



**RUGBY SCHOOL
GROUP**

Rugby School Group Fire Policy

September 2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rugby School Group will maintain fire safety across its Schools, reduce the risk of fire, and ensure staff, students and visitors know how to respond effectively in an emergency.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the Group's fire safety arrangements and supports compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Independent School Standards and relevant inspection frameworks.

2.0 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all entities across the Rugby School Group, including:
- Rugby School
 - Bilton Grange
 - Little Grange Nursery
 - Aysgarth School
 - Old Buckenham Hall
 - Beaudesert Park School
 - Any new school that joins the Group
- 2.2 The Policy does not apply to properties leased or rented commercially (the 'London Estate') or to international Schools.

3.0 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of this policy are to:
- Provide a safe environment in which students can learn, live and thrive, and in which staff and visitors can work safely.
 - Ensure that fire safety risks are identified, assessed and managed in a proportionate and systematic way, so far as is reasonably practicable.
 - Clarify roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability for fire safety at all levels of the School's governance and management structure.
 - Promote a positive and proactive fire safety culture, in which risks are openly discussed, concerns are raised without fear, and learning from incidents and near misses is encouraged.
 - Support effective decision-making and planning, including in relation to curriculum activities, boarding, the estate, projects, visits and co-curricular provision.
 - Provide assurance to the Governing Body that appropriate arrangements are in place to meet statutory duties and recognised good practice.
 - Encourage continuous improvement through monitoring, review and the sharing of lessons learned.

4.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 The Group will comply with all applicable fire safety legislation, regulations and statutory requirements, including:
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, as amended
 - Fire Safety Act 2021, where applicable
 - Building Safety Act 2022, including amendments to the Fire Safety Order
 - Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools
- Relevant statutory and government fire safety guidance

5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 At a Group level, roles and responsibilities are:

5.2 The Governing Body

The Governing Body of Rugby School, as the proprietor of the Schools, is the Responsible Person for the purposes of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 where the workplace is under its control. The Governing Body has ultimate governance oversight of the Group's arrangements for meeting these duties.

5.3 The Governing Body will:

- **Set strategic direction and tone** by approving and endorsing the Group's Fire Safety Policy and ensuring that fire safety is treated as a core organisational priority.
- **Provide appropriate governance and oversight**, including receiving regular reports on fire safety performance, significant risks, incidents and compliance matters, and satisfying itself that appropriate action is taken where issues are identified. In practice, this is delegated to the Risk & Compliance Sub-Committee.
- **Ensure that one or more competent persons are appointed** to assist the Group in complying with its fire safety duties, and ensure that those appointed have sufficient authority, resources, training and experience to fulfil their role effectively.
- **Receive assurance that suitable resources are made available to manage fire safety risks**, including staffing, training, professional advice and investment in the Group's estate and facilities.
- **Receive appropriate assurance with regard the ongoing compliance with statutory duties**, including those arising from fire safety legislation, associated regulations, and relevant guidance, and that effective arrangements are in place for fire risk assessment, fire safety and emergency planning.
- **Delegate operational responsibility appropriately** to the Head Master, COO, and senior managers across the group, while retaining overall accountability as employer.
- **Monitor the effectiveness of fire safety arrangements**, including reviewing audit findings, inspection outcomes and lessons learned from incidents and near misses. In practice, this is delegated to the Risk & Compliance Sub-Committee.
- **Promote a positive fire safety culture**, in which staff are encouraged to raise concerns, incidents are reported promptly, and learning is shared to prevent recurrence.

- **Review this policy periodically**, and at least annually, to ensure it remains accurate, effective and proportionate to the Group’s activities and risk profile.

5.4 **Head Master**

The Head Master has ultimate delegated responsibility from the Governing Body for the day-to-day leadership and management of fire safety within the Group and is responsible for promoting a positive fire safety culture across the Group. They will:

- **Provide visible leadership and commitment** to fire safety, promoting a positive culture in which the wellbeing of students, staff and others is a core priority.
- **Ensure that roles and responsibilities for fire safety are clearly defined**, understood and appropriately delegated.
- **Ensure that student safety is properly integrated into all decision-making across the Group.**

5.5 **Chief Operating Officer**

The Chief Operating Officer has delegated responsibility from the Governing Body for the strategic oversight and operational management of fire safety across the Group. The COO will:

- **Lead on the development, implementation and review of the Group’s fire safety framework**, ensuring that policies, procedures and arrangements are compliant, proportionate and effective.
- **Appoint one or more competent persons** to provide fire safety advice, and that they have appropriate authority, access to senior leadership, and sufficient resources to fulfil their role.
- **Ensure that a suitable Policy on Fire Safety is in place.**
- **Ensure appropriate systems are in place for monitoring compliance across the Group**, including audits, inspections, reporting and follow-up actions.
- **Report regularly to the Governing Body (or its delegated committees)** on fire safety performance, significant risks, incidents, trends and areas requiring assurance or investment.
- **Ensure that adequate resources are allocated** to fire safety, including training, professional advice and capital investment where required to manage risk.
- **Act as the principal escalation point** for significant fire safety concerns, serious incidents or material non-compliance.

5.6 Head of Health and Safety

Reporting to the COO, the Head of Health & Safety is the Group's appointed competent person for the purposes of fire safety legislation and is responsible for providing specialist advice and support to enable the Group to meet its statutory duties. The Head of Health & Safety will:

- **Provide competent, proportionate and practical advice and guidance** to the Governing Body, Head Master, COO and senior leaders within individual schools on all matters relating to fire safety compliance and risk management.
- **Develop, review and support the implementation of Group-wide fire safety policies, procedures and guidance**, ensuring they remain current, effective and aligned with legislation and recognised good practice.
- **Ensure that fire risk assessments are undertaken across the Group**, either appointing contractors where necessary or undertaking where appropriate, and maintain a system to track and record implementation of recommendations coming out of fire risk assessments.
- **Conduct regular inspections, audits and monitoring activities across the Group**, or appoint such experts to undertake such reviews, identifying areas of non-compliance or concern and making recommendations for improvement.
- **Support the planning and delivery of fire safety training**, ensuring processes are in place that mean staff are appropriately informed, instructed and supported in discharging their responsibilities.
- **Produce regular reports on fire safety performance**, trends, significant risks and emerging issues for the Health & Safety Committee, COO and Governing Body (in practice the Risk & Compliance Sub-Committee).
- **Escalate immediately any matter presenting a serious or imminent risk** to fire safety to the COO and/or Head Master.

6.0 STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 All Staff

All staff must take reasonable care of their own fire safety and that of others affected by their work, including students, colleagues, contractors and visitors. They must:

- **Familiarise themselves with and comply with** the Group's Fire Safety Policy, procedures and guidance relevant to their role.
 - **Take reasonable care for their own fire safety**, and that of others, by acting responsibly and following safe systems of work.
 - **Cooperate with the** implementation of fire safety arrangements and in meeting statutory duties.
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- **Use equipment, tools and protective measures properly**, in accordance with training and instructions provided.
- **Report promptly any hazards, defects, accidents, incidents or near misses**, using the school's reporting procedures, and take reasonable steps to prevent further risk where it is safe to do so.
- **Raise concerns about fire safety matters** with their line manager or through appropriate channels, without fear of detriment.
- **Only undertake tasks for which they have been appropriately trained and authorised**, and seek guidance where unsure.
- **Ensure that risk assessments relevant to their activities are followed**, including those relating to curriculum activities, trips, boarding and co-curricular provision.
- **Actively contribute to a positive fire safety culture**, including learning from incidents and supporting colleagues to work safely.
- **Complete all relevant fire training**, as required, and when requested by the School.

6.2 Staff with Line Management Responsibility

Across the Group, staff with line management responsibility are responsible for the effective implementation of the Group's fire safety arrangements within their area of responsibility, and for ensuring that activities under their control are carried out safely. They will:

- **Implement the Group's fire safety policies and procedures** within their department, boarding house (including Day Houses) or area of responsibility.
- **Ensure that suitable risk assessments are in place, understood and followed** for activities under their control, including curriculum activities, boarding, practical work and off-site activities where relevant, including for barbeques or any other activity requiring the use of heat or flame.
- **Ensure that staff and students are provided with appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision** to enable them to work and learn safely and that this is appropriately recorded.
- **Maintain a safe working environment**, including ensuring that fire exit routes are kept clear, that good housekeeping practices are maintained, and that equipment that represents a potential fire hazard is regularly inspected and appropriately maintained.
- **Monitor fire safety practice on a day-to-day basis**, addressing unsafe behaviours or conditions promptly.

- **Report hazards, defects, accidents, incidents and near misses**, and ensure that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner.
- **Work with the appropriate person in each School**, as appropriate, to address identified risks and implement agreed control measures.

7.0 FIRE MARSHALLS & WARDENS

- 7.1 Each School will identify, through its fire risk assessments and emergency planning arrangements, where designated Fire Marshals or Fire Wardens are required to support effective evacuation and fire safety management.
- 7.2 Appropriate numbers of trained Fire Marshals or Fire Wardens will be appointed, taking account of the size, complexity and use of buildings, occupancy levels, boarding and sleeping accommodation, and the need to provide adequate cover during normal School activities.
- 7.3 The responsibilities of Fire Marshals and Fire Wardens will be defined within each School's fire safety procedures and appropriate training will be provided.
- 7.4 The appointment of Fire Marshals or Fire Wardens does not remove the responsibility of all staff to respond appropriately to a fire alarm and to support the safe evacuation of students, visitors and others.

8.0 STUDENTS

- 8.1 Students must act responsibly on Group sites and during School activities. They must:
- **Follow fire safety instructions** given by staff and comply with School rules and procedures.
 - **Use facilities, equipment and resources safely and appropriately**, and only as instructed.
 - **Behave in a way that does not put themselves or others at risk**, including during lessons, boarding, co-curricular activities and trips.
 - **Report hazards, damage or unsafe situations** to a member of staff as soon as reasonably practicable.
 - **Not interfere with safety equipment or systems**, including fire alarms, extinguishers and emergency signage.

9.0 VISITORS

- 9.1 Visitors will be given relevant fire safety information and instructions.
- 9.2 Visitors must comply with the School's fire safety instructions.

10.0 FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS

- 10.1 Each School will maintain a current written fire risk assessment for all relevant premises. The assessment will identify fire hazards, persons at risk, existing control measures, any further action required and the arrangements for managing fire safety. Findings and actions will be recorded and retained.
- 10.2 Fire risk assessments are completed by an appropriately trained and competent person.
- 10.3 The Director of Operations within each School, and the Head of Health & Safety for Rugby School and Bilton Grange, is responsible for reviewing findings promptly and ensuring actions are progressed within agreed timescales. Actions requiring significant capital expenditure, specialist input or Group approval will be escalated to the COO for their consideration.
- 10.4 The Head of Health & Safety will maintain a central register of all Priority 1 and Priority 2 recommendations in Fire Risk Assessments across the Group. This register will be shared with Risk & Compliance Committee at least annually.
- 10.5 Fire risk assessments are formally reviewed at least annually and whenever there is reason to suspect that it is no longer valid, or following significant change to the premises, occupancy, activities or fire precautions.
- 10.6 Significant risks or concerns arising from fire risk assessments are escalated through management and governance arrangements as appropriate.
- 10.7 Further details are included in the Group Policy on Risk Management and Risk Assessments.

11.0 FIRE DETECTION AND ALARM SYSTEMS

- 11.1 The Group will provide and maintain suitable and sufficient fire detection and alarm systems across its premises, appropriate to the use, occupancy, construction and fire risk of each building.
- 11.2 Systems will be designed, installed, maintained and tested in accordance with applicable legislation, relevant British Standards and the findings of the building's fire risk assessment.
- 11.3 As a minimum, the Group expects fire detection and alarm arrangements to:
- provide appropriate means for the prompt detection of fire and raising of the alarm;
 - provide an alarm that can be effectively communicated throughout all relevant occupied areas;
 - take particular account of sleeping accommodation, higher risk areas and persons who may require assistance or alternative means of warning;
 - be subject to appropriate routine testing, inspection, servicing and maintenance; and
 - be reviewed following significant changes to buildings, occupancy or use, and as part of the fire risk assessment process.

- 11.4 Boarding and other sleeping accommodation will have automatic fire detection appropriate to the risk and sufficient to provide early warning to occupants.

12.0 TESTING, MAINTENANCE AND CONTRACTORS

- 12.1 The Group ensures that premises, boarding houses, plant, equipment and grounds are maintained in a fire safe condition.
- 12.2 All hot works must be subject to a hot works permit, issued by the Director of Estates (at Rugby School and Bilton Grange) or the Director of Operations in a prep school.
- 12.3 Contractors are made aware of fire safety procedures within the place they are working prior to beginning work there via the staff member involved with their provision of service.
- 12.4 Each School must have documented arrangements for inspection, testing and maintenance of relevant fire safety systems at the frequencies required by legislation, the Fire Risk Assessment, applicable standards and manufacturers' requirements. These will be maintained by the Head of Health & Safety (for Rugby School and Bilton Grange) and the Director of Operations (for prep schools).
- 12.5 All servicing and maintenance will be logged and held by the Director of Estates (for Rugby School and Bilton Grange) or Director of Operations at the prep schools, and must be made available for the purposes of audit and inspection.

13.0 EVENTS

- 13.1 All internal and external events require a risk assessment and an evacuation plan to be in place, prior to commencement.
- 13.2 Visitors of events taking place at the School will be made aware of relevant Fire Safety information prior to the event taking place, including but not limited to; how the alarm is raised, the relevant evacuation routes in use and the established Fire Assembly Points.

14.0 TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION

- 14.1 Effective fire safety management depends on staff, students and visitors understanding their responsibilities and receiving appropriate information, instruction and training.
- 14.2 The Group ensures that:
- All staff receive appropriate fire safety induction when joining the Group.
 - Fire Safety training is undertaken by all staff annually, to maintain awareness and competence.
 - Role-specific training is provided where required, based on the nature of the work undertaken and the risks involved, i.e. Fire Marshal training in high-risk areas, such as boarding houses and department buildings with complex layout
 - Fire safety expectations and procedures are communicated clearly to staff, students and visitors.
 - Staff are encouraged to raise fire safety concerns and to report incidents or hazards promptly.

- 14.3 Training needs are identified through risk assessments, incident investigations, audits and monitoring.

15.0 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- 15.1 Each School will maintain documented fire emergency procedures appropriate to its premises and activities. The Director of Operations at each Prep School, and the Head of Health & Safety at Rugby School and Bilton Grange, is responsible for ensuring that these procedures are prepared, maintained, communicated and reviewed, with appropriate input from the Group Head of Health & Safety and other competent persons as required. These will include arrangements for:

- Raising the alarm
- Calling the Fire and Rescue Service
- Evacuation and assembly
- Accounting for students, staff and visitors
- Assisting persons requiring additional support
- Liaison with the Fire and Rescue Service
- Arrangements for boarding and sleeping accommodation
- Responsibilities of staff during an emergency.

16.0 FIRE DRILLS

- 16.1 Fire drills are conducted regularly to ensure students, staff and other building users are familiar with evacuation procedures.

16.2 All Prep Schools

Whole School fire drills are carried out at least once each term, with additional drills arranged where necessary following significant changes to the School, staffing or procedures.

16.3 Rugby School buildings and departments

Fire drills are carried out in each Rugby School building at least once per academic year, or more frequently where required by the fire risk assessment, changes in occupancy or use, or other identified risk.

16.4 Boarding Houses (all schools)

Fire drills will be carried out at least once per term during boarding time across the Group, with at least one being a “night time” drill per academic year.

Schools with flexi boarding arrangements will consider through their fire risk assessment whether additional drills are required to ensure that all boarders are familiar with emergency arrangements.

- 16.5 The Group ensures that the following occurs across all Schools:

- Fire drills take place at different times during the School day and, where practicable, without prior warning, to provide a realistic test of the School’s evacuation procedures.

- On activation of the fire alarm, all students, staff, visitors and contractors evacuate immediately via the nearest safe exit and proceed to the designated assembly point, with staff supervising students and taking registers as required.
- Appropriate arrangements are made for anyone requiring assistance to evacuate.
- The effectiveness of each drill, including evacuation times, alarm and exit arrangements, and any issues identified, will be recorded and reviewed, with remedial actions taken where necessary.
- Records of all fire drills, including the date, areas involved, evacuation time, observations and follow-up actions, will be retained as part of the School's fire safety documentation.

17.0 PERSONAL EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN (PEEPs)

- 17.1 Schools must provide appropriate individual evacuation arrangements, including a PEEP where required.
- 17.2 PEEPs will identify the individual's specific needs, the safest evacuation route, any equipment or assistance required, and the staff responsible for providing support.
- 17.3 Plans will be developed in consultation with the individual and relevant staff, communicated to those responsible for implementing them and reviewed regularly and whenever there is a significant change in circumstances, location or the School's evacuation arrangements.
- 17.4 PEEPs will be considered during fire drills to ensure that the agreed arrangements are practical and effective, with any issues identified addressed promptly.

18.0 POLICY OWNER

- 18.1 Chief Operating Officer.

19.0 RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Health and Safety Policy, Rugby School Group

20.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about this policy can be obtained from the Head of Health & Safety on rsu@rugbyschool.net