Fire Risk Policy and Procedures

September 2025

ST CHRISTOPHER'S
HAMPSTEAD

FIRE RISK POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policy to be reviewed annually			
Action	**Owner**	**Date**	**Completed**
Reviewed	Bursar (Richard Edwards)	October 2025	✓
Approved	Risk & Compliance Committee	November 2025	

Date of next review: September 2026

To be published on	
School network	✓
School website	✓

Accessibility notice

To enable easier reading, this Policy is available in a larger font upon request.

PART 1: FIRE SAFETY

1 INTRODUCTION

Our priority is to minimise the risk to life and to reduce injury by maintaining the physical fire safety integrity of the school 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 risk policy, procedures and risk assessments at St Christopher's School are designed to help our community to respond calmly and effectively in the event that fire breaks out in one of our buildings.

2 ROLE OF THE SCHOOL CHIEF FIRE WARDEN

The Bursar and Welfare coordinator are the School's Chief Fire Wardens and are responsible for ensuring that:

- The fire risk policy is kept under regular review
- The fire risk policy is promulgated to the entire school community
- Everyone in the school (including visitors and contractors) is given clear written instructions on where they should go in the event of fire
- Fire induction training is given to new staff and pupils
- Procedures for emergency evacuation are regularly tested and lessons absorbed
- Fire risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated
- Fire prevention measures are meticulously followed
- Fire procedures and risk assessments are reviewed on each occasion that a building is altered, extended or rebuilt, or when new buildings are acquired

3 EMERGENCY EVACUATION NOTICE

This notice is included in the First Day at Work Checklist.

All new staff are shown the following notice by the HR and Compliance Officer:

- If you discover a fire, break the glass in the nearest alarm point to set off the alarm. Leave the building by the nearest fire exit.
- If you are responsible for a class, help them leave quietly with you. No one should talk or run. If you have a teaching assistant in your classroom, one adult should lead the children out and the other should wait to the end to ensure that no children are left behind. Make your way to the assembly point on the netball court. (In the case of a full evacuation, everyone assembles on the netball court before proceeding to The Hall School on Crossfield Road near Swiss Cottage tube station.)
- Any child in a music lesson is escorted out of the building by the member of staff teaching them at the time of the alarm and then handed over to the Form Teacher at the assembly point

- Visiting Music Teachers should inform the School Secretary and Welfare coordinator of any pupils that come to see them between 8.00am and 8.45am, in order to ensure the School Secretary/ Welfare coordinator includes them on the morning register
- Do not take anything with you and do not allow the pupils to take anything
- The Emergency Services are automatically alerted if the fire alarm sounds. However, the Chief Fire Warden (or in their absence, the Bursar) will also call the emergency services on a school mobile (taken outside by the School Secretary or in their absence, the Head's PA) to ensure that the alarm has been raised.
- If you have a disabled pupil in your class and you are on the upper floors of the main building, you can direct her, together with her carer, to the designated safe refuge on the second floor at the end of the corridor between the Art room and the stair tower (depending on their disability and in accordance with their Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan, or "PEEP")
- Take the register of your class as soon as you reach the assembly point (supplied to each Form Teacher on the netball court by the School Secretary, or in her absence the Head's PA). If the Form Teacher is absent, then either the supply teacher (if there is one) will cover this role, or the Chief Fire Warden (or in their absence, the School Secretary) will appoint someone to take the register
- Report anyone who is waiting to be evacuated from a designated refuge, or who is missing, immediately to the Chief Fire Warden, who will inform the Fire Brigade. *On no account should anyone return to any building until given permission by the Fire and Emergency Services.*
- Remain at the assembly point with your pupils in silence until the all-clear is given
- In case of a worst-case emergency where the school is instructed to keep pupils within the building, the whole school will assemble in the Gym (on ground floor of main building)

Directions from St. Christopher's School to The Hall School in case of an evacuation.

Starting at St Christopher's School (32 Belsize Lane, Hampstead, London, NW3 5AE)

1. Out of school gates turn right to intersection with Ornan Rd (or leave school by back of library, turn left along Lyndhurst Gardens and down to Belsize Village)
2. Turn right towards Belsize Village
3. Turn left at first intersection onto Belsize Terrace (road closed to traffic)
4. Turn right at first intersection onto Belsize Park. Proceed on right hand side of road.
5. Continue approximately 250 metres to next intersection (with Buckland Cres.)
6. Before intersection, turn left and cross road (no pedestrian crossing)
7. Continue along left side of road (now becomes Buckland Cres.) a short distance to intersection with Lancaster Grove
8. Turn left onto Lancaster Grove and proceed approximately 100 metres
9. Cross Lancaster Grove at first intersection turning right onto Crossfield Rd
10. Proceed approximately 100 metres to the Hall School

Finishing at The Hall School (23 Crossfield Road, London NW3 4NU)

(Tel: 020 7722 1700)

PART 2: FIRE RISK PROCEDURES

1 BRIEFING NEW STAFF AND PUPILS

All our new staff (teaching and non-teaching alike) are given a briefing on the school's emergency evacuation procedures on their first day at St Christopher's School. We show them where the emergency exits and escape routes are located and indicate the location of the outside assembly point. Fire action notices are displayed on the walls of all rooms and in all corridors. All new staff are shown how to activate the fire alarms if they see or smell a fire.

The safe evacuation of everyone - staff and pupils alike - is our priority. Protecting property comes second. No one should attempt to fight a fire at the expense of their own, or anyone else's safety. Training in the basic use of fire extinguishers is given to staff but the emphasis is on getting everyone out of the building, rather than fighting a fire.

2 SUMMONING THE FIRE BRIGADE

The master panel that shows the location of all the alarm call points on the networked alarm system in the main school buildings is physically located on the ground floor in the entrance hall. The panel for the new classrooms including the new (2024) Reception classrooms is in the Server Room. If the alarm goes off for any reason, other than a fire drill, the Fire and Emergency Services are automatically alerted. However, the Chief Fire Warden (or in their absence, the Bursar, or in both their absences the Caretaker) will also call the emergency services on a school mobile (taken outside by the School Secretary or in their absence, the Head's PA) to ensure that the alarm has been raised.

3 VISITORS AND CONTRACTORS

All visitors and contractors are required to sign in at Reception, where they are issued with a visitor's badge, which should be worn at all times that they are on school property. They are made aware of the emergency evacuation notice (see above) and are shown the way to the assembly point.

When large numbers of visitors are at the school, for example, for plays, quiz night or concerts, a brief announcement is made advising them of the location of the emergency exits that they should use in the event of the alarms sounding.

4 DISABLED STAFF, PUPILS OR VISITORS

Disabled pupils (and their carers) and disabled staff and visitors are shown fire procedures independently by the Chief Fire Warden. The School Secretary alerts the Bursar of any future disabled pupils/staff. The Chief Fire Warden writes a PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan) for those individuals and copies are kept in both the School Secretary's file (which is taken outside during a fire) and in the Bursar's office.

We have a designated safe refuge point on the second floor of the main building, with signs advising of its location. When the fire alarm is sounded, it is the responsibility of the carer of a disabled person to take him or her (depending on their disability and in accordance with their PEEP) to the refuge point (if in the main building) and to wait for rescue by the Fire and Emergency Service. If the disabled person is in a building other than the main building, the procedures documented in their PEEP will be followed. The teacher will ensure that the name of the disabled person and his or her carer, together with the location of their safe refuge point, are passed to the Chief Fire Warden as soon as he or she reaches the assembly point. It is the responsibility of the Chief Fire Warden to ensure that this information is passed as soon as possible to the Fire and Emergency Service.

5 FIRE MARSHALLS & FIRE WARDENS

There are two qualified Fire Marshalls and six Fire Wardens. These all have responsibility for ensuring that the school is fully evacuated and that no staff or children are left in any buildings.

The two Fire Marshalls have overall responsibility for the coordination of an evacuation. The six Fire Wardens are responsible for checking that all buildings are empty of staff and pupils. Two staff have responsibility for clearing and checking the outer buildings and four staff responsibility for the main building. All Fire Wardens must ensure that every room is checked and cleared before reporting back to the Fire Marshall that the school is clear.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHING STAFF

Teaching staff are responsible for escorting their pupils safely out of the building in silence and in an orderly fashion. They are responsible for conducting a head count on arrival at the assembly point, and then, checking names against the class register (once the register has been distributed by the School Secretary) and for ensuring that the name of anyone who cannot be accounted for (and, if possible, their likely location) is passed immediately to the Chief Fire Warden. It is the responsibility of the Chief Fire Warden to ensure that this information is passed to the Fire and Emergency service as soon as they arrive.

On no account should anyone return to a burning building.

7 FIRE PRACTICES

We hold at least one fire practice every term at St Christopher's School and often once every half term. This combined with a programme of inducting new staff and pupils with emergency escape procedures helps to ensure that the school can be safely evacuated in the event of a fire. Written comments are made regarding each practice and records are kept by the Chief Fire Warden.

8 FIRE PREVENTION MEASURES

We have the following fire prevention measures in place at St Christopher's School:

Escape Routes and Emergency Exits

- Fire notices and evacuation signs are displayed in every room and corridor
- Fires extinguishers (of the appropriate type) and smoke/heat detectors are located in every building in accordance with the recommendations of our professional advisor
- All stairs, passages and emergency exits are illuminated by emergency lighting
- Automatic door closures that are activated by the fire alarms are fitted on doors in or leading onto escape routes
- The master panel for the alarm system is located on the ground floor near the front door and shows the location of a fire
- Alarms sound in all parts of the building
- Keeping fire routes and exits clear at all times. The Caretaker is responsible for unlocking the buildings in the morning and checking that escape routes are not obstructed.
- Emergency lights are checked regularly by a suitably qualified electrician
- Testing fire alarms weekly (and recording all tests and defects). This is the responsibility of the Caretaker. They also check the automatic door closures. Records of these tests are kept in the school office
- A suitably qualified contractor checks the fire alarm system every six months. A suitably qualified contractor checks the fire extinguishers annually. Records are kept by the Bursar.
- Parents can be contacted via iSAMS should there be an incident at the school

9 Electrical and Gas Safety

This is covered in the Health and Safety Policy.

10 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.

11 Rubbish and Combustible Materials

Flammable rubbish is stored away from buildings in the rubbish compound.

12 Letting or Hiring the School

Our standard contractual terms that we use for letting and hiring the school cover fire safety and require that the hirer should certify that he/she has read and understood the school's fire risk policy and procedures. The Bursar is always on call when the school is let or hired for an outside function or event.