

FIRE RISK PREVENTION & PROCEDURES

Fire Risk Management Strategy

2025/26

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process of fire safety management at Rochester Independent College. The college campus extends over 17 buildings and 11 outbuildings. The college has adopted a fire safety management strategy which is based on individual buildings. The college has a whole site Fire Management Strategy which includes a Fire Risk Assessment for Gordon House, 17-19 Star Hill, 23 Star Hill, 25-27 Star Hill, 29 Star Hill, 33-39 Star Hill, New Court, New Road House, Dickens Building, Northbank, 252-254 St Margarets Banks, Underhill, Workshop 1, Dome, Overhill, Music and Gym Block, Workshop 2, Garden Studio 1, Garden Studio 2, Maths Shed and Art Cabin

The policy will be reviewed annually.

Policy statement

Rochester Independent College and Dukes Education is committed to minimising and managing fire and associated risks to all 'relevant persons' as defined in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Act 2005, that is, those at risk, including employees, students, contractors and visitors lawfully on the premises.

Rochester Independent College will endeavour to discharge its duties in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Act 2005 accordingly. Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its employees, to ensure the safety of our buildings for all staff, students and visitors on its premises and reduce the potential for harm to all persons in and around our premises from thousand risks presented by fire; and to ensure continuing service delivery, to safeguard our finances and reputation, and to protect the environment.

The Governors will identify and give appropriate priority to the financial, staffing and other resources required to meet these legislative requirements and to implement the college's policies and procedures.



Context

Fire remains the single most serious risk facing a school.

The primary function of the Fire Risk Prevention and Procedures Policy is to ensure that general fire precautions are in place to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of employees, pupils and visitors. General fire precautions include:

- Measures to reduce fire risk and also the spread of fire.
- Adopt procedures that in the event of a fire allow for safe, speedy evacuation of staff, students and visitors.
- Firefighting.
- Fire detection and warning.
- Instruction and training.
- Measures to mitigate the effects of fire.

Legislation

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

This order replaced all previous Fire Safety Legislation. The college is aware of the obligations placed upon it by the above order and will:

- Carry out a fire risk assessment for each building in the School.
- Appoint one or more competent persons to be responsible for fire safety.
- Provide employees with clear and relevant information on risks identified in the fire risk assessment.
- Consult with employees about nominating people to carry out particular roles in connection with fire safety (fire marshals/wardens).
- Inform non-employees, including pupils, of relevant information regarding fire risks and fire safety procedures for the premises.
- Provide visitors and contractors with relevant information regarding fire safety and evacuation procedures.
- Consider the presence of dangerous substances and the risks.
- Establish a means of contacting emergency services and informing them about dangerous substances in the building.
- Provide appropriate information, instruction and training to employees on fire precautions in the workplace.
- Ensure the premises and equipment provided in connection with firefighting, fire detection and warning, emergency exits and routes are covered by a suitable system of maintenance by a competent person.
- Employees must cooperate to ensure the workplace is safe from fire and its effects and must not do anything that will place themselves or other people at risk.



Other relevant Statutory Frameworks and Legislation include:

- Dangerous Substances and Explosives Atmospheres Regulations 2002
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- BS 9997:2019 Fire Risk Management System
- ISI National Minimum Standards

Duties - Fire Safety Responsibility

The responsibility for complying with the Fire Safety Order 2005 rests with the Chief Executive (CEO).

The Chief Executive (CEO – Designated Responsible Person) is therefore responsible for the overall organisation and management of fire safety and will appoint an Executive Directors to be directly responsible for fire safety, and be responsible for establishing the level of fire safety management to be adopted by Rochester Independent College in accord with guidance issued by the Department of Education.

The Chief Finance Officer & Managing Directors (Duty-holder) are responsible to the CEO for ensuring and securing the “General Fire Precautions” and Arrangements, and compliance records for the fabric and condition of premises and that they are maintained to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The Principal (Duty-holder); is to act as the main representative of the Executive Team, having a key role in ensuring the delivery of the fire safety policy and therefore is determined by senior management under the fire safety legislation. This responsibility cannot be delegated, but to effectively discharge this duty, the duty holder may nominate or assign the day-to-day management (Person in Control) to their local managers to ensure that effective fire safety management, arrangements and procedures are adopted and maintained within areas and buildings/ premises under their control.

The Designated Person in Control is the Facilities Manager.

The Director of Human Resources (Duty-holder) is responsible to the Principal for ensuring an annual/bi-annual training programme, including the Education and Training through Educare/TesDevelop. This will be jointly managed with the Facilities Manager who will be responsible for the content and delivery of additional fire safety training sessions.

The Facilities Manager (Person in Control) is operationally responsible to the Principal for ensuring and securing the “general fire precautions” and arrangements, compliance records for the fabric and condition of premises and that they are maintained to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. To provide assurance that appropriate



integrated systems are in place and are suitable and sufficient for auditing, monitoring, review and recording of the college's fire safety arrangements, together with the provision of fire safety advice to key stakeholders.

All Employees, Contract staff, Contractors and Volunteers have a duty to ensure that fire safety arrangements are complied with and are to report based upon their individual knowledge any defects to fire safety arrangements so as to ensure remedial action can be taken promptly to reduce hazards and risks to as low as is reasonably practicable.

Contractors working within College buildings/premises must adhere to the college's Fire Safety Policy and Fire Safety Arrangements and Procedures, including any other college procedural documents. Dependent on contractual arrangements, contractors may be a joint responsible person, a duty holder or person in charge in accordance with Article 5 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 or as defined within the definition terms in use in this document

The designated Competent Persons are Fire and Security Consultancy Ltd (risk assessments) and Omega Fire & Security (conducting servicing and advising on preventative and protective measures).

Weekly fire bell testing and termly fire drills are to be conducted by the Facilities Team.

Procedure - Fire Safety Arrangements (Fire Protocols)

To support our aims and objectives, specific guidance on fire safety is provided in the College's Fire Prevention and Procedures, which details how the various fire safety arrangements are to be met in practice.

The topics covered within these Fire Safety Arrangements and Procedures will include for example:-

- Fire Safety Organisational Management and Structure Levels
- Fire Safety Management Manual (fire log book)
- Fire Risk Assessment Process
- Fire Safety Training
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans
- Maintenance of Fire Safety Measures
- Management of Dangerous Substances

The above arrangements and procedures are subject to a regular management review as necessary. This will ensure that these arrangements and procedures remain current and valid in respect of any changes made to our organisational arrangements and premises, legislation or fire safety guidance, to ensure that we continue to meet our fire safety aims and objectives as far as is reasonably practicable.



Fire Safety Organisational Management and Structure Levels

Chief Executive Officer



Chief Finance Officer and Managing Directors



Principal



Director of HR & Compliance and Facilities Manager.



Fire Marshals/Fire Wardens



Employees, Contractors

Fire Safety Management Manual- FSMM (fire log book)

A fire safety management manual will be provided to cover all premises and is an essential tool in the management of fire safety within occupied buildings or premises. The manual contains and provides comprehensive fire safety information essential to support and evidence the effective local management of fire safety. It is vitally important that risk assessment, evacuation plans and procedures including maintenance records are accurately maintained in the fire safety management manual.

The fire safety management manual should be subject to regular reviews by the person in control; the manual must be kept in the Facilities Office 39 Star Hill, so it is readily available for inspection by any authorised person.

It is recognised that comprehensive fire safety information is essential to support the effective management of fire safety in our premises. A fire safety management box will be provided for all managed buildings where any staff or students are likely to be present at any time. These boxes will contain all relevant fire safety information to enable those persons with day-to-day control of buildings/premises to ensure the effective management of fire safety measures and arrangements in our premises and in particular our emergency evacuation plans. The fire safety management box will be sited beside the fire panel for each building. The fire safety management box will be subjected to an annual management review by the relevant person with day-to-day control of the building /premises normally the Facilities Manager.



Fire Risk Assessments

A fire risk assessment will be carried out on all relevant premises owned and/or occupied by Rochester Independent College as required by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. An external company will complete this. A record of the fire risk assessments and significant findings will be kept in the relevant fire safety management manual, and a copy of all fire risk assessments will be available electronically and will be available on request to assist those who within their particular directorate have the day to day responsibility for fire safety.

Following each fire risk assessment, where deficiencies are identified, a fire safety action plan will also be prepared setting out any remedial action(s) necessary to resolve the identified deficiencies, and detailing a suitable period of time in which to resolve them; these action plans are required to be signed off by the relevant person in control. All fire risk assessments will be kept under regular routine review by the Facilities Manager to ensure that they remain valid, and these will also be reviewed whenever any material change is made that may affect the significant findings of the fire risk assessment.

Fire Safety Training

Bi-annual training on TES Develop (Fire Safety in Education) is provided for Teaching, Office, Support staff, and yearly for Maintenance, Housekeeping and Boarding staff. There is also 'How to be an effective Fire Warden' which is provided on TES Develop for all Boarding Staff, Facilities Team yearly and designated fire wardens again to be conducted bi-annually.

All new staff receive a guided tour on day one as part of the induction process including the meeting points and fire exits and routes.

New boarding staff to receive additional fire safety training from the Facilities Manager within 4 weeks of start date.

Regular training on the use of fire extinguishers is arranged for boarding house staff as well as other members of support staff including the operating of the fire alarm panels

Fire drills take place three times a year in all buildings, arranged centrally by the Facilities Manager or Head of Boarding, with details reported back to the Facilities Manager. These are reviewed by the SMT and the Governors each term.

Boarding houses carry out three fire drills per year including one at night.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's)

In order to ensure all employees and staff are able to escape safely, where necessary due to individual needs a personal emergency evacuation plans will be set up to ensure the



appropriate forms of assistance are provided to support these people in an emergency, for example those with permanent or temporary disabilities, pregnant women and those whose first language is not English. Such plans are to be reviewed and updated annually and whenever there is a significant change in the relevant individual's circumstances that may affect the effectiveness of the plan.

Maintenance of Fire Safety Measures

Rochester Independent College has processes in place across the estate to ensure that in all the premises owned and occupied by it, and for which it has responsibility have adequate and effective provision for the maintenance of any passive and active fire safety systems provided, and any services and equipment that may give rise to a fire or contribute to the spread of fire, and that these are subjected to periodic planned preventative maintenance, checks, tests, and servicing in accordance with current best practice. This will ensure that in all the premises occupied by it has adequate and effective provision for the maintenance of any passive and active fire safety systems provided, and any services and equipment that may give rise to a fire or contribute to the spread of fire, and that these are subjected to periodic planned preventative maintenance (PPM), checks, tests, and servicing in accordance with current best practice.

Management of Dangerous Substances.

Where it is required to use or store any dangerous substances in premises owned or occupied by Rochester Independent College before doing so a risk assessment is to be carried out under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations and/or the Dangerous Substances Explosive Atmosphere Regulations as appropriate to ensure that they are subsequently managed, used, stored and disposed of in accord with best practice so as to reduce the hazard and risk to as low as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances.

Where no longer required any dangerous substances must be removed from the premises and disposed of safely.

Our onsite source of radiation is secured in a safe in 39 Star Hill (Attic) and is inspected and audited externally bi-annually and the local fire brigade is aware of its location. The bi-annual audit is done by the RPA appointed by Kent County Council operating under the CLEAPSS RPA scheme and the source is inspected monthly by the RPO (Schools) who also conducts a leak check if required and annually otherwise.



Fire Management Strategy

Fire procedures are detailed in staff and student handbooks. Copies of the Fire Risk Assessments are held in the Facilities Office (39 Star Hill) and online in the 'cloud'. General procedures for raising the alarm are posted in each building and in every room. The following documents are included in each Fire Box :

- Building plan including location of Fire Extinguishers, Fuse Boards, Call Points, Water Shut Off Points, Boilers, Fire Alarm Panel, Gas Shut Off, Burglar Alarm Panel and Emergency Lighting.

Fire Wardens:

Each building has a nominated Fire Marshal whose duties include maintaining an oversight of fire prevention and fire warning measures, as well as escorting occupants out of the building in the event of fire alarm activation. Duties include overseeing the maintenance of clear fire escape routes and exits on a routine basis. All RIC Fire Marshals have completed the Level 2 Educare course 'Fire Safety in Education' and ' How to be an effective fire warden'

Fire Procedures

Raising the Alarm

The warning, in case of fire, shall be given by a prolonged bell/siren in all buildings. All buildings have their own alarm system which is a continuous siren or bell. All alarms can be easily recognised by staff and pupils and can be heard clearly in all parts of the building.

Any person discovering a fire should immediately raise the alarm via the nearest fire alarm call point, so that evacuation procedures may commence. Members of staff should only attempt to fight a fire once evacuation procedures have been started and should only do so if they are not putting themselves or others in any danger. Members of staff should not attempt to fight a fire on their own; another member of staff must be present. On no account should pupils fight, or help to fight, the fire themselves.

Upon discovering a fire, the person present is to:

- Operate the nearest fire alarm call point immediately.
- Dial 999 to call the Fire Brigade.

On Hearing the Alarm

- Switch off electrical appliances, close windows and shut all doors if safe to do so.
- Leave the building by the nearest fire exit, do not run and go to the designated Assembly Point for that building.
- Wait at the designated meeting point until given further instructions.



Evacuation

All staff are to implement evacuation procedures. All teachers in charge of a class will be responsible for seeing that the whole class is evacuated safely along the designated evacuation route to the defined Assembly Point for that building. Members of staff have a duty to guide visitors to their classroom to the nearest fire escape. In the event of an actual fire, subsequent movement will be decided by the Principal and Facilities Manager.

Arrangements for Visitors

Upon entering the College, all visitors must sign in immediately and read the 'visitors' fire policy'. The member of staff responsible for the visitor is responsible for ensuring that they have safely evacuated the building and instructing them to report to the person in charge at the assembly point. Administrators working in offices with signing-in books or paper registers should take them with them as long as it is safe to do so.

Contractors

There is a separate contractor policy including the smoking agreement (no smoking on site) and includes the Hot Works Permit.

Escape Routes and Emergency Exits

- Fire notices are displayed in every building indicating the direction of travel to the nearest fire exit.
- Fire routes and exits are checked daily to ensure they are kept clear and low-use exits are opened a minimum of once a month.

Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are located throughout the buildings, and are checked monthly by the Facilities Team and the yearly checks are completed internally as per the manufacturer's guidelines on the Service-Free P50 Extinguishers.



Alarms

All buildings are equipped with heat and/or smoke detection alarm systems. They can be manually activated by breaking a glass panel, and are automatically activated when smoke/heat builds up. These are tested weekly by the Facilities Team and serviced every 6 months by Omega Fire & Security

Emergency Lighting

Emergency Lighting is tested monthly by the Facilities Team.

The yearly 3-hour test is conducted in December during the Winter Shutdown period by the Facilities Team, and any issues are notated and rectified by the current contractor PJW Electrics

Routine Protective Checks

Fire marshals and the Facilities Manager are responsible for ensuring that the following measures remain effective:

- Escape routes and exits are kept free of obstructions
- Appropriate signage is in place
- Notices are displayed to assist with evacuation
- Fire Extinguishers are appropriately placed and not tampered with
- All staff and pupils are familiar with and rehearsed in evacuation procedures including principal and alternative escape routes
- Location of Fire Alarm call buttons

Electrical Safety

- The college uses PJW Electrical who are NICEIC qualified Electrical Engineers, to inspect and maintain its electrical installations and Quantec for the 5yr electrical safety inspections
- Annual portable appliance testing takes place by the Facilities Team on all RIC equipment.
- All new RIC equipment is to be tested before usage.
- All boarding students' items are to be tested upon arrival and whenever they purchase something new during the year.
- Boarding Staff to regularly check the rooms for non-stickered/tested items and have them tested ASAP



- No foreign adapters or extension leads to be used by the boarding students. This is advised in the welcome packs with links to official UK-safe products for them to purchase before arrival.
- Any unsafe products to be removed from the student and returned on their last day at college.
- Records of all tests are kept in the Facilities Office (39 Star Hill).

Gas Safety

- All gas appliances (boilers, kitchen equipment etc) are regularly maintained and serviced by Gas Safe Registered Engineers (KBM) Records of all tests are kept in the Facilities Office (39 Star Hill).
- All kitchen equipment is switched off at the end of service.
- All laboratories are checked daily to ensure that the central gas supply is turned off.
- Emergency cut-off valves are in position in each laboratory.

Safe Storage

- We ensure that flammable materials used in teaching or maintenance are locked in purpose-made, flame-proof containers at the end of every day.

Rubbish and Combustible Materials

- Flammable rubbish is cleared on a daily basis.
- Combustible materials used in teaching, catering, maintenance, grounds and caretaking are stored in flameproof cupboards.
- Waste bins are emptied twice a week by an external waste collector.
- Skips are kept away from buildings as much as possible

Critical incident

We have a Critical Incident Policy which details what to do in the event of an actual fire or major event. Included in this policy are:

- Contact details
- Roles and responsibilities
- Processes/contingencies for loss of buildings to maintain full service.



Boarding Houses

The Boarding Team Houseparents who are also fire marshals, are responsible for all aspects of fire safety in the boarding house. This includes:

- Make arrangements for night-time fire practices at the agreed frequency and ensure they are duly logged.
- Ensure that all pupils and adults sleeping in boarding in the house are fully familiar with all fire instructions and that they are rehearsed. This should include alternative fire escape routes.
- Regularly monitor all the rooms as to correct use of authorised electrical equipment. Equipment brought into the House must be of a regular standard of manufacture and maintenance. All portable appliances will be tested early in the academic year by a competent person.
- Ensure that all means of escape in case of fire are kept free and unobstructed at all times.
- Ensure that the appropriate fire notices are up-to-date and clearly display

Created/Updated	Author	Approved by	Date
August 2017	HH	AB	August 2017
September 2018	HH	AB	September 2018
July 2019	DM & CD	AB	July 2019
October 2020	DM	AB	October 2020
August 2021	DM	AB	August 2021
January 2022	DM	AB	January 2022
August 2022	DM	AB	August 2022
August 2023	DM	AB	August 2023
September 2024	DM	AB	August 2024
August 2025	DM		

