

Jessie Younghusband School



Fire Safety Policy

Updated Summer 2025

Review Autumn 2027

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Fire Safety Policy

This fire safety policy has been prepared by Luke Hanna as the responsible person to comply with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 [FSO].

The staff and Governors of Jessie Younghusband School follow the procedures and guidance for fire safety and fire risk assessments clarified within the West Sussex County Council Corporate Code of Practice (CCoP, see attached).

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety from fire of all relevant persons on, in or in the vicinity of the premises by effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective measures.

This policy will be used to ensure the provision of suitable and sufficient general fire precautions, assessment of risk and management of necessary fire safety arrangements.

A comprehensive Fire Safety File is located in the main school office. This file is:

- Up-dated regularly by the Head teacher and Premises Manager.
- Reviewed annually by the Resources Committee.
- Available for audit by Fire Safety assessors at all times
- Taken by office staff whenever the school is evacuated.

Duties and responsibilities

The Head teacher, Luke Hanna is the designated Responsible Person.

Additional staff are identified as Competent People, including the Premises Officer. A list of Competent People is maintained within the Fire Safety File.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that this Fire Safety Policy is fully implemented by the school.

The duties and responsibilities for the Responsible Person and those identified as Competent People are outlined in the CCoP.

A suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment has been prepared, regularly reviewed, and its significant findings acted upon.

A suitable and sufficient fire emergency plan has been prepared, regularly reviewed, and practised by the regular carrying out fire drills.

All staff will be trained to satisfactorily carry out the fire emergency plan, regular fire drills and any other necessary actions to comply with the FSO.

Employees will be provided with comprehensible and relevant information regarding the risks identified from the risk assessment and any other notification of risk by other employees, the preventative and protective measures, the fire emergency plan, and the identities of persons nominated to carry out the duties of the responsible person.

The employer of any other employees, or any other person working on the premises, will be provided with the same information as the responsible person's employees.

All necessary systems required as part of the general fire precautions (or other general systems or appliances required to be satisfactorily maintained to prevent the likelihood of fire) will be tested and maintained in accordance with the relevant code of practice.

Full records of all aspects of fire safety at the school are maintained by the Premises Officer and available for inspection by the Fire and Rescue Service, the Governing Body and WSCC Health and Safety personnel.

Appendix A sets out the practice to be followed in school.

Review of Policy

This policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body to ensure that the safety of all involved with the school is secured.

Appendix A

Fire Safety and Fire Risk Assessments

Corporate Code of Practice for fire safety and fire risk assessments

Guidance for senior workplace managers

This Code of Practice is for senior workplace managers¹ and for managers with delegated fire safety duties in the premises. The purpose of this code is to explain the requirements of the fire legislation and the responsibilities of senior workplace managers regarding fire safety.

What senior workplace managers must do

All senior workplace managers must designate a senior manager (or managers) for fire safety at the premises. The designated person has two principal duties: organising the fire evacuation procedures from the premises, and making the arrangements for checking and maintaining the equipment for fire safety and fire-fighting. In small premises, the senior workplace manager is usually the designated person for fire safety, in which case the senior workplace manager must then check that the designated person is carrying out the first safety duties correctly.

If the designated person for fire safety lacks the necessary experience and knowledge to carry out this function, the senior workplace manager must arrange for him or her to receive appropriate training as soon as practicable. The Health and Safety Unit runs fire safety courses.

Generally, managers and supervisors have a responsibility for assessing the work-related risks to staff they manage and the risks to others affected by the work. Senior workplace managers must make sure that managers at the premises also assess any fire risks associated with the work of their staff. Any precautions required by the risk assessment must be put in place. Managers must record any findings of the risk assessment, and action taken. They must also review the risk assessments periodically. The Health and Safety Unit organises training for fire risk assessments.

¹ This is the senior-most person at the premises or site who has control of the operations at that place. If there is more than one strategic group occupying the premises, it is the senior-most person in the strategic group with the greatest number of staff in the premises who should take the lead. Refer to *Guidance on Effective Health and Safety Management of Multi-occupancy Buildings* available from the Health and Safety Unit on 01234 752025

What the designated person must do

The designated person must be familiar with the premises and the activities carried out there. If there are concerns arising from the fire risk assessments, he or she must liaise with the Fire and Rescue Service and with the insurers.

The designated person at Jessie Younghusband School is Mark Wilkins, Premises Officer.

A designated person must:

1. check that a fire can be detected in a reasonable time and that people can be warned;
2. check that people who may be in the building can escape safely – there must be suitable procedures in place to make sure that people with disabilities (which may include people with learning, physical or sensory difficulties) can be evacuated safely;
3. check that people in the building know what to do if there is a fire;
4. make sure that there is reasonable fire-fighting equipment in the building and that it is maintained;
5. make sure that the fire safety equipment e.g. fire alarm, emergency lighting, etc. is regularly checked and maintained. See appendix A for the required checks and the frequency of these checks.
6. check regularly that there are no general fire hazards around the building, particularly near escape routes and stairwells;
7. check that those staff operating with higher risk materials and processes, such as working with flammable liquids, working in laboratories, workshops, etc have specific risk assessment that include the control of fire risks²; and
8. ensure that there is access for fire fighters.

Points 1 or 3 should already be in place in any premises as part of their periodic fire drills and procedures. Points 4 to 5 should also be in place and undertaken by a contractor; point 7 is generally the responsibility of line managers, and points 6 and 8 should be part of the routine checking of the premises. In premises shared with other employers, the designated person must co-operate with the other employer's responsible person as necessary to achieve the eight points listed above.

² For workplaces where explosions could happen because of dangerous substances being used, the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 must be complied with. Contact the Health and Safety Unit on 01243 752025.

The designated person must have a written plan to explain the arrangements to cover the points above. The plan is needed so that people at the premises know what to do if there is a fire; the plan needs to show how everyone can escape from the buildings quickly and how the emergency services will be called promptly. Generally, in small premises this can be a relatively short plan; in larger premises, particularly where there are higher fire risks, or complex layout, a more detailed one is required.

Assessing and reducing fire risks

A fire risk assessment has three parts to it. The first part comprises the general arrangements for fire safety, including fire evacuation, fire-fighting equipment, keeping escape routes clear and preventing the accumulation of combustible materials. (The Health and Safety Unit have checklists that may be useful.) The second part is an assessment of the fire risks arising from the work carried out and how they are to be minimised, particularly in areas such as workshops and kitchens; contact the Health and Safety Unit for guidance. The third part is an assessment of the structural fire-resisting integrity of the buildings. This needs professional advice. See the last section 'Fire-resisting design and structures'.

For advice on fire risk assessments, contact the Health and Safety Unit. The Home Office has issued 'Fire Safety, an Employer's Guide', available on the website of the ODPM, www.archive.official-documents.co.uk, or the County website under 'Emergency Services', which may be helpful.

There is no need to assess fire hazards separately from other work-related health and safety hazards. This can be done when reviewing other risk assessments.

Tests and Maintenance Checklist

Appendix A

Period	Test / Check /Maintenance	By whom
Daily	Check means of escape are clear. Check fire alarm panel shows normal condition, and the mains or power light is on.	Designated person
Weekly	Test the fire alarm. * Check stairwells and landings are clear and not used for storing flammable materials. Visually check all fire extinguishers are in place and no obvious signs of misuse or damage. * Check indicator lights on emergency lighting are working	Designated person
Monthly	Visual check of fire doors or any defects. Test operation of doors fitted with mechanical emergency devises, e.g. push-bar operation. Where possible, test emergency lighting using the key test switches provided.	Designated person

Period	Test / Check / Maintenance	By whom
Three-monthly	Test emergency lighting. Check the fire detection and warning system. * Test the electrically controlled systems that are connected to the fire alarm system, such as fire-door release mechanisms.*	Contractor
Twice a year Schools - termly	Carry out a fire drill.	All personnel in building
Annually	Full system checks of fire detection and warning system. Full system checks of emergency lighting system. Full service of all fixed and portable fire-fighting equipment.	Contractor
5 yearly	Electrical system wiring checks	Contractor

***but refer to following sections for variations.**

Routine checks and tests

The designated person must organise the routine user checks on the fire detection and warning systems and emergency lighting. This is to check that the systems have no major failure. The checks should be only those specified by the system installer or manufacturer for the occupier of the building. The checks should be only those specified by the system installer or manufacturer for the occupier of the building. The checks are those that require no specialist knowledge and can be carried out quite easily and safely. The designated person needs to make sure that a record is kept in a log book of the routine checks made and any subsequent action taken to remedy faults.

The electrical fire warning system must be tested weekly to make sure it is operational. Exceptionally, it may be less often than weekly if it is justified by a risk assessment, and advice is taken from West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. The test only needs to be brief, long enough to check that the system is working. The test should not exceed one minute, and ideally it should be done at the same time each week. Make sure that people know the difference between a test and a real alarm, and make sure that the Fire and Rescue Service are not called by an alarm test. A different manual call point should be used each week, so gradually all the manual call points in the premises are tested.

Testing and maintenance by a contractor

The fire detection and warning systems and emergency lighting must be formally inspected and maintained by an engineering maintenance contractor competent to do this type of work. The contractor must provide evidence of their servicing and maintenance in the premises Property Maintenance Records Manual. This manual should be held in a designated location on the premises.

Property Services recommends that fire detection and warning systems are formally inspected and maintained by the contractor at three-month intervals. British Standards³ allows for testing of fire detection and warning systems of periods up to six months for certain types of fire warning system. In these cases, for buildings controlled by WSCC, Property Services may extend the interval to six months.

Conversely, more frequent inspection and maintenance of the emergency lighting and fire detection and fire warning systems by a contractor may be required where it has been recommended by a risk assessment. For

³ BS 5839-1:2002 Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings. Code of practice for system design, installation, commissioning and maintenance.

example, premises with sleeping accommodation, or premises occupied by vulnerable people.

Fire safety notices

The designated person must make sure that all staff and service users know the correct procedures in case of fire. Fire procedure notices must be displayed prominently throughout the premises, and the designated person must arrange monthly checks to make sure they are in place and up-to-date.

Fire evacuation and drills

For large or complex buildings, the designated person will need to designate fire wardens to assist with the evacuation of the premises whenever the fire alarm is sounded. It is important that they receive information on the role of a fire warden so that they know what to do.

Fire drills must be practised twice a year, or termly for schools. Each drill must be recorded, and any defects or problems with the building or alarm system promptly reported. There should be as little warning as possible before the drill, but some people will have to know beforehand, such as those responsible for calling the Fire and Rescue Service.

Acutely sick or injured people do not have to take part in a fire drill if it would make them worse. They must be made safe during the drill.

As a guide, the escape time to outside (or to a safe haven or main stairway where arranged by risk assessment) should be not longer than two and a half minutes. If the time is significantly longer, the designated person must look at any causes of delay to see if the time can be reduced in any practical way. The fire drill plan must have an effective procedure for accounting for staff, service users, visitors and contractors on site at the fire assembly points.

Evacuation of people with restricted mobility

People with restricted mobility (for example, people using wheelchairs, or people with impaired vision) will need assistance to escape the building during a fire evacuation. The first evacuation plan must include how they are to be helped to escape. British Standards⁴ gives guidance on how to achieve this. At premises with more than a few disabled people, the designated person should refer to this document.

Getting wheelchair users out from multi-storey buildings in an emergency evacuation needs careful planning. Do not use a lift to get people to the exit floor unless it is specifically designed to be used in a fire emergency. Generally, the recommended procedure for evacuating disabled people in

⁴ British Standard BS5588-8:1999 Fire precautions in the design, construction and use of buildings. Code of practice for means of escape for disabled people.

wheelchairs by stairways is in two stages. First they should be taken to a temporary safe place near the stairway – a refuge – with staff remaining with them. The refuge must be an enclosed area designed to resist fire and smoke. As soon as the stairs are clear, a team of staff should use Evac Chairs (if provided) or other safe systems to take the disabled people down the stairs and outside to safety. The designated person must arrange for the disabled people to be rescued by the Fire and Rescue Service.

The evacuation of disabled people from refuges should be given a high priority starting with those nearest the fire, particularly in circumstances where there are not enough people to evacuate everyone at the same time. There needs to be reliable two-way communication between the people who are temporarily in each refuge awaiting evacuation and staff who are controlling the evacuation. Part of the planning must include the assessment and provision of a reliable communication system, such as internal emergency telephones, in the refuges. The communication system is essential so those controlling the evacuation know:

- how many disabled people there are;
- the nature of their disabilities;
- the refuge or refuges in which they are located; and
- the evacuation equipment available.

Refuges should be clearly marked with fire safety signs, and instruction stating clearly 'Refuge: Keep clear'. Refuges must not be used as storage areas for anything other than evacuation equipment. A risk assessment will be needed to decide on the number of Evac Chairs or other safe evacuation systems at the top of each stairway. The Health and Safety Unit can help with these assessments. The users of the Evac Chairs also need training on how to use them.

People with a hearing loss

There must be reliable arrangements so that deaf and hard of hearing people will be made aware of an emergency alarm sounding. The evacuation plan must not assume that people with hearing loss will notice others evacuating the building. In some circumstances, for example if part of the building is regularly occupied by people with a hearing loss, a risk assessment should be undertaken to see if any extra measures are needed for an effective fire alarm.

Escape routes

People should be able to turn their back on a fire and escape from it unaided. It is important that everyone, including pupils, residents, service users, and

contractors, can get out of the building quickly. The main escape routes should have been identified by the architect and it is unlikely that the arrangements for escape need to be changed unless the function of the building has changed significantly. Where identified by risk assessment, special measures may be needed to protect escape routes, such as fire-resisting self-closing doors.

In open-plan offices where routes are shaped by screens and furniture, there must be adequate escape routes and the furniture and screens must not present a trip hazard. Escape routes must not be narrow or tortuous. Materials, equipment and loose furniture must not be allowed to get in the way of exits.

The emergency exit doors must open easily and immediately from the inside when people are in the building.

Escape signs

If there is a risk that people could go the wrong way in trying to escape a fire, for example into a dead end, the escape route must be signed⁵. The signs have directional arrows and a pictogram of a running person. Old signs with the pictogram must be modified or replaced.

⁵ This must be to the standard specified in the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.

Fire extinguishers

Portable fire extinguishers (and fire blankets where necessary) are provided in all WSCC premises. Currently, these are checked each year by the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. The designated person must check that there are arrangements for interim checks that all fire-fighting equipment is in place and that none is missing or has obvious damage. As a guide, this should be weekly; it can be less frequent, perhaps monthly, where vandalism, misuse or theft is unlikely. If there are concerns about the condition of a fire extinguisher, contact a fire extinguisher maintenance officer on 01903 228404. All extinguishers should be tested and maintained in accordance with British Standards guidance⁶.

All fire extinguishers should be red with a small colour code patch to show what type they are. It is important that there are adequate numbers of extinguishers and that they are suitable for the likely type of fire in the area. For guidance on extinguishers and how many are needed in an area⁷, contact the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, or the Health and Safety Unit. As a guide, in low-risk environments such as offices, a standard 9-litre water extinguisher (type 13A) is usually suitable; there should be one 13A extinguisher for every 200 square metres of floor area, but with a minimum of two on each storey. If the upper floor area is small (less than 100 square metres) and single occupancy, only one extinguisher is required on the upper floor.

Fire fighting equipment training

People who work in areas where they are likely to use fire extinguishers e.g. kitchens, workshops and laboratories, need to be trained in the use of fire-fighting equipment. Fire wardens should also receive training. Using the wrong extinguisher, or using an extinguisher incorrectly, can cause severe injuries and may make the fire worse. People should not be expected to use fire extinguishers unless they have received training on how to use them correctly. They should use them only on minor fires that can be tackled easily and without additional risk.

The Health and Safety Unit runs courses on the use of fire extinguishers. The Unit also has videos and DVDs that Service Units may borrow.

Visitors

Visitors (for instance, contractors and agency staff) must be given appropriate fire procedure instructions. These must include:

⁶ BS5306-3:2003 Fire extinguishing installations and equipment on premises. Code of practice for the inspection and maintenance of portable fire extinguishers.

⁷ The guidance that should be followed is in British Standards 5206-8:2000 Fire extinguishing installations and equipment on premises. Selection and installation of portable fire extinguishers. Code of practice.

- what to do if they discover a fire;
- what to do if they hear the fire alarm;
- how to call the Fire and Rescue Service;
- the escape routes and assembly points; and
- who is authorised to say it is safe to return to the building.

When contractors come onto the premises, they may temporarily increase the fire risk to the building if they are carrying out hot work such as soldering pipes and repairing flat roofs. For buildings over which WSCC has control, the designated person should ensure that the contractor uses the sign-in system, declares the nature of their work, and is adequately monitored by WSCC staff. Contractors undertaking hot work should provide their own portable fire-fighting equipment.

Fire-resisting design and structures

It is essential that buildings used by WSCC staff, service users and others have adequate fire-resisting design and structures and that these have not been damaged or compromised by building maintenance or modifications, for example by contractors running cables through ceiling voids and damaging fire barriers. The building may need extra fire-resisting improvement too if there is a significant change in its use; professional advice is required on this aspect of a fire risk assessment. If there is a proposed change the use of all or part of a building, it is important to seek advice from Property Services beforehand.

Note that it is inadvisable to rely on risk assessments carried out by commercial manufacturers or installers as they may be biased towards their own products. They will also tend to propose systems to current standards, which may not be necessary as the standards are not always applied retrospectively. Where there is uncertainty about the fire-resisting design and structures of the buildings, for example if the building is old and there are not records of fire officers' inspections, then contact the Property Services area building surveyor in the first instance. Where a building survey is necessary to assess the fire resisting design and structures, it should be a one-off assessment by a competent person. If there are shortcomings in the fire-resisting design and structures of the building, the senior workplace manager must consider the limitations and what needs to be done about it.