

Fire Safety Policy

Introduction

The Directors recognise that ultimately, fire safety is their responsibility as proprietors. At Willow House School, the Directors, Executive Headteacher and Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager have shared responsibility for fire safety. All staff are required to make suitable and sufficient assessment of the general fire precautions to be taken or observed in relation to the risk of the safety of all staff and pupils in case of fire.

A fire safety officer can inspect at any time whilst the school is in progress to confirm that the conditions required for fire safety are being met.

Willow House School pays due regard to the national guidance regarding fire safety. This policy acknowledges guidance including:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 S.I. 2005/1541, to which there are amendments not relevant to these Regulations (legislation);
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1541/contents/made.
- Fire safety risk assessment – educational premises (guidance):
www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-educational-premises.
- Fire safety risk assessment: sleeping accommodation (guidance);
www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-sleeping-accommodation.
- Fire safety law and guidance documents for business (guidance);
www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-law-and-guidance-documents-for-business

Roles and responsibilities

Directors

Although Willow House School retain responsibility for fire safety, they delegate tasks to the Executive Headteacher, the Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager and other school staff.

Responsibilities of the Directors:

The Directors are responsible for:

- Ensuring the safety of the pupils, including fire safety in Willow House School at all times through receiving detailed monthly accident/incident/fire safety/issues reports from the Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager. In addition, related monthly meetings take place between the Directors, Executive Headteacher and the Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager.
- Ensuring that all agreed corrective action to address issues is effective and timely through rigorous monitoring and follow up reports from the Executive Headteacher and the Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager.
- Visiting Willow House School regularly to check on each schools general performance and fire safety provisions.
- Liaising with the Executive Headteacher and the Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager throughout the year to discuss processes, make changes and improvements wherever appropriate and ultimately lead to the highest standards in Fire Safety.

Specific responsibilities of the Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher is specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring that Willow House School is a safe learning environment by undertaking regular, frequent and robust checks at each school (including unannounced monitoring visits) to check that the Fire Policy and procedures are fully and effectively implemented
- Ensuring that all staff are well trained and accredited as required in Fire Safety matters
- Ensuring that each of Willow House School implements the company's Fire Policy and Procedures by holding the Lead Teachers to account
- Ensuring that Lead Teachers make all staff at each school including volunteers and temps aware of this policy
- Ensuring that all required documentation eg. Fire Risk Assessments are completed and sent to the Directors for consideration
- Ensuring that any necessary remedial actions are carried out promptly
- Ensuring that Fire Safety processes are improved in a timely fashion
- Reviewing health, safety, fire and risk assessment policies and procedures annually or earlier when significant changes are required, with the Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager
- Ensuring that this policy is amended promptly when significant changes are required by the DfE
- Liaising with the DfE, Directors, Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager and Lead Teachers and staff throughout the year to discuss processes, make changes and improvements wherever appropriate and ultimately lead to the highest standards of Health and Safety.

Specific responsibilities of the Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager

The Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager is specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring that Willow House School is a safe learning environment by undertaking regular, frequent and robust checks at each school (including unannounced monitoring visits) to check that the Fire Policy and procedures are fully and effectively implemented
- Producing monthly Fire Safety Incident Reports (including nil returns) and circulating to the Directors and the Executive Headteacher
- Ensuring that any necessary remedial actions identified in the Fire Safety Incident reports are carried out promptly and effectively
- Ensuring that Fire Safety processes are improved in a timely fashion
- Reviewing health, safety, fire and risk assessment policies and procedures annually or earlier when significant changes are required, with the Headteacher
- Ensuring that this policy is amended promptly when significant changes are required by the DfE, in partnership with the Executive Headteacher
- Liaising with the DfE, Directors, Executive Headteacher, Head of Education and Lead Teachers and staff throughout the year to discuss processes, make changes and improvements wherever appropriate and ultimately lead to the highest standards of Fire Safety.

Specific responsibilities of the Head Of Education and Lead Teacher

The Head Of Education and Lead Teacher are specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring that their school is a safe learning environment by undertaking regular, frequent and robust checks are carried out including in relation to accommodation/premises matters, learning activities (including educational visits) and any local considerations
- Ensuring that levels of pupil supervision and day to day vigilance regarding fire safety are effective
- Ensuring that all staff are well trained and accredited as required in Fire Safety matters
- Ensuring that their school implements the company's Fire Policy and Procedures
- Ensuring that all required documentation including is completed and sent to the Headteacher and Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager
- Ensuring that any necessary remedial actions are carried out promptly
- Ensuring that Health and Safety processes are improved in a timely fashion
- Liaising with the Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager and Headteacher regarding any fire safety incidents so that they can be reported to the Directors
- Liaising with the Executive Headteacher, Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager and staff at their school throughout the year to discuss processes, make changes and improvements wherever appropriate and ultimately lead to the highest standards of Health and Safety.
- Ensuring that they support their staff to discharge their duties in relation to Health and Safety
- Ensuring that staff in their line management control and any volunteers and temps are aware of this policy.

Specific responsibilities of Staff

Staff are specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring that they have read, understood and are committed to the company's Fire policy
- Ensuring that their school is a safe learning environment by undertaking regular, frequent and robust checks regarding Fire Safety
- Ensuring that pupils are supervised diligently and with due care for their Fire Safety
- Ensuring that they attend accredited training as required by Willow House School in Fire Safety matters
- Ensuring that any necessary remedial actions they are asked to carry out in relation to Fire Safety are completed promptly
- Liaising with the Lead Teacher, Executive Headteacher and the Health, Safety and Maintenance Manager throughout the year to discuss processes, make changes and improvements wherever appropriate and ultimately lead to the highest standards of Fire Safety
- Ensuring that any weaknesses they feel exist regarding the company's policy and procedures are promptly reported to their line manager.

Fire Safety Management

Main duties are to:

- Undertake risk assessments
- Be responsible for fire safety training
- Produce an emergency plan and put up fire notices
- Conduct fire drills
- Check adequacy of firefighting apparatus and its maintenance
- Consult with and implement recommendations of local fire service
- Conduct fire safety inspections
- Make more frequent informal checks
- Ensure fire escape routes and fire exit doors/passageways are unobstructed and doors operate correctly
- Check fire detection and protection systems are maintained and tested and records kept
- Ensure close down procedures are followed
- Include fire safety in the regular Health and Safety meetings

A Fire Log Folder is kept in the school office.

Close Down Procedure Checklist

- All flammable materials are locked away
- All valuable equipment is secured
- No cash is left unsecured overnight
- All rubbish/waste has been removed from the building and placed in secure storage
- Everyone has vacated the premises and all rooms, especially toilets and showers have been checked for anyone hiding
- External lighting is working correctly
- All windows are shut and locked
- All internal doors are closed (to prevent the spread of fire)
- All external doors have been secure.

Electrical Fire Safety

- Electrical appliances should be unplugged when not in use
- Sockets should not be overloaded
- A blown fuse should only be replaced after the cause of its failure has been discovered and always with a fuse of the correct rating
- Procedures are in place for regular inspection and testing of equipment
- Flammable materials should not be kept in the electrical switch room and the boiler house
- Materials stored in the switch room should not obstruct access to the switchgear.

Displays

- Should be kept away from curtains, doors and heat sources
- Should not obstruct escape routes
- Should not obscure fire notices, fire alarms call points, fire fighting equipment, emergency exit signs or lights.

Furniture

- The selection of furniture and soft furnishings must comply with Regulations
- The layout of loose furniture and equipment should, particularly in the open plan teaching areas, not obstruct escape routes and should take account of the needs of occupants such as wheelchair users.

Gas Supplies

All gas supplies should be shut off at the end of each day's activities.

Portable Heaters and other Electrical Equipment

Portable heaters should not be used in school without the Headteacher's permission. Staff should not bring in their own equipment unless it has been checked by the Willow House School authorised Electrical Tester and is registered with the school.

Waste Handling

- Waste must not be allowed to accumulate
- It should not be stored in school overnight
- External waste storage should be away from any building
- Skips should be removed the same day and not placed near the school building

Community Use

In the interests of security and energy conservation, only those parts of the school in use are unlocked. Users must be aware of the means of escape available. (A copy of this policy is provided).

Events

Competent attendants are required to look after everyone. They should:

- Be identifiable
- Carry a torch whenever part of the public areas is in darkness
- Ensure no overcrowding
- Keep exits and gangways clear
- Be aware of the needs of disabled persons and pupils with SEN.

The school operates a NO SMOKING policy, including when there is community use or events

Building Contractors

Risks are anticipated through discussion with contractors. Arrangements are made to monitor escape routes and to prevent obstruction. Where obstruction is essential alternative arrangements are made. All workers report to the school office and must sign in at the Visitor's Register.

The installation companies of each of the identified equipment will carry out inspections on an annual basis once installed. They are:

Rob Courier Building Services

Triangle Works

Back Darwin Street

Blackburn

BL1 3PR

Fire Practice

Fire Practices are normally held once a term. The fire alarm is sounded at the first assembly each new school term.

Leaving the Buildings

In each school and each room near the exit door there is a Fire Plan giving evacuation details, fire assembly point and the route to take if the alarm bell rings. It is the responsibility of each person using the room to be familiar with these instructions and the various exit routes. If any of these are missing or unreadable, notify the Lead Teacher immediately. Pupils should be led out in silence to the assembly point. Staff should ensure that all exit doors are fully open to avoid congestion.

Lining up at Assembly Points

There is one assembly point at each school: This is situated at the front of the school and is depicted on the Fire Plan.

Pupils should line up in an orderly manner.

The Lead Teacher will bring out the register so class teachers can check that all pupils are present. When the Lead Teacher has given the all clear, pupils should be led back to the building in silence.

Visitors should report to the Lead Teacher, who will check the signing in book. When all such staff etc are present, or absences are identified, the Lead Teacher will be told.

In the event of a Fire - follow the instructions on the Fire Evacuation Plan.

Additional Points

- Obviously the normal route for leaving the building will not be appropriate if the exit is blocked by fire – in this case, leave by the nearest safe exit.
- The Lead Teacher will check that pupils in the medical room are evacuated.
- Teaching staff who have no class to register should report to the Lead Teacher.
- At lunch or break times there is an increased emphasis on making a careful check of the school to ensure that everyone has been evacuated.
- All pupils are reminded regularly that if they are out of the room at the time of a fire alarm they should leave the building by the nearest exit and proceed to the assembly point to await the arrival of their class.
- Other adults who are in school on a regular or casual basis are made aware of the procedures for evacuation of the building by the teacher responsible for them. The Lead Teachers keeps supply teachers informed.

NB: Accurate registration of pupils at morning and afternoon registration is essential for a register check in a real life situation to be reliable. Particular attention should be paid to the accurate recording of 'lates', medical or other appointments. The residential staff are responsible for informing Lead Teachers if a pupil has been kept at home because of illness.

Fire Drills

Must be entered in the fire log book. Details include:

- Date
- Duration
- Name of observers/instructor
- Type of drill
- Results.

Fire Detection

- When school is in session every pupil and member of staff is regarded as an independent mobile fire detection system
- Fire detection systems are regularly tested by an independent approved alarm tester and serviced by a qualified engineer.

The Lead Teacher will make a daily check of the control panel.

The Lead Teacher should keep copies of the lists of emergency contacts off-site.

Extinguishing Fires

This should not be attempted if there is a risk of injury to the person using the extinguisher. Staff should only consider fighting a fire after they have evacuated any pupils in their charge and raised the alarm. They must inform another adult of their intention to fight the fire.

Electrical Fires - switch off electricity at the mains if possible.

The location of all fire extinguishing equipment is depicted on the attached Fire Plan. Also a list is provided at (Appendix A)

Training

All staff will receive training on the use of fire extinguishers and fire blankets from a Fire Officer. INSET will be provided on this policy.

Designated Fire Marshal

Willow House School has a designated Fire Marshal. The Designated Fire Marshals are as follows:

- Willow House School – Katy Todd
- Willow House School – Jensen Forshaw

Related Policies/Documents

- Health and Safety
- Risk Assessment
- First Aid and Administering Medicine

Policy review

This policy document will be reviewed by the Executive Headteacher on an annual basis to ensure it is up to date with current legislation and best practice.

Date approved: April 2014

Date last reviewed: September 2024

Next review (or before): September 2025

Signed: 

Position: Education Director

Staff Acknowledgement

In signing this document I am confirming I have read the information and have an understanding of the procedures outlined within the information provided.

I have had the opportunity to discuss this document with a Senior Leadership member of staff to gain further clarity.

I also know that if I feel I need further guidance I know I can access through the Executive Headteacher.

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

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