



Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

1. Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to minimize the risk to life and to reduce injury by maintaining the physical fire safety integrity of the school and by 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 School commits in this policy to observing the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and does not discriminate on any grounds.

NB; The Term "School" represents "Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation" or "DCSF".

2. Policy Statements

- 2.1 The Fire Safety Policy, procedures and risk assessments at DCSF are designed to help our staff members, pupils and visitors respond calmly and effectively in the event that fire breaks out in one of our buildings.
- 2.2 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for health & safety and fire safety matters for the School as a whole.
- 2.3 The Principal carries responsibility for policy implementation but the day-to-day responsibility and operational arrangements for monitoring compliance with the terms of this Fire Safety Policy and the School's fire safety procedures are delegated to the Fire Marshall, the Estates Manager, as the Responsible Person.
- 2.4 Fire Safety legislation in England, Wales and Scotland is governed by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The order requires the 'responsible person' to make suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks which relevant persons are exposed to for the purposes of identifying the general fire precautions needed to comply with the requirements and prohibitions imposed under the order
- 2.5 School will consider a 'team approach' to risk assessment ensuring that people pool their different knowledge and skills. The aim should be for the School to have the comprehensive coverage of fire safety assessment.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 School Fire Marshalls:
School Fire Marshall Mr Hugh Shannon (Estates Manager)
Deputy Fire Marshall Mr Nathan Bushnell (School Marshall)
- 3.2 The School Fire Marshall can be contacted on 313901 (internal) or 07786 780206. In the absence of the School Fire Marshall, the Deputy Fire Marshall can be on 07551 524 209.
- 3.3 The School Fire Marshall is responsible for ensuring that:
- The Fire Safety Policy is kept under regular review.
 - The Fire Safety Policy and risks identified by the fire risk assessments are circulated to the entire school community.
 - Information is available so that everyone in the school (including visitors and contractors) should be aware of where they should go in the event of fire.
 - Procedures for emergency evacuation are regularly tested.
 - Fire prevention measures are followed and staff are provided with appropriate fire safety training and instruction.
- 3.4 The Fire Marshalls at the Chorister site are Headmistress, Mrs Sally Harrod and Deputy Heads, Mr Iain Campbell and Ms Joss Balfour.
- 3.5 The Fire Marshall at Barrington House is Housemaster, Mr Simon Bowler.

4. Fire Risk Assessment

- The Fire Safety Risk Assessment will be updated and reviewed annually by an approved, accredited external contractor
- The Estates Manager (Fire Marshall) will carry out regular checks of all the buildings and weekly monitoring of fire safety systems.

5. Fire Prevention

Fires start and grow when there is a source of fuel or combustible material present alongside a heat source and plentiful supply of oxygen. Minimizing the presence of oxygen is not a practical solution to prevent fire, so the School focuses on removing or limiting the presence of ignition and fuel sources where possible.

Some of the key fire hazards that exist at the School, and a brief overview of how they are removed, reduced or managed, is included below.

5.1 Electrical hazards

An inspection and testing plan is in place for electrical equipment and the fixed electrical installation within School buildings.

- The electrical circuits and switchgear in school buildings are periodically inspected and tested, by an external registered qualified contractor, with remedial works being completed as required and records being retained of all works.
- Portable electrical equipment is inspected and tested periodically by an external registered qualified contractor, with records being held in the Estates Department.
- All electrical equipment must have a visual inspection before the use of the electrical equipment to ensure its safe use. This is particularly relevant to the Houses where the SHM, DHM, Matron and cleaners can observe this and refer to the Estates Manager if a problem is noted.
- Electrical circuits must never be overloaded and equipment should always have the correctly rated fuse in the plug.
- Faulty electrical equipment is taken out of use immediately and either repaired or disposed of safely to prevent use by others. Particular attention is paid to international pupils' electrical equipment and guidance is given to international pupils regarding their electrical equipment.

5.2 Gas fired equipment

All gas appliances and the gas supply system are subject to a safety check on an annual basis by a GasSafe Registered Engineer. In addition.

- Certificates of gas safety are produced and records retained. Testing includes the effective combustion of gas to ensure that fire and explosion risk is eliminated.
- In the School kitchens, an ANSUL fire suppression system is installed over the main ovens and cooking areas to instantly suppress any outbreak of fire. Heat detectors are installed as part of the fire alarm system.
- The use of naked flames within the Science Department are controlled in accordance with Departmental risk assessments. Bunsen burners are checked before use by the technicians.

5.3 Portable Heaters

The occasional use of portable heaters in School or the Houses is appropriate in exceptional circumstances, if approved by the Estates Team. If used, they must be inline with the following precautions:

- Heaters must always be positioned at a safe distance away from combustible materials.
- Heaters must not be covered.
- Heaters with exposed elements are not permitted.
- Heaters should not be left unattended when in operation and should be turned off after use.

5.4 Smoking

DCSF is a non- smoking site, including the use of e-cigarettes/vapes. Smoking is not permitted in any school buildings or on any part of the site, indoors or outdoors.

5.5 Machine related risks

Machinery, including hot works such as welding, cutting and grinding are carried out by contractors, our Estates Team and in academic workshops, especially in the DT department. Controls include:

- Regular checks and servicing of equipment.
- Risk assessment of the activity which includes the use of machinery prior to operation.
- Appropriate training given to members of staff or pupils who are operating any machinery.

5.6 Combustible or Waste materials

Non-combustible materials should be used wherever possible, in construction or refurbishment works. Fabrics and upholstery should also have an appropriate level of flame resistance. Controls include:

- Annual checks on furniture and furnishings in Houses and School to ensure the Furniture and Furnishings (fire Safety) Regulations 2010 are met. <https://www.firesafe.org.uk/furniture-and-furnishings-fire-safety-regulations-19881989-and-1993/>

5.7 Flammable substances

The use of flammable substances should be limited wherever possible, and the following measures are adopted:

- All flammable liquids are managed, stored and used in accordance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) and the School COSHH Policy.
- All flammable substances are correctly stored in a secure area away for sources of ignition. Appropriate ventilation must be provided to prevent the buildup of flammable vapors.
- The segregation of incompatible chemicals and substances must be carefully managed to eliminate the possibility of combustion.
- Pupils are always supervised during science lessons and laboratories are secured when not being used for lessons. Pupils should never be in laboratories without staff being present.

6. Protective fire safety measures

Further protective measures are also adopted to reduce or limit the spread of smoke and flame and to ensure the School Community are as safe as possible.

6.1 Fire Alarm

- Automatic fire alarm systems are installed in all buildings with detection via ceiling mounted smoke and heat detection. There are manually operated break-glass call points near most exits.
- The fire alarm systems are serviced every six months at Durham School and every three months at Chorister School by Pyrocel and in addition an agreement is in place to provide for repairs and routine maintenance, where required.
- Once per week, usually on a Thursday between 08:00 – 11:00, all fire alarm systems are tested in each building. Records are kept in the fire log book. The weekly test is no longer than 10 seconds. Staff and

pupils are briefed that if the alarm sounds for longer than this, it is considered a genuine emergency and the building should be evacuated.

6.2 Fire Drills

- A whole School fire drill takes place termly during School hours. At the Senior School, pupils and staff assemble on Master's Green in Houses and year group order. Housemasters / mistresses are responsible with House staff on registering pupils and reporting missing pupils to the Fire Marshall.
- At the Chorister site, pupils assemble in classes with their classroom teacher at the assembly point.
- Fire drills are carried out in Houses, termly. A daytime drill is carried out for all pupils and an evening or nighttime drill is carried out in the Boarding Houses.

Assembly points are:

Macleod and Pimlico House	The Grove garden
The Caffinites	Poole House front lawn
The Lodge	Poole House front lawn
Poole House	Poole House front lawn
School House	Master's Green
Barrington House	College Green

- Records of all fire drills are kept in the Estates Office Fire Safety file.
- Visitors to the site will be informed if there are any planned fire drills.

6.3 Compartmentation and fire resistance

Good compartmentation and fire resistance within a building can help to contain a fire and limit the spread of the fire, smoke and flame through the building. This also helps to protect escape routes.

- Fire doors are installed on most rooms and along escape routes to provide fire resistance and to ensure fires are contained in a small area. Fire doors should not be propped open as this negates the fire resistance in the building.
- Automatic fire doors have been installed in key areas to protect escape routes or segregate high-risk areas such as the kitchens.

6.4 Escape routes and exits

These have been planned to ensure there are an adequate number and that they are protected and available for use.

- Escape routes should always be clear of obstructions.
- The Estates Team will regularly check that escape routes are clear, however it is the responsibility of all staff to monitor this on a daily basis.
- Visitors and contractors are also responsible for ensuring that they do not obstruct any emergency escape routes.

6.5 Emergency lighting and signage

- Escape routes and exits through the school are provided with emergency lighting which illuminate in the event of a power failure, to enable the safe evacuation of buildings.
- Emergency lighting is checked for operation on a monthly basis by the Estates Team and results are recorded.
- Annually the emergency lighting system is serviced, and the batteries checked for performance, with action being taken if required.

6.6 Fire extinguishing appliances (FEA)

These are located throughout the school at regular points and are selected to match the type of fire that is likely in that area:

- FEA are serviced and maintained annually, under a maintenance agreement with an external contractor.
- Whilst the provision of FEA is a requirement, the priority is to evacuate the building. Where FEA are used by staff, the following rules should be applied:
 - The fire should be no bigger than a wastepaper bin.
 - The staff member should keep themselves between the fire and the exit should the fire become uncontrollable, and they can turn away and escape.
 - No more than one fire extinguisher should be used to tackle a fire. If the fire is not extinguished, the member of staff should evacuate the building.

7 Fire Safety Training

All staff are provided with an overview of the Fire Safety Policy, the evacuation procedures, escape routes and exits and assembly points as part of their induction to the School and also annually at the Inset Day at the start of term.

- Fire drills are completed on a termly basis for each of the houses on site. Fire evacuation drills are intended to provide training and rehearsal in the event of a fire, and they should ensure:
 - People act in a calm and orderly manner and understand their responsibilities and action they must take.
 - Those who have designated responsibilities carry out their tasks effectively to ensure the safety of all concerned.
 - People can respond appropriately and quickly should the Estates Team block escape routes to simulate an actual fire.
- No fire drill will take place without the permission of the Principal. A debrief between the Principal, Headmistress of Chorister School, Estates Manager and Operations Manager should take place after each drill and actions recorded and implemented if required.

8 Evacuation Plans

Evacuation plans have been developed for all the buildings. Evacuation routes and assembly points are clearly signed and in addition Fire Action Notices are displayed throughout the buildings. These advise people what to do in case of a fire.

A Personal emergency Evacuation Plan (PPEP) should be developed and implemented for anyone who may need additional support responding to a fire alert. (eg. persons with mobility issues or sensory impairments). These should be reviewed periodically to check they remain updated.

9 Fire Evacuation Protocol

9.1 Assembly points

There are four assembly points at Main School which serve all the buildings.

- Masters Green. For whole School evacuation and main School site
- Poole House front lawn. For evacuation of Poole House, The Caffinites and The Lodge
- The Grove Garden. For the evacuation of Pimlico, Macleod and the Medical Centre only.

At the Chorister site, there are two assembly points:

- College green for whole school
- Playground for temporary holding till safe movement to College Green.

9.2 Groupings of Buildings

On the Senior School site there are groupings of buildings each with separate fire alarm systems. These buildings are physically isolated from each other, and it is only necessary to evacuate the building / group of buildings where the fire alarm has been activated.

- Corner Block, Long Block, School Block and School House
- Admin Block
- DB building, ICT, Budworth Sports centre, The Vallance.
- Pimlico House, Macleod House and Medical Centre
- The Caffinites House and Lodge House
- Poole House

At the Chorister site there are 3 groupings of buildings

- Sports hall
- Building 8
- Building 9, 10, 11, 12)

9.3 Fire Evacuation Procedure (School Hours 08:00-18:00)

9.3.1 Evacuation

- All staff and pupils should evacuate the building quickly and calmly via the nearest exit, and proceed to the designated Assembly Point.
- Staff are expected to make sure pupils evacuate in an orderly manner and are supervised whilst they remain at the Assembly Point.
- Any member of staff accompanying visitors to the School should accompany them to the Assembly Point.
- Any contractors/ visitors who are not normally accompanied during their time at the School, should be instructed on the location Assembly Point and advised to report there on hearing the alarm.
- Any concerns/ comments/ observations on the evacuation process should be raised with the Duty Fire Marshall before leaving the Assembly Point.

9.3.2 At the Assembly point:

- The Fire Marshall will take overall charge.
- At the Senior School, Pupils and House staff assemble in House groups. Each Tutor group in alphabetical order.
- At the Chorister site, pupils and staff assemble in class and year groups.
- The Duty Fire Marshall will distribute the fire file with register and high vis vest to either the Senior or Deputy Housemaster / mistress or another member of House staff in their absence.
- Other staff and visitors must report to the Principal's PA who will have a list of non-House staff. Visitors will be accounted for through the "Sign in App" and the Receptionist will bring the sign in iPad out of Reception.
- Once everyone is accounted for, staff in charge of Houses or the staff / visitor group should inform the Fire Marshall or alert him /her to unaccounted persons.

9.3.3 The Estates Staff, will on hearing the fire alarm, identify where the fire is, and report to the relevant building.

- If safe to do so, they check the Fire Alarm Panel to establish the location from which the alarm has been activated and the cause of the activation.
- If safe to do so from outside the building, it may be possible to investigate whether a fire is present in that area.
- If the reason for the alarm being activated is not fire, the Estates team will investigate the area and establish the cause of the alarm. Common causes of the alarm being activated are insects, deodorant spray, cooking in the kitchen.
- The Estates staff will contact the Fire Marshall and allow staff and pupils to return to their daily activities.

10 Fire Evacuation Procedure Out of hours (18:00 – 08:30am)

The Fire Marshall is the School Marshall, Mr Karl Relph. He can be contacted on 07551 524 209. If the fire alarm is in an individual House, the Resident Senior Housemaster / mistress act as the Fire Marshall.

- Any member of staff still on the School site must assemble at the designated Assembly point.

- Cleaners must also report directly to the Assembly point and one of the Chartwells staff from the kitchen must bring the list of members of staff on site and check they are present.
- Where necessary, the Fire Marshall should phone the Estates Manager for additional support.
- No body should enter the building until confirmation from the designated Fire Marshall says that it is safe to do so.
- The Fire Marshall shall follow the procedures for evacuation as detailed in section 9.

11 Cross reference to other policies and documents

The Fire Safety Policy is designed to be used in conjunction with the DCSF Health and Safety Policy.

12 Oversight

Oversight of this Policy is undertaken by the Health, Safety and Welfare Committee and the policy will be reviewed annually.

**Policy last reviewed by
S Middleton (COO), on 6 February 2023
H Bergenstjerna (Operations Manager), 11 November 2024
H Bergenstjerna (Operations Manager), 7 November 2025**