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## The GCA Fire Safety Policy

### Part 1: Fire prevention

#### Introduction

The prevention of fire is of vital importance. Most fires are caused by carelessness and ignorance. A high standard of fire consciousness will prevent this. It is the responsibility of all personnel to become conversant with these instructions.

Upon the outbreak of fire, the saving and preservation of life takes precedence over the salvaging of property. A member of staff's first and overriding duty is of course to look after the children or persons under their charge and this will mean the evacuation of the building. No attempt should be made to fight fire until their safety is assured, and then without exposing any person to risk.

The school fire officer is the school business manager and he or she is to be informed of all fires, no matter how small. A fire is not considered extinguished until such time as it has been inspected by the fire officer.

#### Strategy for fire prevention

Management strategy for fire prevention may be classified as follows:

- everyday management and vigilance by staff to ensure that potential hazards are kept under control to prevent the occurrence of fire
- alarm, evacuation and emergency action backed up by notices, drills and practice to ensure that correct action is taken in the event of an outbreak of fire

The strategy should also include:

- planning for the actions to be taken in the event of fire:
  - training of staff, including any specially delegated function
  - provision of instruction to pupils
  - display of appropriate fire instruction notices
  - control of risks associated with activities or processes that may cause or adversely affect any outbreak of fire, eg process, storage, gas, electricity, contractors on site, vandalism

- check on existing structural precautions, and seeking further advice where there are thought to be deficiencies
- monitoring the effectiveness of precautions, eg analysis of evacuation drills, annual review by checklist

### **Issue of general fire notice**

The issue of general fire notices to staff will take place during induction. It is imperative that this document is issued and explained in detail to an employee in the same way as details of pay, work hours and holidays would be explained. This requirement applies to all staff.

### **Staff training**

The fire officer is responsible for ensuring that all staff in the premises are trained in accordance with the requirements of the school. Every member of staff will receive instruction in fire precautions during induction.

After the initial instruction, all members of staff will receive refresher training at least once every 24 months.

### **Control of risks: training of staff and instruction of pupils**

#### **Employees**

- The training of all employed persons forms an essential part of the school's fire precautions. The aim should be to ensure that all staff receive training in a basic appreciation of the risk of fire and the action to be taken in the event of fire, including instruction appropriate to their responsibilities in an emergency.
- Instruction and training for all will include the following points.
  - action to be taken upon discovering a fire
  - action to be taken on hearing the fire alarm
  - method of raising the alarm, including location of call points, use of internal telephone system and location of external telephone
  - correct method of calling the fire service
  - location and use of fire-fighting equipment
  - knowledge of escape routes
  - evacuation method for the building, location of assembly point and method of accounting for persons
  - stopping machinery, activities and isolating power and fuel supplies where appropriate
  - appreciation of the importance of fire doors and the need to close all doors and windows at the time of a fire or on hearing the alarm

#### **Pupils**

Pupils should be instructed at the start of their attendance at the school to enable them to:

- identify the fire alarm
- know the action they should take on hearing the alarm
- know the location of the assembly points
- know what to do if not in a supervised group, in the event of fire

These points should be included on the fire notice, and reinforced during practice evacuations.

### **Fire drills**

Fire drills will be carried out at least twice every year. The exercise will include a simulated evacuation drill with the assumption that one escape route is not available. Each exercise will be started by a predetermined signal, such as activating the fire alarm and the whole premises will be checked as if an emergency has arisen. This fire drill can be combined with the instruction given to staff. When a fire drill is held, it will be recorded in the staff training record book, held by the site supervisor.

### **Testing of fire alarm systems**

The fire alarm system will be tested weekly by the site team. A different call point for each test will be used and recorded in the log book. The fire alarm systems will be serviced twice a year.

### **Emergency lighting**

The emergency lighting is to be examined monthly by the caretaker. The log book will be completed indicating any defects and these will be brought to the attention of the school business manager immediately. This lighting will also be checked by the maintenance contractor twice annually.

### **Emergency exits**

All emergency exits are to be kept clear and free from obstruction at all times. It is the responsibility of all staff to be fully aware of the contents of these instructions and know the location of all fire exits and the assembly point in the immediate vicinity.

### **Fire alarms**

Electrical fire alarm operated by breaking a glass release button. The fire alarm is to be raised no matter how small the fire.

### **Fire-fighting equipment**

### **Fire extinguishers**

There should be the correct type of fire extinguisher at each fire point, dependent upon the location.

### **Fire instruction notices**

Printed notices should be conspicuously displayed at all fire points stating concisely what staff and others should do if a fire is discovered or if they hear the alarm. The notices should be permanently fixed in position and suitably protected to prevent loss or defacement.

### **Fire prevention checks**

Regular fire prevention checks should be carried out.

Checks are to include the following.

- Unnecessary lights and electrical appliances (TVs, videos, microwave ovens etc) are to be switched off and, where possible, unplugged.
- It is recommended that convector heaters are not used in school. All other electric fires must be regularly tested and maintained.

A fire prevention check is to be carried out in all areas at the termination of the day's work prior to the premises being vacated.

The following precautions are to be observed.

- With the exception of essential systems that must continue to operate after normal working hours, all electrical appliances and lighting systems are to be switched off and disconnected by a person nominated for this purpose.
- Waste paper bins are to be emptied and the contents removed from the building.
- All parts of the school are to be inspected by the site team at the end of the day. The site team is also to ensure that all doors are closed.
- Windows are to be left free from obstruction. To facilitate detection of a fire from outside, prior to vacating rooms or premises at the end of the day, all blinds should be open, other than when security requirements dictate otherwise.

### **Housekeeping**

Tidiness and cleanliness are essential fire prevention measures. The accumulation of rubbish and waste material is to be kept to a minimum; it is to be cleared away each day on the cessation of work and removed to a safe location outside and away from buildings for early disposal.

Paint materials are subject to spontaneous ignition. Such items should be removed to a safe external location on cessation of work. The storage or accumulation of combustible materials in roof voids, under stairs and similar spaces is forbidden.

### **Smoking**

Smoking is one of the main causes of fire and is prohibited in the school and the school grounds.

### **Refuse and rubbish**

Refuse or rubbish must not be permitted to accumulate in or around the school. Disposal is to be undertaken at the end of each day.

### **Flammable materials**

Flammable materials are not to be stored near any form of heating.

### **Electrical appliances**

When using electrical appliances, the following rules should be observed.

- They are to be switched off and unplugged when not in use.
- The use of multi-plug adapters is prohibited.
- They are to be fitted with the correct plug for the socket provided. Plugs are to be undamaged.
- Temporary wiring and extensions are not to be used unless agreed with the site team in advance. If extensions are used they should be PAT tested and it is prohibited to 'daisy chain' link more than one.
- Electrical faults are to be reported immediately to the site manager.
- Fuses that have blown must only be replaced after establishing the cause for the blowing, with fuses of the correct rating.
- A fuse should never be replaced with one of a higher rating.
- Flexible cable to fittings should be as short as possible and should be inspected regularly and replaced if worn.
- Personal portable electrical appliances must be PAT tested. Such items must not be used without the appropriate testing and prior authorisation of the business manager.
- Electrical appliances should not be brought in from home. Please notify the site team if you need an appliance that you do not have access to within school.

## **Paint solvents**

Paints and solvents suitably marked are to be segregated in properly prepared stores.

Paint and solvents should be disposed of correctly.

## **Grass and undergrowth**

Grass and undergrowth is to be kept cut well back from buildings.

## **Kitchens**

In order that losses by fire are kept to a minimum and that catering facilities are not jeopardised, a high standard of fire precautions in kitchens is of paramount importance. Catering staff should be fire conscious and are to be trained in the action to be taken when a fire occurs.

## **Disabled/mobility impaired persons**

Special precautions may be required when disabled persons have access to a building. Where possible they should be located within a building so that they are able to evacuate with the minimum of assistance. This will normally mean location on the ground floor. However, consideration must be given to any steps or other changes of level that may need to be crossed. Staff or students will be risk assessed individually and evacuation plans determined on a case by case basis through the risk assessment process.

## **Vandalism and damage limitation**

Fire caused by vandals or persons breaking into a building intent on causing damage are a constant risk, and this type of fire is probably the greatest risk facing the school. Such fires are often started at night or during holidays, and result in extensive material damage, and disruption of pupils' education.

The opportunity for reducing such vandalism lies partly in the long-term development of a good relationship with neighbours, and partly in the security of the premises, by ensuring the windows and internal doors are properly secured when the building is unoccupied. Combustible materials should not be left where they are immediately accessible to intruders, and flammable liquids, which may be used as accelerants, should be stored securely.

Structural fire precautions incorporated to assist escape from buildings will also reduce the spread of fire. All fire doors should be closed when premises are vacated (closing of all doors and windows is recommended to limit the spread of smoke damage).

## **Curtains, furnishings, art displays and decorations**

Care should be taken when choosing curtains, furnishings and fittings. Inherent or tested fire-retardant materials should be used whenever possible.

- Art displays and other decorations of a combustible nature can increase the spread of fire considerably. Accordingly, the quantity and location of such displays is critical in reducing the fire loading.
- Displays should not be placed on escape routes or block exits.
- Sources of ignition, such as light bulbs, should not be placed near the displays.
- Expanded polystyrene and other plastics produce large amounts of toxic, black smoke and considerable heat. They should not be allowed on escape routes.
- In corridors or on staircases, wall displays made from combustible material should be limited to 20 per cent of the available overall surface.

### **Storage**

Readily combustible materials such as paper should be stored in designated areas where they will be secure against unauthorised entry. These areas must be free of sources of ignition, such as heaters and suspended lighting units.

Flammable liquids must be kept in purpose-built storerooms or cupboards provided with ventilation.

All persons handling such material should be aware of the dangers.

### **Electricity**

All electrical apparatus should be installed by an approved contractor, using the correctly rated fuse. If a fault occurs, get it repaired before continuing. Electrical installations should be checked regularly as electrical faults are a major cause of accidental fires.

All electrical equipment not required to be used out of hours should be switched off and the plug removed from the socket. All portable electrical equipment is to be checked annually by a suitably qualified contractor.

### **Fire doors**

Fire doors have at least one of two functions, to protect:

- escape routes from the effects of fire so that occupants can safely reach a final exit
- the contents and/or the structure of a building by limiting the spread of fire

Neither of the above functions will be satisfactorily undertaken unless the door is a good fit in the frame, the self-closing device is working efficiently and the door is not wedged or held open.

Even if a door is not a fire door, it may reduce smoke and heat damage, so at evenings and weekends, all doors should be left in the closed position.

### **Contractors**

Building contractors bring a large number of ignition sources to the school. Ensure that all contractors entering the premises are aware of the fire precaution measures and procedures, should a fire occur.

At the end of the day, no building materials should be left outside where vandals can use them to damage the premises.

The school business manager should be made aware when hot cutting work is to take place for both the safety of the pupils and the school.

### **School grounds**

Access for emergency vehicles must be kept clear at all times. Combustible buildings must be sited away from the main building to avoid fire spread. Areas beneath raised buildings should be protected against the accumulation of litter and access for intruders.

Combustibles, rubbish containers and equipment, which could be used by vandals, especially those used by outside contractors, must not be left unsecured.

### **Fire routine**

The purpose of the fire routine is to establish what action is to be carried out in the event of a fire. It should be in the form of a written notice and cover the basic facts below (see part 2):

- what to do if you discover a fire
- what to do when you hear the alarm of fire
- evacuation
- assembly
- roll call
- calling the fire service
- special needs of cleaners, disabled, etc.

### **Advice on the procedure in the event of fire**

At time of emergency:

- If you discover a fire – or one is reported to you – operate the nearest fire alarm call point by breaking the glass.
- If you hear the fire alarm, evacuate the premises immediately, as detailed in the evacuation procedure for the school.
- Ensure that the fire service is called by dialling 9/999.

After the event, follow the procedure described below:

- Do not re-enter the premises until advised to do so by the senior fire service officer present.
- If the fire has been extinguished by school staff, do not disturb any evidence that could indicate the cause of the fire, except for ensuring that the fire is out.
- Ensure that the premises are in safe working order before re-occupying: fire doors satisfactory, fire alarm operating, extinguishers re-charged.
- Statistics have shown that any publicity given to a school fire can result in a second fire. Members of staff are not to talk to the media unless authorised by the Principal.
- The fire officer is to analyse the procedures followed during the fire to determine whether changes are required.

### **Fire records**

The safety of a building's occupants cannot be assured by design alone. Any building can quickly become dangerous unless there is foresight in the activities carried out there, and care in the maintenance of it.

The following fire records are to be maintained:

- persons with special responsibilities
- fire alarm call point locations and checks
- weekly fire alarm tests
- fire alarm fault records
- fire alarm maintenance inspection
- emergency lighting maintenance inspection
- fire-fighting equipment routine monthly checks
- fire drills

- fire-fighting equipment tests and maintenance by contractors
- training records
- visits and inspections by the fire service

### **Publication of fire instructions**

These instructions are to be accessible to all staff via the staff portal or visible signage in their work areas.

All new arrivals are to have fire instructions brought to their attention.

*The classroom fire notice is to be displayed in each classroom.*

## **Part 2: Fire procedures**

### **General fire notice**

#### **On discovering a fire:**

- operate the nearest fire alarm point without delay
- call the fire service by dialling 9/999, ask for the fire service and give the precise location of the fire
- Get Out – Stay Out
- evacuate all occupants to the agreed assembly point
- staff may attempt to extinguish a small, localised fire with the nearest suitable fire appliance if trained and suitably confident
- if fire has reached such proportions as to endanger life or escape, do not attempt to extinguish, but proceed to assembly point

#### **On hearing the fire alarm:**

- close all doors and windows
- proceed to your assembly point and take the roll call – TENNIS COURTS
- on arrival of the fire service, the fire officer or a senior member of staff should meet the fire service officers and give as much information as possible about the fire

#### **Know:**

- your means of escape, primary and secondary
- the nearest fire-alarm point
- the nearest fire appliance and how it should be used
- the assembly point

#### **In the event of fire:**

- maintain silence
- do not stop to collect your personal belongings
- do not rush
- do not use the lift in the Hazelhurst building
- be mindful of individuals requiring help and support to evacuate

## **Fire and emergency procedures**

At all times, fire exit routes must be unobstructed. All exit doors must be unlocked whilst there are people in the building. Smoke doors must not be hooked or wedged open, other than to allow temporary movement within the area.

Exit routes must be clearly identified and marked.

The use of display material must be controlled on fire exit routes.

## **Extinguishers**

The location of all fire extinguishers must be clearly marked. No materials may be placed near these in such a way that their location is hidden or that their use is hindered.

If possible, training in the use of fire extinguishers should be arranged with the local fire officer.

## **Storage of flammable materials**

Flammable materials, such as paper, floor-cleaning materials and petroleum products, must not be stored in boiler houses or other high-risk locations.

## **Classroom fire notice**

*A classroom fire notice is to be displayed in each classroom.*

## **Raise the alarm**

It is the duty of anyone discovering a fire to operate the nearest fire alarm point by breaking the glass cover. The nearest member of staff must be immediately informed.

## **Evacuation route**

Evacuate the building in an orderly manner.

## **Assembly areas**

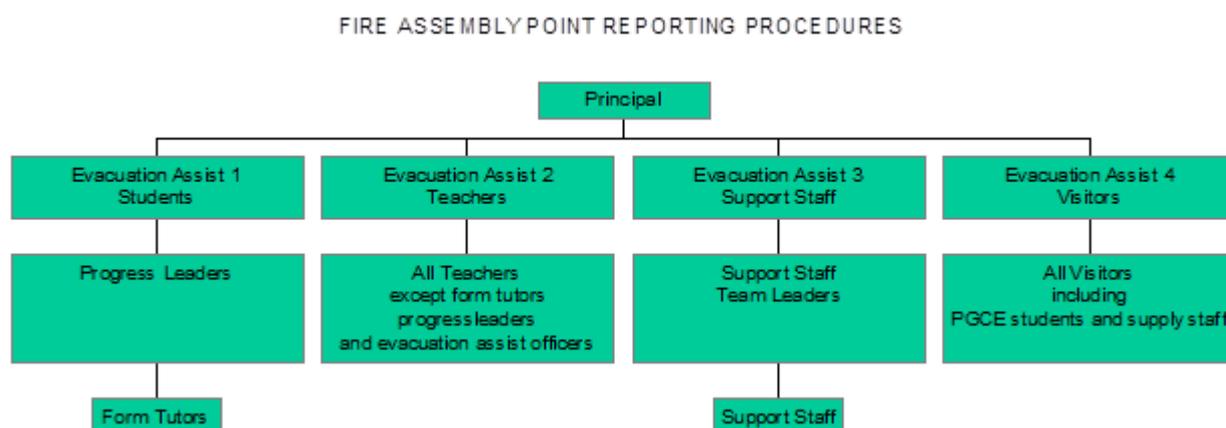
Form tutors and pupils will assemble by classes at the designated area, support staff will assemble at the Sports Hall end of the tennis courts, visitors at the entrance to the courts and remaining teachers at the Pond end of the courts. See Appendix 1

## **During examination periods**

In the event of the alarm being raised during periods of external examinations please refer to the Examinations Contingency Plan document for information regarding the required evacuation procedure to meet examination board criteria.

## Roll call

Roll call will be carried out in accordance with the following chart.



## Fire Marshalls

Due to the nature of the building and the mobility of both teachers and staff the school do not appoint fire marshalls.

The following responsibilities have been allocated to personnel in the event of a fire:

Post	Primary	Deputy	Responsibility
Evacuation Assist 1	Tony Holliday	Angela Livesey	Students register (1)
Evacuation Assist 2	Paul Dawson	Gary Felvus	Teachers Register (2&3)
Evacuation Assist 3	Susan Forrester	Liz Macpherson	Support Staff Register (4)
Evacuation Assist 4	Bill Wiseman	Jennifer Morgan	Visitors Register (5)
Catering	Peter Townsend	Debbie Crutcher	Turn off ovens and isolate
Finance	Susan Forrester	Anne Ormerod	Check reception toilets on way out
Office (main reception)	Liz Macpherson	Ali Duffy/ Kay Linighan	Collect 5 registers (1,2,3,4,5) Collect signing in/out book(s) (Visitors & Student & Staff ) Collect lettings sign in sheet (if applicable) Collect Critical Incident bag

			Drop shutter
IT	Tony Richens-Smith	Mark Hesmonhalgh	Check server room and toilets in Fairsnape
Maths	John Malloy		Check lift and toilets on way out

### **Inclement weather**

In adverse weather conditions staff and students will be advised that in the event of a fire the assembly point will temporarily be located at the front of school on the bus car park. This change in procedure will be communicated at staff briefing and via e-mail. Notification of return to normal procedure will also be notified when the weather no longer causes risk on the tennis courts.

### **Instructions for the Responsible Person in school**

The Principal is the Responsible Person for the school. He delegates the day to day duties to the School Business Manager but maintains responsibility.

The Business Manager's duties are to:

- be responsible to the Principal for all matters relating to fire precautions and the school fire organisation, establishing close liaison with the local fire service officer in the area
- supervise, maintain and control on behalf of Principal:
  - preparation of school fire instructions
  - measures for fire prevention and fire-fighting, including fire practices
  - allocation, maintenance and testing of all fire-fighting equipment held by the school for its fire protection
  - arrangements for summoning fire-fighting resources, with details displayed in buildings and by the main reception
  - liaison with the appropriate fire service representatives in the area
- maintain suitable records to show the following:
  - training of personnel and attendance on courses
  - distribution and appropriate inspection, maintenance and testing of school fire equipment, fire alarms and water supplies
- *take charge of fire-fighting operations until the fire service arrives*
- *ensure that adequate arrangements are made for sign-posting and marking water supplies for fire-fighting, and that a water supply map is maintained for use by the fire service*
- ensure that authorised fire notices are displayed as necessary

- ensure that contractors employed within the school perimeter maintain an adequate standard of fire precautions

## Review

This policy and procedures will be reviewed annually as part of the GCA's Premises/Health & Safety procedures

Reviewed by Governors' Premises Committee: Summer term 2017

Date of next review: Summer term 2018