


MERTON COURT SCHOOL



Fire Prevention Policy and Emergency Evacuation Procedures (inc the reduction and Elimination of Risk from Dangerous Substances)

To be reviewed October 2025 by: Mr D Price, Mrs A Macdonald
Signed by Headmaster/Proprietor: 
Shared with staff: 12.11.24
Put on Website: 12.11.24

Applies to:

This policy applies to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), all staff (teaching and non-teaching), supply teaching staff, volunteers and contractors working in the school.

Related Documents:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Audits

Availability

This policy is made available to staff via the staff shared drive. Parents on request, may obtain a copy from the School Office.

- The Fire Safety Policy and Emergency Evacuation Procedures (available to staff on the school internet and in the school policy folder) along with relevant procedural documents, are provided either in hard copy or electronically to all new employees and volunteers before commencing work at Merton Court School.

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headmaster/Proprietor who will undertake an annual review of this policy and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown, or earlier if changes in legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Fire Safety Policy and Emergency Evacuation Procedures

This document sets the policy on how the regulations are interpreted at our School.

Fire Safety

Government statistics show that the UK Fire and Rescue Services attend over 500,000 fires each year. The number of fire related deaths reported each year exceeds 600, with the number of fire related injuries exceeding 16,000. The financial loss to the UK economy is measured in the billions of pounds.

Against this background, Merton Court School has established a fire safety policy and procedures, which are designed to protect children, staff and visitors and school assets. The effectiveness of these policies depends not only on physical precautions designed to prevent the occurrence and spread of fire, but also on the co-operation of every member of staff, pupil and visitor.

Compliance with fire safety policies and procedures is a legal requirement. All staff will have duties and responsibilities in respect of fire safety. Ultimate responsibility for this policy rests with the employer. The Advisory Board will look to the Headmaster/Proprietor to ensure that the Fire Safety Policy and the Fire Safety Procedures are effectively applied and brought to the attention of their staff and are observed by them at all times. As with all matters relating to health and safety, the leadership team (LT) and staff have devolved responsibility for the application of this Fire Safety Policy.

The Government published the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order in 2005. It applies to the vast majority of premises. The aim of the new regime is to create a simple fire safety regime applying to all workplaces and other non-domestic premises. The regime is based on risk assessment, a duty to maintain fire precautions which are for the use of fire fighters and new duties on fire authorities for fire safety, investigation and testing. The fire safety arrangements in Merton Court School have been dictated by the provisions of the Fire Safety Acts, where, in such premises, there are at any one time either:

- a) More than twenty people at work; or
- b) More than ten people at work elsewhere than on the ground floor, then the owner or occupier of the premises is required to apply for a fire certificate.

Responsible Persons

The Regulatory (Fire Safety) Reform Order 2005 states the meaning of 'Responsible Person' as being:

- The employer, if the workplace is to any extent under his control; or
- The person who has control of the premises (as occupier or otherwise) in connection with carrying out their trade, business, or undertaking.

The Main requirements of the above legislation include:

- Fire risk assessment and fire precautions to minimise the risk of fire;
- Design of buildings to prevent the spread of fire;
- Means of detection and giving warning in the event of fire;
- The provision and maintenance of means of escape;
- Emergency evacuation procedures and means of fighting a fire;
- The training of staff in fire safety and the management of fire safety.

The main objectives of our school Fire Policy are:

- To safeguard persons who may be affected by fire at any of the school premises;
- To safeguard the physical assets of the school, its staff, children and visitors;
- To reduce the incidence of fires;
- To minimise the potential for fire to disrupt the work of the school;
- To minimise the incidence of unwanted fire alarm signals and false alarms and
- To protect the environment.

The Health & Safety Officer (HSO) has undertaken a fire risk assessment (Priority Risk Ltd. October 2017) in accordance with the Fire Precautions Workplace Regulations 1997 (amended 1999). The Health and safety officer (HSO) ensures compliance and this is viewed as a minimum standard to be achieved. The Health & Safety Officer (HSO) will ensure any further modifications required as a result in changes in legislation or established best practice are approved by the local fire authority. In accordance with legislation, there is an annual Health and Safety Fire Risk Assessment. This is completed by an external contractor. Additionally there is external fire safety training.

In compliance with both regulations and best practice, the Proprietor has ensured that:

- all fire call points are identified and weekly call point tests (different call point every week) undertaken and recorded;
- adequate and suitable fire extinguishing appliances are provided and maintained;
- suitable means of fire detection and signalling of the presence of fire is provided and maintained;
- adequate means of escape are provided and maintained;
- suitable signs designating firefighting equipment and means of escape are provided and maintained;
- a fire logbook is provided and maintained;
- fire training is provided to employees;
- Evacuation drills are undertaken at all the premises at least termly and the results recorded;
- suitable fire procedures are published in respect of:
 - Action to be taken on discovering a fire.
 - Action to be taken on hearing the alarm.
 - Responsibility of key personnel in the event of a fire.

The Management of Fire Safety

The Health & Safety Officer is responsible for the ongoing management and maintenance of fire safety arrangements within the areas that come under their control. This will include:

- Appointing a sufficient number of School Fire Marshalls;
- Ensuring that all appointed Fire Marshalls are appropriately trained;
- Ensuring that all staff, children, contractors and visitors are made aware of basic fire safety procedures;
- Ensuring that day and where required, evening fire emergency practices or fire drills are carried out each school term, to familiarise staff, day children and other users of the school with the school evacuation procedures in the event of a fire emergency;
- Ensuring that all means of escape are kept clear of obstructions, and free of combustible material and any potential sources of ignition;
- Ensuring that that good standards of housekeeping are maintained at all times;
- Ensuring that all statutory instructions relating to fire doors are observed;
- Reporting any defects with the fire alarm system, emergency lighting, fire doors, portable fire extinguishers or fire signs etc. to the appropriate persons and reporting any incidents of fire.

Emergency Contact

A registration form for emergency contact telephone numbers is issued to parents on entry to the school. Notification of any change to these details must be reported to the School Office. Every employee at the school has been asked to complete a form giving details of next of kin, emergency contact numbers and relevant details about medication. If they do not wish to do this, a "disclaimer" must be signed. Were there ever to be a disaster or crisis affecting the staff and/or children of the School, there would be need for easy access to certain data. It would also be essential for considered procedures to be pre-determined to avoid the risk of ill-considered action being taken during a time of stress. The primary aim of our Fire Safety Policy is to safeguard life and to this end the Proprietor will assume this responsibility. Policies and procedures are available for all staff who are required to be familiar with and apply them.

- Advice is taken from appropriate specialist advisors.
- Problems will be noted, prioritised and acted upon appropriately.
- Outside teachers, visitors and contractors will be required to take note of and follow our emergency procedures.
- Public events are assessed for all risks including fire.
- Fire Drills are held regularly, at least once a term and timed. Records of fire drills are kept in the Log Book in Mrs Macdonald's Office.
- Escape routes are clearly labelled and lead to a safe assembly point.
- All staff and children are instructed on action to be taken in the event of an emergency.
- Every room has prominently displayed clear notices describing the action to be taken.
- Fire doors are clearly labelled and unlocked.
- Clear and prominent signage directs visitors to the nearest evacuation route.
- The Fire Marshall for each building checks that areas are evacuated and is on hand to assist those with a disability.
- Arrangements are in place for summoning the Fire Brigade.

- The designated assembly point is at a safe distance from the building and not on a route which may be used by the emergency services.
- A roll call is taken using **Bromcom & Inventry**.
- The alarm system is tested weekly, and is audible in every part of the premises.
- The alarm is never switched off and is routinely serviced.
- All the firefighting equipment is recommended by the Fire services and checked on a regular basis.
- Electrical equipment is regularly checked and maintained by an approved electrical.
- Regulations concerning the control and storage of flammable liquids are followed.
- All appropriate fire risk assessments are in place and checked by the HSO.

Firefighting equipment will be regularly serviced and clearly labelled. Signage is regularly checked and updated in line with current legal requirements. There is a fire drill/emergency evacuation procedure every half term. Staff are made aware of fire drills but children are not warned of an impending practice. It is essential; therefore, that each member of staff is aware of what the evacuation arrangements are for each area of the school. These are detailed in to this document. In case of a fire or bomb threat, evacuation procedures will be tested each term. The evacuation and safety of visitors and contractors will be the responsibility of the person who they are visiting or working for.

The School has:

- Fire Safety Policy and Procedures
- Fire Safety Audit
- Evacuation Procedures

In accordance with statutory requirements there is an annual fire safety audit which includes checking all firefighting equipment by an approved contractor and records maintained. The fire alarm will be tested weekly from different points when the site is not in use and records maintained. All emergency lighting is tested weekly and records maintained.

Responsibility of Staff

The effectiveness of the Fire Safety Policy will depend on the full co-operation of every member of staff, without exception. Co-operation should be encouraged from the highest level. Complying with the fire safety procedures should be regarded as a basic duty by all the staff and an essential obligation for all Officers with management responsibility. The Headmaster/Proprietor and The H & S Officer are responsible for coordinating the fire evacuation of the school buildings in the event of a fire emergency.

Fire Marshalls

Fire Marshall training should be made role –specific, to include:

- How and when to check areas to ensure that people have evacuated;
- An overview of the School's emergency plan; the role of the First Response Team and Fire Marshalls;
- The location of the 'Control' and 'Assembly' Points.

- Understanding of the fire detection and alarm system and the fire equipment available.
- Reporting procedures for non-compliant issues.

Fire Drill

Staff are also informed of the location of the fire extinguishers. All employees and voluntary helpers are provided with a personal copy of the fire drill procedures including:

- Evacuation from the premises;
- Exit routes;
- Checking the children are present;
- responsibilities regarding the children they are supervising.

A copy of these procedures is also available in each classroom.

Execution

Our fire safety policy regime mirrors closely the Merton Court School Health and Safety Policy (H&S) systems and procedures. Fire safety is by definition a subset of the current H&S systems and procedures. Our School's H&S Policy includes a statement that the Proprietor of the School has a duty to take reasonable precautions to safeguard the lives of employees and other visitors. In this case children at our school are included as employees rather than visitors to the site. Responsibilities are as follows:

	Tasks	Comments
The Proprietor/Head master	Responsible in law for what happens on the premises Plans, implements, monitors and reviews the policy Assists the Responsible Person in the Management of H&S including fire precautions	
Employees	Comply with H&S policy and take reasonable steps to protect themselves and colleagues at work.	
Visitors	Should be briefed on any H&S issues that will affect them, as required, when they are on site	

Risk Assessment. The Responsible Person produces the risk assessment for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions that he needs to take. The Risk Assessment is based on an understanding of the relevant legislation, guidance and good practice in the fire prevention field.

Design of Fire Alarm Systems

The Health and Safety Officer, Mrs A Macdonald and the Estates and Maintenance department, Mr Colin Elliott and Mr Mitch Lewis will also be responsible for the weekly testing of all fire alarm systems with the school's buildings.

Maintenance of Fire Alarm Systems

The School's Health and Safety Office will be responsible for ensuring the ongoing maintenance of all the school's fire alarm systems, within the school buildings. ADT, our maintenance company are ISO 9001 certified.

Fire Precautions Maintenance

The following arrangements have been made for maintenance:

	Item	By whom
Ongoing	Check signage, safety clips on fire extinguishers, ensure that fire doors are not wedged open	Mr Colin Elliott Mr M Lewis
Weekly	Test fire panels on Wednesday between 10.00 – 10.15am	Mr Colin Elliott
Termly	Test Emergency lighting	Mr Colin Elliott
6 monthly	Test all fire panels & alarms	External Contractor
Annually	Test all fire extinguishers, check all fire blankets. Replace any missing fire evacuation signs. Fire Risk Assessment	External Contractor External Contractor

Smoking

Smoking can be a major source of fires. Smoking on the school's premises is prohibited.

Training

The Health and safety officer (HSO) will arrange biennial training for staff.

Practice Evacuation

There will be a practice evacuation each term. The aim of the practices is to familiarise children and staff with evacuation procedures, a full evacuation is considered successful when a building is evacuated within 4 minutes. The HSO will set off the fire panel and monitor the time it takes to evacuate the buildings;

these details are to be passed to the Responsible Person for record keeping purposes. The following practices should occur **every term**:

	Detail	By whom
Whole School	One daytime evacuation practice	The HSO, in conjunction with the Headmaster/Proprietor
Anyone on the premises	After school evacuation practice	The HSO, in conjunction, with the Headmaster/Proprietor

Merton Court School has an Emergency Evacuation Plan which forms an appendix to this policy.

Overview of hazards, people at risk, level of risk, records and review.

Identification of hazards.

- **Sources of ignition.** Sources of ignition include: electrical sockets and equipment; maintenance; items covered under CoSHH; and specific rooms such as science laboratories, boiler house, workshops and kitchens. These areas are kept under review to minimise risk, and to ensure that there are few chances of mechanically generated sparks. Contractors are supervised and have to comply with both CDM regulations and school policies in relation to Fire Safety and Health and Safety.
- **Sources of fuel** Mains, gas and electric.
- **Sources of oxygen.** Doors are kept shut to reduce the levels of draft (an accelerant) and slow the spread of fire; there are no stored oxygen containers on site. All doors are fire doors and must not be wedged open.

People at risk.

- **By day.** Children, staff and visitors.
- **During holidays.** During the holiday periods there could again be occasions when the school is used for activities and continuing professional development but these numbers are low.
- **People especially at risk.** This would apply if either a child or adult with a physical disability was on the school site.

Evaluation of risk

- **Overall evaluation of risk.** The overall evaluation of the risk of a fire starting is assessed as **LOW** because there are few ignition sources and combustible materials are kept away from them. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the school premises or the entrance area. Electrical equipment is inspected regularly and tested, and the chance of arson is assessed as low due to the security arrangements of the school.

- **Evaluation of risk to people from fire.** Risk to people from fire is low.
- **Reduction of fire hazards.** All adults are briefed on induction and annually on the importance of good housekeeping to prevent the build-up of combustible material.

Reduction of risk to people.

- **Detection and warning.** The premises are well protected with fire detection equipment, emergency lighting and warning bells.
- **Firefighting.** Certain staff are trained Fire Marshalls and have practised with fire extinguishers. Although the school policy is not to fight fire unless it is to ensure a safe evacuation.
- **Fire Marshalls.** All Fire Marshalls will receive training every 3 years.
- **Escape routes.** The school follows the principal that main escape routes are all signed.
- **Signs and notices.** Signs and notices comply with H&S (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.
- **Eliminate and reduce risk.** All dangerous substances are kept securely locked away. Unauthorised adults and children are never allowed to come into contact with these substances.

Fire Prevention and Control - Fire Marshalls

Introduction

The Headmaster/Proprietor has appointed eight Fire Marshalls and eight Deputies. A full list can be found on the back page. **Mr Price & Mrs Macdonald will act as deputies in the event of any member of staff being absent.**

Tasks

Fire Marshalls have the following tasks (in priority order):

1. To ensure that all occupants of a building evacuate the building in an orderly manner using the recognised evacuation routes.
2. To assist with the control of the children, staff and visitors in the fire assembly area
3. If there has been a false alarm the HSO along with the Headmaster/Proprietor will decide when to silence all fire panels and re-enter the building.
4. Reporting faulty firefighting and fire detection equipment to the HSO along with the Headmaster/Proprietor.
5. To make recommendations to improve fire safety.

Appropriate procedures are in place for ensuring that safety precautions are properly managed, formulated and disseminated to all staff. These procedures include Fire Drills and the use of Fire Extinguishers. A copy of the school evacuation procedure is available in all key areas. There is one exit door from each room and on leaving the room the exit routes are clearly displayed. All staff, visitors and volunteers should be fully conversant with the evacuation procedures

in the case of a fire/bomb threat. The procedure for this purpose at Merton Court School is in full at the bottom of this document.

Bomb Threats

The aim is to prevent bomb or incendiary attacks, or when this is not possible, to minimise their effects in buildings to which members of the public must have access. This must be done without imposing unacceptable restrictions on them and the Proprietors must weigh the seriousness of the threat against the need to maintain business as usual and decide the extent to which counter measures should be adopted.

Public Access

Consideration should be given to dividing the areas to which the public usually require access from the rest of the building. The rest of the building can then be made a secure area.

Package Bombs and Hoaxes

Postal bombs are unlikely to be in large parcels, rather in flat packages. Staff should be on their guard for:

- The post mark – especially foreign, and any name/address of sender.
- The writing – especially of foreign style.
- Stains – these could be sweating explosives.
- The smell – usually an aroma of marzipan or almonds indicate an explosive.
- The sound – if the parcel rattles, ticks, etc.

Telephone Calls

These are more of a common occurrence than parcels. All members of staff should be aware of the necessary procedures should they receive such a call:

- Alert security/police immediately.
- Above all, be calm, listen carefully, and report exactly what is said.

Fire and Bomb Alerts

If an alert is a practice, then the fire brigade must be informed before the evacuation of the premises takes place.

Prevention of Arson

Arsonists in schools often start their first fires by chance. The school policy on arson prevention is therefore:

- As far as is practicable inflammable materials are locked away.
- All waste bins are emptied.
- The HSO along with Headmaster/Proprietor makes occasional unannounced checks that the procedure is being adhered to.

Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures

FIRE

1. Any child discovering a fire in the School or the need to evacuate should tell the nearest adult.

2. Any adult discovering a fire or the need to evacuate should operate the nearest fire alarm point.

These are operated in the following manner:

Smash glass and push bell

The fire alarm points in the school are situated:

By the School Office

Upstairs Offices at the top of the stairs

Near Fire call point and CO2 Extinguisher are located outside the library door.

Top corridor main building (opposite Assessment room)

Top corridor – main building top of stairs (opposite Art Room)

Stairwell main building adjacent to lower corridor and toilets

Elizabeth Price Building located on the ground and first floors at the end of the corridors

Dance Studio – located next to the Bi-fold Doors

J1 – on all three exit doors

EY – main door to carpark, on both doors exiting onto the decking

Afterschool Club building – on both exits from the building

The fire extinguishers are situated:

On corridors in all School areas

In the swimming pool the extinguishers are located in the boys changing room.

3. Upon hearing the alarm, Teachers should assemble their children and take them straight to their allocated position in the Senior Playground. Children should line up in register order and number off if required.

The positions for each class are:

All children to assemble on the Junior Astroturf, with the exception of EY who will assemble on the field. If EY are in the main school they will be escorted to the Junior Astro to join the rest of the school.

Those using the Hall: to use fire exits to sides of hall.

For anyone is in the pool when the alarm is raised, they should leave immediately using the fire exit on to the outside of the building.

Thermal jackets will be issued upon leaving the building. Everyone should then assemble in the lower playground. Under no circumstances should anyone re-enter the changing rooms for belongings.

4. If, for any reason, a teacher cannot use the usual route he or she should exercise discretion and get the children to safety by some other route.
5. If time permits, Teachers should close doors and windows as they leave the classroom. Roll call must be taken when the children are assembled.
6. Helpers with groups throughout the school should take the children out at once. The only responsibility of adults in the school is to evacuate the children in their charge to safety as quickly as possible, closing, where possible all doors and windows on route to the emergency evacuation point.
7. No child or adult should go back into the School without the express permission of the Headmaster/Proprietor.
8. Ancillary staff will help the Teachers.
9. As soon as the alarm is given it will be the responsibility of members of staff to check the interior of the School and make sure that no child has been left behind in the toilets, or anywhere else.
10. On hearing the fire alarm the School Secretary (or a member of the office staff) will immediately telephone the fire brigade on 999. Ms Emma Cole/Mrs Kim Lewis will **Bromcom and Invenry information** along with the office Walkie-Talkie down to the assembly point. Please make sure that all Walkie-Talkies are set to Channel 3. If the school telephone is out of action, or cannot be reached, arrangements have been made to use a telephone within the School grounds, situated at Early Years or J1. Mr Price and Mrs Macdonald to ensure they take their mobile phones with them.

The Headmaster/Proprietor is responsible for ensuring that regular fire drills are held, that the fire alarms are serviced annually and that any emergency lighting system is also tested annually. The fire drills are recorded by Colin Elliott and kept in the school office.

Emergency Lighting

The HSO will ensure the routine testing and ongoing maintenance of the emergency lighting systems, is carried out in all the school premises.

Fire Alarm Test

The fire alarms are tested once a week by Mr Colin Elliott, and records are kept in the School office. The HSO is responsible for reporting any defect and ensuring that they are repaired.

Fire Fighting Equipment

The HSO will be responsible for ensuring that suitable fire extinguishers are located on all school buildings. Regular Fire risk assessments will identify the type, numbers and location of fire extinguishers. The HSO will also be

responsible for ensuring the engagement of contractual annual testing and maintenance of all fire extinguishers and equipment.

The Headmaster/Proprietor will ensure that the emergency plan is reviewed on an annual basis, or sooner if changes occur that affect this plan.

The following members of staff are all trained Fire Marshalls.

Fire Marshalls

Mr Luke Barley	Main Building
Mr David Brady	EP Building - UPPER
Mrs Tessa Langton	EP Building – LOWER
Mrs Elizabeth McCarthy & Miss Emma Cole	Main building offices, adult toilets Science room, Music room, Staff room Children’s toilets & PPA room
Miss Adele Broderick	Upstairs offices & dogs
Mrs Cathy Cowburn	Kitchen & Wash-up
Miss Hayley Hall & Miss Jane Amphlett	J1, Swimming Pool, Hall, First Aid room, PTA Kitchen, Dance Studio, toilets (blue and outside Dance Studio)
Mrs Kirsty Richardson Miss Laurs-Jane Thatcher	EY Building
Mrs Tessa Langton	MAD House, Dance Studio, Outside toilets (blue & next to Dance Studio)
Mr Colin Elliott	to visually ascertain location of fire, meet Fire Brigade and oversee evacuation
Mr Dominic Price Mrs Angie Macdonald	

