

Holmwood House School



FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION POLICY

This policy applies to all pupils at Holmwood House School, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) settings

Reviewed: July 2025

Holmwood House Version: September 2025

KEY STAFF FOR FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

Headteacher	Edward Bond
Chair of Health and Safety Committee:	Matthew Lyne
Lead Person for Fire Safety ("the competent person"):	Matthew Lyne
Fire Wardens	Angela Isherwood Laura Elnadi Jonathan Collins
Safeguarding Governor	Steve Wade
Education Board	Steven Wade David Williams

ADDRESSES OF PREMISES

Holmwood House School, Chitts Hill, Colchester, Essex, CO3 9ST
Holmwood House Nursery, 151 Coach Road, Great Horkesley, Essex, CO6 4DX

Holmwood House School is required under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to comply with the relevant statutory provisions. Within this policy the responsible person will endeavour to observe measures to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Measures will be taken to prevent or reduce the risk of fire and the spread of fire on the premises and to train and instruct employees, pupils, visitors and contractors in relation to the arrangements for action to be taken in the event of fire on the premises.

COVID-19 the DfE has issued non-statutory interim guidance to schools, colleges and other providers during the coronavirus outbreak. This guidance supports governing bodies, proprietors, senior leadership teams and staff in regard to adapted conditions. The school will consider where policy and process may be conducted differently when compared to business as usual.

PERSONS AT RISK

During a typical working day there can be approximately 270 pupils and 60 staff on the school site, and up to 53 children and 24 staff in the nursery. In the Boarding House, there is capacity for 50 boarders and 2 staff.

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

In order to eliminate or reduce the risk of fire, hazards have been identified by means of risk assessment. The following risks were included in the assessment:

- i) Ignition Sources
- ii) Combustible materials
- iii) People at risk
- iv) Adverse structural features

The School has a Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) provided by an external firm which is audited annually by the Safeguarding Governor. Essex Fire & Rescue Service periodically visits the school but does not offer an advisory service.

Date of last external Fire Risk Assessment: December 2021

Date of last in-house review of the FRA: June 2025

The Health and Safety Committee meets regularly to discuss and review all fire procedures and matters arising from risk assessments. The exact frequency of these meetings is to be determined by the Operations Manager in order to respond immediately to any issues that may arise.

MANAGEMENT OF POTENTIAL FIRE HAZARDS

- Boilers, sparks from light switches and other electrical equipment; All boilers are gas fired and are serviced annually by Lindsey's.
- Smoking on the premises is forbidden other than in the designated external area.
- Combustible solids and liquids are not subject to heat or naked flame.
- Paper and card throughout the school should not be allowed to accumulate in piles.
- Bins are cleared each evening.
- Waste dustbins should be kept as far away from the school walls as possible.
- All fabrics used should be flame retardant.
- All furniture should conform to British Standards.
- Science, Art, Design Technology: Chemicals are kept in a locked cupboard, and are not subject to heat or naked flame. Hazardous chemicals are stored in locked fire cabinets and their access restricted to authorised personnel. These cabinets are located in designated rooms with a coded

lock on the door. These rooms themselves also meet Fire Department regulations concerning fire containment.

- Kitchen staff ensure that chemicals used in the kitchen are stored in an appropriate locked location.
- Cooking: electricity and gas services within the kitchen/staff room/boarding are regularly checked.
- Science: electricity and gas services within the labs and prep rooms are regularly checked. A cut-off mains switch for both gas and electricity is installed in each science laboratory.
- Any smell of gas should be reported immediately to the office who will call the emergency number for the gas board whilst evacuating the building.
- Electrical: All portable appliances, including any belonging to staff and pupils and kept at school are checked regularly, usually annually. Fixed wiring is inspected by an external company every 5 years. No electrical equipment should be brought on site without the knowledge of and inspection by the person responsible for PAT testing. Pupils are not allowed to use mobile telephone chargers in school, except for boarders, who must keep them in the boarding house. Chargers for laptops must first be PAT tested and certified before use. New items are tested at the end of their first year in use.
- The school does not use socket protectors, which takes account of up-to-date guidance.
- Computers: Computers are in every classroom and offices and in mobile storage units around school. Pupils should not be left unsupervised with computers.
- Fire doors are installed at the point of high risk.
- All internal doors are closed at the end of the working day.
- Contractors on site are required to complete a hot work permit and are fully instructed on the procedure for fire safety compliance and action to be taken in the event of a fire.
- The Operations Manager liaises with the fire service and Chief Fire Officer to request assistance and to confirm compliance with new legislation.

SUMMARY OF FIRE SAFETY RESOURCES

Holmwood House School

- There is a double battery back-up fire alarm system installed.
- There are three main external fire escapes; main building, stable block, library block.
- Appropriate emergency lighting has been installed.
- The school is equipped with appropriate fire detection equipment, including smoke and heat detectors.

- The school has resources for tackling small fires, including extinguishers and fire blankets.

Holmwood House Nursery

- There is a double battery back-up fire alarm system installed.
- There are fire escapes from each room - Babies, Bluebells, Poppies and the kitchen, as well as the staff room.
- Appropriate emergency lighting has been installed.
- The nursery is equipped with appropriate fire detection equipment, including smoke and heat detectors.
- The nursery has resources for tackling small fires, including extinguishers and fire blankets.

SUMMARY EVALUATION

- Overall responsibility for fire safety lies with the Headteacher, who delegates the leadership of action in relation to fire safety and prevention to the Operations Manager.
- Average evacuation time for the entire school in standard drills is 4m 23s and 2m 27s at the nursery, and is judged to be adequate given that the spread of a fire is likely to be slow. This included time needed to account for everyone.
- Staff are trained in the use of emergency fire-fighting equipment and in the procedures for an evacuation. Such training is included in the induction programme for new staff. It is adequate and the pupils have at least one escape drill per term.
- Staff training and drills are always recorded in a fire log.
- There are adequate and sufficient means of fighting small fires.
- Formal risk assessment to take place regularly.
- Staff are alerted to find any hazards and report them to the Headteacher, office or any member of the Health and Safety Committee **AT ANY TIME.**

DETAILED EVALUATION

1. The school premises are primarily used for educational purposes and where the premises are let, the school should ensure that the leader/manager is given a copy of this policy and adheres to the detailed procedures.

2. There are portable fire extinguishers at strategic places around the school, on every floor and clearly marked locations. All staff are fully aware of their positioning. The number and type of fire extinguishers and other fire-fighting equipment, and their positioning complies with current legislation.

- Maintenance of fire extinguishers is undertaken annually by Morgan Fire Security.
- Maintenance of the fire alarm system is undertaken 6 monthly by Firesite.
- Maintenance of emergency lighting is undertaken annually by Firesite.
- Maintenance of fire detection equipment is undertaken annually by Firesite

3. Pathways of escape are clearly marked by white arrows on green backgrounds and are very visible. There are escape stairs on three buildings which are easily accessed from the first and/or second floors. Fire door escapes exist in each building.

4. Fire drills are carried out at least once per term. The times of drills are varied to give pupils and staff experience of evacuating from different starting locations. The variation of times includes occasional drills to evaluate the procedures at challenging times, such as lunchtime or during wraparound care. Periodically, drills introduce a difficulty to simulate a real emergency situation. In boarding, there is at least one fire drill per year which takes place overnight when boarders would normally be in the bedrooms.

5. There are fire alarms, and heat and smoke detectors on every floor.

6. Emergency lighting is in place for all floors and exits. These are checked half termly by the maintenance team. They are also checked visually with the weekly fire point tests. They are tested by Firesite annually.

7. There is a detailed Fire Emergency Plan for the building

8. A fire log book is kept, which includes details of fire drills, alarm testing and escape lighting, located in the finance office. Staff training forms part of the induction programme and periodically in INSET.

9. In the case of an emergency requiring evacuation, particular attention is paid to those with disabilities, visitors, or members of the public who are unfamiliar with the evacuation process. For any pupil or staff member with either temporary or on-going limited mobility, the school will create, if required, a personal evacuation plan (PEP). This may be prepared in conjunction with the person's doctor and/or nurse, and, in the case of pupils, the parents.

10. Records of who is present (including class registers, staff signing in book and the part-time staff signing in/out book), including any visitors (in the visitors' book) are maintained in the school office and taken to the roll call point. Where such records are electronic, a list of absentees is printed on a daily basis,

amended during the day if required and compared with standard class lists at the role call point.

11. On occasion, the premises are used for after-school clubs. The adult leaders of these clubs will have received the same training as staff and attendance registers are maintained at clubs. When peripatetic teachers are on site there are always members of staff on site who are trained.

12. A register is kept of pupils attending care provision before and after school. Any pupils who arrive early, for example, for extra tuition, individual music lessons or sports coaching must register at the school office/with breakfast club on arrival.

13. Alarm systems are linked across the whole school site and the same is the case for the nursery site; When a fire call point is activated an alarm is sounded throughout the building, enabling the whole site to be evacuated.

14. The fire alarm panel is situated in the finance office which will indicate the place of call point activation. The fire alarm panel for the Boarding House is sited in the same place.

15. All boarding staff undertake an induction to ensure they understand fire evacuation procedures. All boarders also receive an induction, including fire drills and walkthroughs which take into account 'flexi' or occasional boarders.

16. Dorm lists of boarders are checked and distributed to all boarding staff on duty each evening, once pupils have transitioned from being 'day pupils' to 'boarding pupils'. These are used as the register in case of fire evacuation. A copy is also placed in the Jubilee Hall, which is the assembly point in case of fire.

17. In the event of the fire alarm sounding overnight, boarders are instructed to make their way to the dormitory on each floor with the fire exit (these are clearly signed) and to exit down the stairs and assemble in the Jubilee Hall. Boarding staff on each floor 'sweep' through each dormitory to ensure all boarders have left, before leaving the building themselves via the fire exit. The Headteacher will be notified by staff.

18. The fire brigade is called by the Headteacher or any member of staff.

19. The Headteacher liaises with the emergency services when an incident occurs.

20. Information about access to the school is provided to the emergency services.

21. Information with regard to key holders and contact numbers is provided to the emergency services, in the event of a fire out of school hours.

ARSON: THREE POINT ACTION PLAN

1. Deter unauthorised entry onto the site by
 - All entry doors to the various buildings have coded keypads
 - An intruder alarm system in some areas which is activated once the premises is vacated
 - Ensuring that all windows are closed and locked once the premises is vacated
 - CCTV signage is clearly evident
2. Reduce the opportunity to start a fire by ensuring that
 - Refuse containers are not accessible to the road
 - All flammable materials are stored securely in locked fire cabinets
3. Reduce scope of fire damage and any losses and disruptions by
 - Making sure all fire doors are closed
 - Ensuring that any flammable materials are returned to locked cabinets after use.
 - Training members of staff are in fire procedures, including evacuation drills and the use of fire extinguishers
 - Ensuring that all data to secure the continued operation of the school is backed up and stored off site

MAINTENANCE AND ROUTINE TESTING

Daily

- Staff ensure by visual inspection that exit routes are kept clear, that fire doors are not wedged open and that combustible waste has not accumulated in the classroom
- The Fire Officer checks that the fire alarm panel indicates no faults

Weekly

- The Fire Officer ensures that the fire alarm is tested by using a different call point/zone each week and checks that the fire extinguishers in that zone are not damaged. Tests are logged.

Monthly

- The Fire Officer ensures that a flick test is carried out on the Emergency lighting every half term and logged.

Annually

- The fire alarm system, including the smoke detectors, heat detector and emergency lighting is tested annually by Firesite.

Annually

- All fire-fighting equipment is checked annually by Morgan Fire Security
- Portable electrical equipment is inspected regularly and PAT tested by a qualified person
- All gas boilers are inspected annually by a Corgi registered plumber. The inspection will include the cut-off switch and the Bunsen burners. These switches are located in all laboratories and kitchens.

Three Yearly

- Mains electrical installation will be inspected every three years by a Registered electrician

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

- On hearing the fire alarm, staff visually check that their area is evacuated and, **without taking any risks**, ensure that the doors and windows are all closed. During a fire drill, the evacuation will be timed, aiming to vacate the building in four to five minutes.
- During the evacuation all staff encourage pupils and visitors to proceed quietly to the assembly point.

Role of Staff:

- Registers are to be taken by year group by staff who have been allocated the specific role. In their absence there are designated deputies. Class lists will be provided by the front office staff at the roll call point
- Count heads at the assembly point and record on the relevant fire record sheet which is then handed to the person in charge (usually the Deputy Head) once you have completed the roll call and accounted for all of your pupils.
- If you cannot account for all of your pupils you should firstly check with the office signing out record and then verbally inform the person in charge of any missing persons.

Role of other staff:

- Assist in the evacuation of all persons in the building as you proceed to the Assembly Point.
- Assist in ensuring that all pupils proceed quietly to their year group allocated assembly point and remain in a quiet and orderly manner until instructed to disperse.
- **It is important not to allow pupils to mix into other groups or in any other way become distracted from any announcement made by a member of staff. They should be encouraged to wait in a quiet and orderly manner.**

- In the event of any staff absences, you may be asked to act on behalf of a particular staff member. If so, you should follow the steps outlined above ("Role of Staff").

Role of members of the front office

- To ensure that the year group folders issued to staff in the event of an emergency are kept up to date. These folders should contain the following:
 - A list of each member of that particular year group
 - Information of whether each pupil should be present in the building
 - Contact phone number
- The information in the folder should be represented in an accurate, clear and simplistic format to allow efficient use by any member of staff in the event of an emergency.
- If the evacuation is not a drill, to dial 999 and call the fire brigade and, if necessary, other emergency services.
- To ensure that a current list of pupils who are registered absent from school at the time of the evacuation is handed to the person in charge.
- To ensure that the information on part-time staff, peripatetic and sports coaching staff etc and any visitors on site is taken to the roll call point.
- A member of office staff is designated to undertake a roll call of all adults on site at the time of the evacuation.
- To ensure that in the event of any member of the front office being absent, that the responsibilities outlined above are delegated appropriately.

Role of Person in charge at the roll call point

- Confirm all persons have been accounted for.
- Gather the details of any fire or incident (location / type / adjacent fire hazards)
- Ensure that the fire brigade has been called by a member of office staff
- Liaise with the fire brigade on its arrival.

APPENDIX 1: FIRE PROCEDURES

PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

Assembly point: This is the main field beside the tennis courts for most of the school except for the Pre-Reception and Reception building which is on the lawn in front of the main building.

On discovering a fire

- Raise the alarm immediately by activating the fire alarm call points – this is achieved by pushing on the glass panel. The alarms are located in various locations around the site.
- Instruct all pupils in your class and nearby to evacuate the building immediately – without collecting personal belongings.
- Guide the children to the assembly point for roll call.
- Close windows and doors behind you if possible
- If it is possible without placing yourself at risk tackle the fire using the fire extinguishers which are situated around the school. **Do not attempt to fight the fire unless you have been trained to do so.**
- Do not return to the place of fire.

On hearing the alarm

- Instruct all pupils in your class to evacuate the building immediately and calmly – without packing up personal belongings. Tell the pupils in your class to cease what they are doing and to proceed immediately and calmly to the assembly point where they are to register with their year group.
- Close all windows and doors in the room where you are situated, ensure that all your pupils have left the building, then leave yourself.
- Ensure any visitors accompany you to the Assembly Point.
- **Ensure that all pupils at the assembly point remain in their designated groups in a quiet and orderly manner.**

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE LOG OF FIRE EVACUATIONS

FIRE DRILLS

DATE	PERSONS ATTENDING	TIME	DURATION	DAYTIME/NIGHTTIME/ REAL!	REMARKS