **Assembly Point Full of Vehicles (evacuation any time)**

If alarm activation occurs and the car park is full of vehicles, the Fire Marshal/First Responders/Duty Staff are responsible for assessing the safety of the fire assembly point and moving people in front of the Squash Courts away from vehicles if required.

### **Boarding**

After 16.30 boarders and staff living in the Mansion will follow their own evacuation process and assemble at the front of the Mansion House. Overnight visitors must be advised of the assembly point and evacuation process.

Foreign language students receive instructions, where practical, in their own language.

## **3 FIRE SAFETY SYSTEMS**

### **3.1 Alarms**

All buildings are fitted with an addressable fire safety system installed and maintained every 6 months by a suitably qualified external provider. Security Team and/or keyholders are contacted by the remote monitoring centre in the event of alarm activation 24/7 x 365.

### **3.2 Remote Monitoring & Alerting the Fire Brigade**

The school is connected to a remote monitoring centre so in event of alarm activation, the remote monitoring centre will ring the keyholder/s who are responsible for checking the fire alarm panel that has activated and they will carry out an immediate visual inspection to ascertain if the Fire Brigade need to be summoned. Should the alarm prove to be false, then the alarm system will be reset, and personnel that have been evacuated will be allowed to return to their buildings.

Even a minor source of smoke and/or fire that could be extinguished locally should trigger a call to the Fire Brigade especially if the source is suspected to be electrical. During normal working hours, the Maintenance Manager, Maintenance Team and First Responders will make the necessary checks; during out of duty hours, this responsibility falls to the Duty Staff/SLT and Security.

### **3.3 Fire Door and Fire System Upgrade Programmes**

The school manages an ongoing programme of monitoring and upgrading the fire doors throughout the site. The school has consulted with expert third parties in preparing an audit on fire doors and determining doors requiring upgrades. The school's external Fire Officer has then agreed prioritisation in consultation with the school.

## **4 SAFETY CHECKS AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT LOCATIONS**

### **4.1 Responsibilities**



The Maintenance Manager and his team are responsible for ensuring that all fire safety systems are maintained and checked as required by current legislation. The Maintenance Manager will maintain all documents from servicing and repairs/maintenance of these systems. Documents are kept with the Maintenance Manager or on H&S folder, depending on how they are recorded at the time (paper or electronic).

The fire alarm system will be serviced and formally tested every 6 months by a competent fire detection company. A record of all these tests will be kept by the Maintenance Manager. Any spurious faults with the fire system, or any false alarms etc are to be by the Maintenance Manager in the system logbook on SharePoint.

The gas emergency valves are located in the pool plant room, at the top of mole hole stairs, in each of the science labs, in the biology lab, in theatre plant room and in both prep and pre-prep kitchens.

Fire hydrants are located near Pre-Prep blue gate and by the zebra crossing near music block.

The fire alarm system is serviced every six months by a fire alarm system contractor.

All twelve fire panels are tested weekly, and logs are kept with each panel.

One break glass per building is tested each week by physically setting off the break glass. A different area is tested every week. The emergency evacuation route closest to the break glass being activated is also checked and findings documented.

Emergency lights are tested monthly and annually (3-hour test) by a suitably qualified contractor.

COSHH items are controlled and managed under the H&S Policy. Training is provided for all staff involved in the use of COSHH chemicals.

Fire extinguishers are located in each building and are maintained on an annual basis by a suitably qualified external supplier.

The school has an inspection regime for electrical circuits in its buildings and it uses NICEIC qualified electrical engineers to inspect and maintain its electrical installations.

Regular portable appliance testing is conducted by a suitably qualified external provider and complies with the school's policy on PAT testing.

Electrical equipment condition and safety inspection reports are carried out in Science, DT, Art, and Workshops on an annual basis by a suitable qualified external provider.

All lightning protection and earthing is tested by a specialist contractor.

All gas appliances (boilers, kitchen equipment etc) are regularly maintained and serviced by Gas Safe Registered Engineers. Certificates are kept by the relevant department head (Kitchen/Domestic/Maintenance)

Landlord's gas safety certificates are held for all School domestic accommodation. These certificates are stored in the Bursary.

Weapons and ammunition are kept in a securely locked, fire-resistant store that is located within a permanently locked room, the door of which is fitted with an alarm. MoD standards and regulations are applied. Documentation is stored on the H&S drive and reviewed annually by the Shooting Department.

'Hot' works carried out should follow the Hot Works Permit regulations including the requirement to provide a continuous fire watch during the period of Hot Work. Following completion of each period of the work, the fire watch should continue for at least 30 minutes, with further checks at regular intervals up to 60 minutes after completion to ensure that the working area and all adjacent areas, including the floors below and above, and areas on the other sides of walls, screens, partitions and above false ceilings have

been inspected and found to be free of smouldering materials or flames. Hot Works Permits can be found under the H&S area of Sharepoint and as an Appendix to this document.

## **5 FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT**

Fire risk assessments are completed for all buildings every years or upon change of use or change to the area, whichever is the sooner.

FRAs are completed by a suitably qualified external provider. A log of when FRAs are due is kept on the shared drive and managed by the Estates Manager.

Upon completion of the FRA the Estates Manager will log all actions/findings onto the Every Helpdesk for completion by the in-house team, or depending on the action, call a specialist contractor to quote. If the action related to poor housekeeping, the HOD will be advised.

The Maintenance Team will complete any findings/actions from the FRA, prioritising the works as they see relevant and save updated documents in the H&S folder.

## **6 DRILLS, TRAINING AND REVIEW**

### **6.1 Fire Drills**

Fire drills for Prep, Pre-Prep and Nursery are carried out within the first fortnight at the start of each term. The Head of Estates will ensure that the correct timetable of fire drills is followed and liaise with the Maintenance Manager and his team of First Responders, who carry out fire evacuation drills and log the results on the Fire Drills Log on SharePoint.

For the boarding house there will be a practice every term in a night-time situation and all findings will be documented by Head of Boarding on the Fire Drills Log on SharePoint.

The record of fire drills will include the date and time of every planned and unplanned fire evacuation, documenting the buildings vacated and the time taken to clear the buildings. If the school is not cleared completely in the minimum time consistent with the difficulties inherent in the buildings, the drill will be considered inadequate and will be repeated. The process will be reviewed and revised as necessary, and the data will be available to the Health and Safety Committee and Premises Committee.

### **6.2 Training**

Fire wardens complete the Fire Safety in Education Educare on-line training module every three years. First Responders undergo an in-person training session with the fire officer appointed by the school. A log of all training is kept by the Estates Manager.

All staff undergo inset training covering fire and health and safety at Inset.

### **6.3 Fire Action Notices**

Evacuation notices and directions to the assembly point are saved on the H&S Noticeboard on SharePoint and displayed in prominent places throughout the school, e.g., offices, dormitories, noticeboards etc. Staff and pupils are provided with a reminder at the start of each term about the fire safety processes at school.

### **6.4 Review of Policy and Procedures**

- The Fire Safety policy is reviewed annually by Governors and the Bursar
- Any change to the Fire Safety Policy is communicated to the school
- Fire safety training is provided at Inset and during induction

- Emergency evacuations are regularly tested and findings documented
- Fire risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated
- Everyone in the School (including visitors and contractors) are given clear instructions on where they should go in the event of fire. Visitors are escorted by their hosts and will receive direction as is appropriate when they visit the premises
- The school has access to, and uses, suitably experienced fire and health and safety consultants when writing policies and procedures
- Reviewed at the same time as the H&S Policy

Signed Chair of the Board of Governors

Dated 01.09.25

## **Appendix A: HOT WORK PERMIT**

This Hot Work Permit should be completed whenever repairs, alterations, extensions or refurbishments are to be carried out at the premises involving the use or generation of heat.

Serious fires are frequently started as a result of lack of care and attention before, during and after work involving the use or generation of heat.

By undertaking the reasonable checks listed we could avoid the possibility of serious damage to our premises. Failure to implement these checks may mean that we are unable to recover from our Insurers in the event of any ensuing fire damage.

These checks must be completed by the Safety Officer or a nominated person and the Contractor / Workman / employee concerned.

### **General Precautions**

Alternative safer methods of work should be explored before a decision is taken to authorise Hot Work.

Wherever possible items to be subjected to Hot Work should be removed to a safe area designated for that purpose.

A trained person, not directly involved in the work, should provide a continuous fire watch during the period of Hot Work. Following completion of each period of the work, the fire watch should continue for at least 30 minutes, with further checks at regular intervals up to 60 minutes after completion to ensure that the working area and all adjacent areas, including the floors below and above, and areas on the other sides of walls, screens, partitions and above false ceilings have been inspected and found to be free of smoldering materials or flames.

**General Information**

**Complete this section with the person/s carrying out the work.**

Contractor's / Workman's / Employee's name :

Name of Safety Officer or nominated person :

Location of Hot Work :

Date / Time of Hot Work :

Date / Time of issue of Permit :

This permit expires on :

Anticipated duration period of Hot Work :

Days

Hours

Minutes

Date / Time of expiry of Permit :

**Please ensure that the Contractor / Workman has adequate Public Liability Insurance.**

### **Before Hot Work Commences**

**Ensure that :**

**Tick actions completed**

In sprinkler protected premises the system should remain fully operational.

☐

Adequate and suitable portable fire extinguishers are available for immediate use and all persons involved and undertaking fire watch duties are fully trained in fire procedures

☐

An area within 10 metres of the hot work process is cleared of combustible materials and flammable liquids

☐

If combustible materials are within 10 metres and cannot be removed they should be covered by non-combustible materials

☐

Any holes, gaps in walls, floors or ceilings where sparks could pass through are covered by non-combustible material

☐

Floors are swept clean.

☐

Floors of combustible material in the designated area are covered with sheets of protective material or wetted and covered with sand

☐

Floors below and above, and areas on other sides of walls, screens or partitions are inspected and cleared of combustible materials

☐

Enclosed equipment such as tanks, vessels etc are emptied and tested or are known to be free of flammable or dangerous materials

☐

Where work is being carried out on building panels, an assessment is made on insulating or other materials behind or forming the core of the panels ☐

Where an automatic fire detection system has been installed the zone where the Hot Work is being carried out is isolated ☐

### **Following completion of Hot Work**

**Ensure that :**

**Tick when completed**

Paint strippings, hot stub ends of welding rods and other hot waste materials have been removed and disposed of safely ☐

All equipment, including gas cylinders, has been removed to a secure area. ☐

### **Final Check**

**Maintain Fire Watch and regular inspections for a period of 60 minutes after completion of the Hot Work as specified under ' General Precautions' overleaf**

**We confirm completion of the Hot Work and Final Check :**

**Safety Officer or nominated person :**

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**Contractor / Workman / Employee :**

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Date :        /        /

Time:

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