

Heart of the Forest Community Special School

Fire Safety Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the schools Health & Safety Policy and relevant risk assessments.

It is the responsibility of all staff to become conversant with this policy.

If staff need to leave the building during school hours (including approved leave) they should sign out (and back in if they return) at main reception in order that they can be accounted for in the event of an alarm.

Policy Statement

The issue of Fire Safety is taken extremely seriously and the prevention of fire of vital importance. As a school we will strive to ensure our employees comply with the Regulatory reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

More importantly we will strive to ensure the safety of all persons who have a legitimate right to be in, on or in the vicinity of the school, from fire and its effects. These include pupils, visitors, staff and contractors but exclude fire fighters in pursuance of fire fighting.

Staff should be aware it is a criminal offence not to consider theirs and others fire safety whilst at work and breaches will be followed up by the Senior Leadership Team.

In the event of an outbreak of fire the saving and preservation of life takes precedence over the salvaging of property. A member of staff's first duty is to look after the children and young people and this will mean the evacuation of the building. No attempt should be made to fight the fire until their safety is ensured, and then without exposing any person to risk.

The Regulations

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO), implemented in October 2006 applies to both new and existing school buildings and imposes a number of duties relating to fire safety:

- To ensure that precautions against fire are taken as a matter of routine.
- To ensure that employees and others are aware of their own responsibilities with regard to fire safety.

- To carry out risk assessments.
- To apply the principles of fire prevention.
- To make arrangements for fire safety.
- To eliminate or reduce risks from dangerous substances.
- To have special procedures for serious and imminent danger and for danger areas.
- To have additional emergency measures in respect of dangerous substances.
- To have on the premises means of fire-fighting and fire detection.
- To have emergency routes and exits.
- To ensure that premises and equipment related to fire safety are kept in good repair and have regular maintenance.
- To ensure that the 'responsible person' has adequate support and assistance in carrying out the duties.
- To provide information on fire safety to employees, pupils and others on the premises at any time.
- To offer training on fire safety precautions to staff.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for fire safety at Heart of the Forest School lies jointly with the Governors (represented by the resources committee) and Senior Management (Head, Deputy Head, Business Manager and Site Manager).

Those with responsibility must ensure fire precautions at the school comply with all relevant health and safety legislation. Operationally, on a day-to-day basis, the Business Manager will be the fire safety manager and manage fire safety in the same way other health and safety issues are managed - by implementing the policies agreed and monitored by the Governors.

Responsibility of the Business Manager (fire safety manager - day to day)

- Ensuring arrangements are made in respect of the maintenance of fire safety provision for the school, this will include:-
 - Fire warning and detection systems are maintained in accordance with the relevant standard (annually) and any recommendations implemented as necessary.
 - Fire fighting equipment is subjected to an annual maintenance programme.
 - Means of escape are maintained as required.
 - Emergency lighting, escape lighting and signage are maintained and tested in accordance with the relevant standard.
- Ensuring that a fire risk assessment is carried out every 3 years and that any recommendations are responded to diligently.

- Ensuring that all works undertaken by contractors, relevant to areas of responsibility, are supervised and where "hot works" are to be carried out, that the appropriate approval is completed.
- Ensuring the fire alarm (including remote signalling/monitoring), emergency lighting and firefighting equipment are serviced by a competent person.
- Ensuring portable electrical appliances are maintained as required (PAT).
- Ensuring fixed electrics are inspected at least once every five years.
- Producing a Fire Safety Policy for the school every 3 years or sooner if changes are made to the building or procedures within that time.

Responsibility of the Site Manager/Caretaker:-

- Ensuring all emergency exits are unlocked, clear and useable during times people are in the premises (recommended daily).
- Ensuring every occupied room has a fire action notice.
- Fire fighting equipment is in place and undamaged (seals intact - recommended weekly)
- The weekly check and recording of the fire alarm - (Test key operation of different call point each week in rotation).
- Visual check of fire alarm panel for fault indications (Daily)
- Check that internal Fire Doors are closing fully (Weekly)
- Check fire exit doors are opening freely and operating correctly (Weekly)
- Checking the emergency lighting is in working order (recommended weekly and recorded in log book) and reporting any faults to the Business Manager.

Responsibility of all School Staff

All school staff are responsible for maintaining a high standard of fire precautions in areas under their control or influence. In particular, staff should ensure that they are fully aware of the fire procedure. They should ensure that door vision panels and fire exits are kept clear. They should also ensure that pupils for whom they are responsible are aware of the fire procedure.

In particular all staff are responsible for ensuring:-

- Their classroom exit doors are unlocked when the first person arrives. The site manager will lock the exits at night.
- Fire doors are kept shut and NOT propped open
- Tops and fronts of heaters are kept clear
- There is adequate clearance to the routes of exit doors
- Combustible materials (paper, card, fabrics etc) are not stored near to sockets or lights OR on top of radiators.

- Unnecessary lights or electrical appliances (Computers, printers, TV and video, fans, laminator etc.) are switched off at the end of the day and where possible unplugged.
- Remove all electrical items, plugs and cables from their storage areas when required for their annual PAT test.
- Toasters are only used in the designated areas around the school (Little Apples kitchen, Food Tech Room, Staff Room & Life skills room). In no circumstances should toasters be used in any other classrooms.

Most fires are caused by carelessness and ignorance. All staff have a responsibility for their own and others fire safety. They should report any possible dangerous issues to the Business Manager for action.

Staff must not carry out actions that could compromise their or others fire safety and where staff are found to carry out such actions they may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited everywhere on the school premises.

Personalised Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

As a special school all Heart of the Forest pupils have direct assistance from Teachings Assistants in their class team. Evacuation methods are included in each individual care plans so are not applicable to this school.

Fire Risk Assessments

Regular risk assessments will be made by the SHE (Safety, Health & Environment) team - a member of SLT (normally the Business Manager) and the Site Manager.

These will

- Identify any person especially at risk in a case of fire,
- Review the evacuation plan and each rooms instructions for this
- Look at the past years records of fire practices etc
- Ensure the provision of adequate training
- Review the provision of instruction to students or visitors to the building

Staff Training

Every member of staff will receive instructions in fire precaution during induction. All members of staff will receive regular updates and feedback after each practice to ascertain if any procedures need revising.

Students and visitors will be instructed at the beginning of their attendance.

Designated Fire Wardens will receive appropriate training and refresher updates from the SHE team (purchased as a traded service from GCC). All staff will receive fire awareness sessions as part of their INSET every 3 years.

Fire Drills

Fire drills will be carried out once a term i.e. every 3 months. This will include a simulated evacuation drill. When a fire drill is held it will be recorded in the fire logbook.

Advice on the procedure in the event of a fire

Discovering a fire

1. If you discover a fire operate the nearest fire alarm call point by pressing the emergency alarm point and leave the area immediately.
2. Do not attempt to fight the fire unless it is blocking safe exit or can easily be extinguished such as in the kitchen areas with a fire blanket.
3. Inform a member of Senior Leadership Team as soon as it is practical to do so.
4. Stay with your class in the designated assembly point until you are told it is safe to re-enter the building.

On hearing fire alarm

1. If you hear the fire alarm, evacuate the premises immediately as detailed in the evacuation procedure for the school.
2. Proceed to your assembly point.
3. Stay with your class in the designated assembly point until you are told it is safe to re-enter the building.

After the event

1. Do not re-enter the building until advised to do so.

Know

1. Your means of escape, primary and secondary
2. The nearest fire alarm point
3. The assembly point

Should the fire alarms be activated accidentally either at the emergency alarm point or by activation of smoke alarms a full evacuation will still take place but persons using the hydrotherapy pool can be alerted to the fact that there is no requirement for them to evacuate.

It has been agreed that not all call points will have signage due to the fact that, particularly the younger pupils, see symbolised signs as an instruction. This has led to

false alarms. All staff are made aware of this decision and are informed where the call points are and how to operate them.

SAFE EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Whole School Evacuation

To accommodate safe evacuation, different arrangements will be put in place for a morning evacuation due to the number of wheelchairs in one place during the Focus Group sessions in the morning.

The groups with a high number of wheelchairs are Aqua/Green group (current Hazel & Willow classrooms) and Yellow group (current Caracara Classroom).

To assist with their evacuation other staff will be deployed to these classrooms - Ruth, Shelley & Lizzie. Please wait for them to get to you, either in the classroom or outside in the playground - if it is safe to do so. Other staff evacuating along the path may be able to assist by taking some of the able bodied pupils

All other Focus groups

Escort all pupils from the building via the nearest emergency exit. From classrooms this will normally be the classroom external door.

The pathway to the rear of the nursery being used as an escape route to the assembly area could be compromised by a fire in Key Stage 1 due to the proximity of the buildings. Staff will make a considered decision as to the safest means of evacuation if this is the case and would use the route via the front of the school building to make their way to the assembly point in these circumstances.

Where possible, non mobile pupils will be evacuated in their wheelchairs. If however these pupils are out of their chairs and on a moveable bed such as an Acheeva or in their class based chairs, they can be evacuated on or in that piece of equipment as long as parental permission is obtained. If non mobile pupils are on the floor when the alarm sounds, staff will make a decision as to whether to use a hoist to return them to their chairs. Should they decide that the amount of time this will take will compromise safety then a two man lift may be used to return the pupil to their chair for safe evacuation. Two males may lift a maximum of 35kg and two females, 22kg without specific training although individual staff will be risk assessed as necessary. Parents/carers will be informed that staff will make this decision and only staff who have agreed to and are appropriately trained will undertake any lifting over the above mentioned weights.

Afternoon evacuations will take the same format as the procedure described above under 'all other Focus groups'.

Hydrotherapy Pool Evacuation

Evacuation will be via the main door to the corridor and then via the nearest safe emergency exit through Caracara classroom external door. Foil blankets are provided to ensure that staff and pupils are kept as warm as possible. Persons evacuating from the pool area can remain under the cover of the canopy outside Caracara classroom if it is deemed safe to do so. Non mobile pupils can be evacuated on the changing bed if it is deemed necessary due to time implications of returning them to their wheelchairs.

ASSEMBLY POINT

Everyone must make their way to the assembly points which are areas outside the school premises clearly designated as assembly points, easily identifiable by any person who is on the school premises as a visitor, far enough away from the school premises to afford protection from the heat and smoke in a fire situation and in positions that do not put pupils, staff and visitors at risk by emergency vehicles responding to the incident.

Assembly points are:-

Hydrotherapy users - Canopy outside Caracara Class

Rest of the school - Path and grassed area behind and to the side of the MUGA.

Where possible, keeping to the path when weather is inclement as grassed area may be wet. Moving down the path from the school exit road to the assembly point may be difficult for some pieces of equipment and may cause distress to the pupil involved. In this case a member of staff will remain with the pupil at the gate and a member of SLT or school administrator will be informed that the pupil has been safely evacuated.

Roll call

In the event of an alarm, admin staff will proceed to the assembly points with attendance registers and visitors books to check everyone is accounted for. Class teams have the responsibility to ensure all their pupils and staff are present or know their whereabouts if they were not in class at the time the alarm sounded. They should report to the admin staff that they are all accounted for.

Admin staff will use walkie talkies to converse with the fire wardens to ascertain the location of anyone not accounted for at the assembly points to verify that everyone is out of the building.

Evacuation Roles and Responsibilities

Due to the limited mobile phone network coverage on site the following phones may be used to contact the emergency response centre/emergency services.

- Landline telephone located in the water plant room opposite the biomass building
- Landline telephone located in the Pavilion
- Any other landline telephone available in an area away from the main building.

Alternatively a mobile signal is obtainable by the exit gate.

The school administrator or her support assistant is responsible for informing any personnel in the hydrotherapy pool if they do not need to evacuate the pool area. She is also responsible for taking all fire registers and off site visit forms to the assembly point where she, along with a member of the SLT will ascertain that all persons are accounted for. It may be necessary for her or her assistant to check on any persons assembled outside Caracara Class as per hydrotherapy pool evacuation procedure.

Class teachers are responsible for directing all other adults in their classes to ensure safe evacuation of all pupils. They will take responsibility for deciding on the safest means of escape from the room that they are working in. In the case where a Teaching Assistant is the senior adult in the room they will take on this responsibility.

Catering staff are responsible for their own evacuation. They should always respond to the fire alarm and evacuate via their nearest emergency exit and assemble in the same assembly area as the rest of the school. The supervisor is responsible for checking that all catering staff or visitors are accounted for. If a member of the catering staff has activated the fire alarm accidentally, reception should be immediately informed.

Therapists on site are responsible for their own evacuation and that of any pupils they may be working with.

Forest Pulse staff are responsible for their own evacuation but will be accounted for by school staff as they sign in each day for fire registration.

Appointment of Fire Wardens

The appointed fire wardens are the Deputy Headteacher, Business Manager and Site Manager. Fire Warden training was received in April 2017

Responsibility of the Fire Wardens

In the event of an alarm sounding during the course of the school day, the fire wardens TOGETHER will:-

- Pick up walkie talkies to maintain contact.
- Attend the fire alarm panel in reception to ascertain the cause of the fire alarm and identify the activation zone.
- Check the address of the device in alarm and the descriptor (fire alarm is point addressable so only one room or area will need to be checked to confirm the cause)
- Proceed and investigate the reason for activation IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.
- Look for signs of a fire NOT A FIRE ITSELF. Most classrooms and teaching spaces can be viewed through door panels and windows so there will be no need to open doors if smoke is detected.
- Proceed along fire door protected corridor routes checking the top of doors with back of hand for signs of heat before opening.
- NOT take any longer than 1 minute to investigate and if delayed will abandon the search.

All fire wardens and admin staff will be in contact via walkie talkies.

If no fire is detected fire warden will contact the emergency remote response centre on 01752 204911 to inform them that it is a false alarm.

If fire is detected the fire wardens will evacuate by the nearest exit and await the arrival of the Fire Brigade.

Fire appliances will be despatched automatically if no-one at the school can be contacted.

Meeting the brigade

The fire wardens will identify themselves to the fire brigade on their arrival. In doing so, vital information can be relayed to the fire officer which will dictate the necessary actions to be carried out by the fire brigade.

The fire brigade will want to know:

- Is everyone accounted for?
- If anyone is missing: How many? What is their usual location? Where were they last seen?
- Where is the fire? What is on fire? (It may not be apparent).

- Are there any hazardous substances involved in the fire or stored in the building? (For example, chemicals, solvents, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), oxygen cylinders, etc.)

Events Taking Place Out of School Hours Such as School Prom or External Lettings

Where events are organised by the school outside normal school hours the fire evacuation procedures will be adjusted to suit the area of the school being used and the site manager will ensure the appropriate fire exits are unlocked and usable for the duration of the event. The adjustments will be arranged before the event and all key staff will be notified.

Where there are lettings of the school buildings by other organisations outside normal school hours, the Business Manager will discuss a suitable evacuation procedure with the group depending on what area of the school is being used. This procedure will include arrangements for evacuation. If there is evidence of fire from the outside of the building the group will dial 999 immediately. The group will remain in the agreed assembly point (if it is safe to do so), until a school fire warden/fire brigade attends. When alarms are activated out of school hours the emergency response centre will automatically contact the school fire wardens, who will attend school. They will talk to the group to ascertain where the alarm was activated. The fire warden will wait for the fire brigade to arrive and show them into the building by the Headteachers office (providing it is safe to do so) to check the fire panel in main reception. The fire warden will exit the building and leave the fire brigade to check the premises.

Checklist for persons hiring the school premises

Discuss with the *hirer* the fire safety procedure as displayed in school and agree any adjustments as required, in particular:

- Show them the location of the fire alarm call point and describe the way it operates.
- Emphasise that the first action on discovering a fire is to raise the alarm *even if the fire is small*.
- Describe the sound of the fire alarm and the action to be taken in when it sounds, in particular leaving the building (exits may need to be reviewed depending on what areas of the school are being used), with any *persons for whom the hirer is responsible* and going to the assembly point.
- Describe and walk the escape routes and alternative escape routes that *the hirer is likely to need to use* and show the operation of any push bars or exit fittings.

- Explain that an automatic call is made when the alarms are activated and where the nearest telephone point can be found. Give clear instructions of location of school for them to relate if necessary.

Forest Pulse - use outside normal school hours

Forest Pulse is responsible for ensuring all their staff and children are evacuated safely in line with the school's evacuation procedures. As some normal exit routes are not available outside of normal school hours their evacuation procedures need to reflect this. The Business Manager will discuss the evacuation procedures with the Manager of Forest Pulse to ensure they are adequate and comply with the necessary requirements.

The Manager of Forest Pulse will ensure the appropriate fire exits are unlocked and usable for the duration of their use of the school.

In the event of the alarm being activated Forest Pulse will follow their normal evacuation procedures to the agreed assembly point. If there is evidence of fire from the outside of the building the group will dial 999 immediately and will notify one of the school fire wardens.

Forest Pulse will remain in the agreed assembly point (if it is safe to do so), until a school fire warden/fire brigade attends. When alarms are activated out of school hours the emergency response centre will automatically contact the school fire wardens, who will attend school. They will talk to the group to ascertain where the alarm was activated (if known). The fire warden will wait for the fire brigade to arrive and show them into the building by the Headteachers office (providing it is safe to do so) to check the fire panel in main reception. The fire warden will exit the building and leave the fire brigade to check the premises.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Review of this document will take place regularly and following any change in premises use or subsequent building works.

Ratified :

Chair of the Governing Body: