ST JAMES
Schools

Fire Safety Policy

2026-27

St James Senior School, Ashford
Church Road, Ashford, Surrey, TW15 3DZ

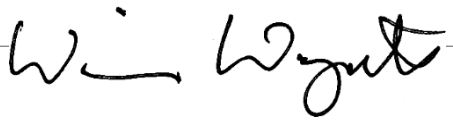
St James Prep School and Senior School, London
Main Building
Earsby Street, London, W14 8SH

Little Shells @ St James Nursery, Gorleston Street, London, W14 8XS

Contents

Version Control 3
1. Aims and objective 4
3. Staff Responsibilities 6
4. Training and Prevention Methods 7
5. Practice Drills 8
6. Evacuation Notices 9
7. Fire Fighting Equipment 9
8. Fire Alarm System 10
9. Suspected Gas Leak 11
References 11

Version Control

Effective date of the policy:	1 September 2026
Next Review Date:	August 2027
Circulation:	All staff
Authorised by:	
Print:	William Wyatt – Chief Operating Officer
Date:	1 September 2026

1. Aims and objective

1.1. The aim of this policy is to state how our establishments deal with the requirements of the law regarding fire precautions and prevention, and the arrangements by which this is brought about.

1.2. To have an effective and proactive system of fire prevention, aimed at identifying those circumstances that could lead to a fire if not recognised.

1.3. To have a well organised means of safe evacuation of all persons on the premises and from all buildings to a point of safety in the event of any emergency.

1.4. To have a means by which fire and rescue services required to enter the building during a fire, can quickly, safely and accurately navigate their way around and be fully informed of any persons not accounted for in the evacuation.

1.5. Our primary objective is to minimise the risk to life and to reduce injury by maintaining the physical fire safety of the schools, in ensuring that staff, pupils and visitors do not add to the fire risk and through safe evacuation of our buildings if a fire breaks out. The fire safety policy, procedures and risk assessments at St James Schools are designed to help our community to respond calmly and effectively in the event that fire breaks out in one of our buildings.

1.6. In order to do so we will comply with the appropriate legislation in compiling an Emergency Plan from a structured and systematic Fire Risk Assessment of our workplace by:

- Identifying the fire hazards
- Identifying who is at risk from each fire hazard
- Evaluating if existing control measures reduce risk to adequate levels
- Determining what additional measures are required, in particular;
- Means of escape
- Means of detection and giving warning in case of fire
- Means of fighting the fire
- Planning, Training and Maintenance

2. Arrangements

The following arrangements and activities are in place in order to meet the above policy requirements:

2.1. A risk assessment system that includes assessment of the risk from fire and the identification of adequate preventative controls carried out by a fire consultant annually.

2.2. Clearly defined Fire Evacuation Procedures tailored to each site to be maintained and kept up to date. Ensuring all persons with responsibilities clearly understand their duties

2.3. Additional Arrangements –Early Years (Nursery and Unders 2s)

2.3.1. The School recognises that children in the Nursery, particularly those under the age of 2, may be non-ambulant or unable to respond to verbal instruction.

2.3.2. Fire evacuation procedures for the Nursery are therefore fully staff-led and supported by appropriate evacuation equipment.

2.3.3. Detailed arrangements, including the use of evacuation cots, staff roles, and procedures for sleeping children, are set out in the Fire Evacuation Procedure.

2.3.4. Staffing levels, training, and fire drills are planned to ensure the safe and timely evacuation of all children.

2.4. A reporting system that enables any staff member to raise any concerns regarding the current fire precaution arrangements

2.5. Equipment for dealing with a fire that might break out and the appropriate positioning of such equipment to enable quick and easy access to it. Serviced annually in accordance with relevant standards, e.g. BS5306/part3 for extinguishers.

2.6. Fire detection systems are appropriately positioned in key locations that assist in giving early detection and warning of fire or smoke. 100% of devices are tested annually.

2.7. A fire alarm system by which the entire organisation can be alerted to the outbreak of any fire, with appropriate call points at each exit point

2.8. Signs clearly displayed to enable all persons to follow a safe route to the nearest exit in the event of a fire

2.9. Warning notices posted on fire doors, fire exit points and external locations to ensure that exit routes are not restricted or blocked.

2.10. A system of regular in-house testing of fire alarms to ensure that any faults that may develop are detected and rectified in a timely manner.

2.11. A schedule of service and maintenance for the fire alarm system and all linked and ancillary equipment, such as emergency lights, smoke alarms, fire panels etc.

2.12. A system of monthly testing of the emergency lighting system to ensure its functional availability both during a fire or during loss of power; battery run function 1hr test every 6 months and 3hr function test annually.

2.13. Ramps are available for visitors who require the use of a wheelchair. The estates team will ensure that the ramps are in place and secure for safe access/egress. The school will endeavour to put personal evacuation in place for any person who is mobility impaired via a personal Risk Assessment.

2.14. A system of carrying out fire drills every academic term involving all personnel on the premises to ensure the safe and swift evacuation to a pre-designated point of safety.

2.15. A system of reporting on and reviewing fire drills to ensure the detailed instructions in the St James School Fire Evacuation Procedure remain relevant and accurate.

2.16. A schedule of service and maintenance of all fire extinguishers on the premises to prevent deterioration of the functionality of the extinguisher.

2.17. The schools have a no smoking policy on the premises to significantly reduce the risk of a fire starting from non-extinguished cigarette ends in addition to other risks from smoking.

2.18. A system of testing and examination of all portable electrical appliances to significantly reduce the risk of fire from electrical faults is carried out annually by an approved appointed contractor.

2.19. Certification of the electrical distribution system to significantly reduce the risk of an outbreak of fire through deterioration of the cabling and switches is undertaken every 5 years and whenever a new installation is added.

2.20. A system of waste management minimises the amount of rubbish and waste materials allowed to build up in order to remove as much flammable materials from the premises waste receptacles are kept in a designated locked store to prevent arson to the building.

2.21. The provision of appropriate storage cabinets in order to store those materials and substances that are known to be flammable. Flammable gas bottles are to be stored in the flammable gas cage. Inert gas bottles must be appropriately stored. There is no unnecessary storage of gas bottles.

2.22. A system by which all visitors and contractors required to enter the premises are informed of the key points regarding fire precautions and the rules by which they must abide by using the school signing in system in reception.

2.23. An induction programme for all new staff joining the organisation (whether temporarily or otherwise) that includes information and instruction on fire precautions and the rules by which they must abide. Fire tours showing them escape routes and final exit doors.

2.24. The provision and updating of a diagram of the premises and associated buildings showing the internal layout, including rooms and corridors, and the location of all relevant and applicable fire equipment and installations. The location of any specific hazards or hazardous areas, such as chemical laboratories, gas cylinder locations etc. are included.

2.25. Annual record of gas appliance servicing, lightning conductors, gas shut off devices, kitchen extract servicing and deep clean, chimneys, private hydrants, dry risers, policy on inspection of metal fire escapes. Security locks on escape route, upholstered furniture.

3. Staff Responsibilities

The Estates Manager undertakes the role of School Fire Officer. They are the person responsible for Fire Safety at their respective School sites. In their absence, the Senior Caretaker (or an assigned Caretaker) will undertake this role.

All staff have the following responsibilities

3.1. Take responsibility for any pupils and students in their charge at the time of any fire or emergency and ensure they are safely guided out to the pre-designated assembly point.

3.2. Keep all fire exit routes clear and free from obstacles and waste materials.

3.3. Not to restrict access to or reduce vision of any mounted fire extinguishers.

3.4. Not to prop fire doors open, unless fitted with an automatic closer device linked to the fire alarm

3.5. Fully co-operate in any evacuation drills

3.6. Store all flammable substances and materials in appropriate locations after use

3.7. Not to create fire hazards by overloading plug sockets and using multiple extension leads (daisy chaining)

3.8. Ensure any visitors and contractors in their charge are made aware of fire safety procedures.

3.9. Ensure any visitors or contractors under their charge at the time of any fire or emergency are safely guided out to a pre-designated assembly point

3.10. Take note and comply with all signs posted around the premises

3.11. Maintain vigilance for any potential fire hazards and to report them at the earliest opportunity to the Estates team.

3.12. To ensure safe access and egress to and from the premises

4. Training and Prevention Methods

4.1. Training in the safe and speedy emergency evacuation procedures is given to all staff and pupils of St James Schools through regular fire drills. Further information and guidance can be obtained from the School Fire Officer.

4.2. All staff will be trained in the basics of fire prevention and precautions either through the organisation's own internal training system or by arrangement through a competent external organisation. Annually, records will be kept by the School Fire Officer.

4.3. All staff are made aware that their primary duty under health and safety legislation is the safe evacuation of themselves, pupils and other employees. They also have a duty to visitors, parent helpers and contractors.

4.4. Specialist fire equipment is required in places such as laboratories and kitchens and staff who work in these areas are to be aware of the particular hazards which exist and receive additional training as required.

4.5. Key staff, as identified by the School Fire Officer, will be trained in the use of fire extinguishers.

4.6. Fire risk prevention is promoted through the following: a no smoking policy within the building; discouraging pupils from bringing lighters and matches to school; applying disciplinary measures in cases where pupils have been found smoking/vaping or using lighters/matches on site; ensuring all hazardous activities are risk assessed and control measures put in place before the activity commences; ensuring there is a culture of safety awareness amongst the staff and pupils.

5. Practice Drills

5.1. Emergency drills will be carried out at least once a term and, in particular, at the beginning of the academic year, so that all new teachers, support staff, parent helpers and pupils are aware of the procedures. When new members of staff arrive at school or when temporary or supply teachers and non-teaching staff are appointed, they should be instructed in the emergency procedure by those staff responsible for induction training. Induction Trainers should also conduct the new member(s) of staff around all exit routes. This should take place as soon as possible after their arrival at the school. During the "walkabout" all exits should be opened to ensure that they are available for use.

5.2. The Fire Safety Officer, who will not normally inform other members of staff, will instigate emergency drills. However, the person who is responsible for calling the emergency services will always be aware that an emergency drill is to take place, and the alarm monitoring company should be asked to put the alarm in test mode for the duration of the test. This is so that the emergency services are not alerted unnecessarily. Emergency drills should be carried out at different times of the day so that pupils are aware of the different exit routes from the different parts of the school.

5.3. The time taken to evacuate the building is recorded for all drills along with the “Total Evacuation Time", which is the time from the sounding of the alarm until all persons are accounted for. These times are evaluated following each drill and measures are taken to address the reasons for any delay.

5.4. The Fire Log is completed following each evacuation. The "Action Taken or Required" column is used in conjunction with the school’s maintenance programme to record those faults which are discovered during the emergency drill, e.g. an individual bell not ringing at full volume. Alternatively, a full report of the drill together with any recommendation is kept with the Fire Log.

6. Evacuation Notices

6.1. Fire Evacuation Notices are strategically positioned to aid in an emergency evacuation. All notices are checked as part of any health and safety check. It is the responsibility of the School Fire Officer to install and maintain these notices.

7. Fire Fighting Equipment

7.1. Maintenance

7.1.1. Any faults should be reported to maintenance staff so that extinguishers can be serviced immediately. Any maintenance required should only be carried out by a person who is qualified to British Approvals for Fire Equipment (BAFE) standards.

7.1.2. Each fire extinguisher is examined by competent school maintenance staff once a month to ensure that:

- it is in the correct position
- it is fully charged
- the accidental discharge mechanism is intact
- Appropriate fire extinguisher identification and usage signage is in place

7.2. Colour Coding

1.1.1 The School meets BS EN3, Specification for Portable Fire Extinguishers, which recommends that all fire extinguishers should be red with an additional colour coding to indicate the extinguishing medium.

- Red = Water
- Cream = Foam
- Blue = Dry Powder
- Black = Carbon Dioxide (CO2)

1.1.2 The table below describes the type of fire extinguisher required to deal with the various classes of fire.

Class of Fire	Water	Foam	CO_2	Dry Powder
Wood, paper, cloth, etc.	Most suitable	Only suitable on small surface fires	Only suitable on small surface fires	Only suitable on small surface fires
Liquids, fats, petrol, oil, etc.	Unsuitable	Most suitable, especially for fats	Suitable where contamination must be avoided	Most suitable
Electrical	Unsuitable and dangerous	Unsuitable and dangerous	Suitable	Suitable

1.1.3 Portable fire-fighting equipment, where practicable, is securely fixed to a wall with the carrying handles approximately 1m from floor level.

1.1.4 Persons who need to use a fire extinguisher do not have to travel more than 30m in any direction to locate one.

7.3. Fire Blankets

7.3.1. Fire blankets are used for smothering small fires, which involve cooking fat or other flammable liquids, and for smothering flames on people whose clothing has caught fire.

1.1.2 Fire blankets are kept in suitable containers, which are fixed to the wall open end downwards. Blankets are positioned adjacent to the fire extinguishers in every kitchen, science laboratory, pottery area and assembly room.

7.4. Buckets of Sand

7.4.1. Buckets of sand, where in use, are recommended for use in laboratories, as they can be used to contain spillages of flammable or other heavy liquids, thus preventing the spread of fire. One bucket of sand is to be placed in the prep area for each laboratory. Rubbish is not allowed to accumulate in these buckets.

7.5. Fire Suppression Systems

7.5.1. The Senior Boys' and Olympia kitchens contain a wet chemical fire suppression system to mitigate the use of the relatively high-risk gas hobs and fryer. The hobs and fryer are required to cater for a large volume of pupils and staff at speed.

8. Fire Alarm System

8.1. There are fire alarm detection systems installed throughout the schools' buildings. These have the facility to be manually operated by actuating a "Fire Call Point" situated in passageways and landings throughout the buildings.

8.2. In high-risk areas, such as the kitchens, as well as automatic detection devices actuated by either heat or smoke, there are also fire suppression systems.

8.3. This Control Panel is "Addressed" which will tell the Fire Service the location of the actuation (if possible, it is important if operating a manual call point to do so close to the fire).

8.4. Once operated, the fire alarm must **only** be reset by the Fire Service or qualified/competently trained person.

8.5. The Fire Alarm will be sounded on a regular basis within one of the school buildings using a different manual call point each time. This will take place during school hours to familiarise building occupants with the sound of the alarm and will be done at a regular published time.

8.6. These tests are recorded in the Fire Log test sheets along with any defects found or reported by staff or pupils. Any defects affecting operational use are dealt with immediately by a competent qualified engineer. School maintenance staff are responsible for informing all persons using school premises when work is being carried out on the fire alarm system.

8.7. If at any time the fire system fails or is found to be defective, especially while the school is occupied, the School Fire Officer or their Deputy is to make alternative arrangements such as maintaining a Fire Watch.

9. Suspected Gas Leak

9.1. Anyone who smells gas or believes that there is a gas leak on the premises, or in the near vicinity, should report this fact immediately via reception to the Estates Manager (School Fire Officer).

Do (if safe to do so)
- extinguish all naked flames
- turn off all gas appliances and sources
- open all windows

Do not
- operate any electrical switches or mobile phones
- use a naked flame to search

9.2. The Estates Manager, if safe to do so, will shut off the gas supply at the incoming meter.

References

The following internal documents and official publications should be referenced in conjunction with this policy:

- Fire Evacuation Procedures
- Testing, service and maintenance records for fire equipment
- Records for evacuation drills
- Staff Induction Programme
- Premises layout diagrams

Current set of regulations for fire precautions and prevention:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005