

Fire safety and evacuation policy

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Fire safety and evacuation policy: document provenance

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Policy authors	School and college trust leaders Estates centre of excellence Safeguarding leads
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Summary of changes in this review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The policy has been rewritten in order to apply consistency across our trust with regards to fire evacuation plans and procedures. This was previously maintained locally but will now be supplemented by this trust wide policy.
Related policies and documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health and safety policy• Child protection and safeguarding policy• Risk management policy• Business continuity framework• Lockdown, shelter-in-place and invacuation policy• Please refer to section three for details of key relevant legislation

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, the policy will be reviewed as per the review cycle. Should no substantive change be required at this point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.

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1.0 Policy statement

- 1.1 Dixons Academies Trust is committed to ensuring the health and safety of students, staff and visitors whilst they are on our premises. Our fire safety and evacuation policy applies to all aspects of fire safety and evacuation at all of our trust sites.

2.0 Scope and purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this fire safety and evacuation policy is to ensure the safety of all students, staff, visitors, and contractors within Dixons Academies Trust (our trust) premises by establishing a clear, consistent, and legally compliant approach to fire safety, evacuation and emergency preparedness.
- 2.2 This policy defines our trust's expectations for proactive risk management, structured evacuation procedures, and compliance with statutory obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Fire Safety Act 2021, and other relevant legislation. It provides a framework for safeguarding life, minimising disruption, and supporting inspection readiness across all academies.
- 2.3 The welfare of our students, staff and visitors is paramount, and we are committed to having in place procedures that will support informed and sensitive management of fire safety and evacuation.
- 2.4 This policy applies to all our trust schools, colleges and premises, including those operated under Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts. It encompasses all permanent and temporary occupants of trust premises, including:
- students (EYFS, primary, secondary, post-16)
 - all staff including teaching and associate staff as well as staff employed via third party arrangements
 - visitors, volunteers, and contractors
 - external providers operating on school grounds
 - any other persons known to be on site
- 2.5 The policy covers all aspects of fire safety and evacuation, including planning, roles and responsibilities, training, drills, personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs), communication protocols, and post-incident review procedures.
- 2.6 The policy applies during normal operating hours and any time the site is occupied for relevant activities, including lettings, extracurricular events, and holiday provision.
- 2.7 This policy does not include information about lockdown, shelter in place or invacuation procedures as these are detailed in a separate policy.
- 2.8 The fire safety and evacuation policy is guided by the following principles:
- safety first: the welfare and protection of students, staff, and visitors is the highest priority in any emergency
 - clarity and consistency: all procedures must be clearly understood, consistently applied across all academies, and regularly reviewed to maintain readiness
 - inclusivity safeguarding: emergency protocols must account for the diverse needs of the school community, including those with SEND, vulnerabilities, and protected characteristics, in line with the Equality Act 2010
 - preparedness through training: staff and students are entitled to regular training, drills, and communication that ensure confidence and competence in responding to emergencies
 - proportionate and contextual response: each academy must tailor its procedures to its site-specific risks, age phases, and community context, while adhering to trust-wide standards
 - legal compliance: aligns with statutory fire safety legislation and guidance, including the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, Building Regulations 2010, and DfE expectations
 - site-level ownership with trust oversight: combines strong site-based responsibility (led by principals and facilities managers) with strategic governance and auditing by our trust's estates and health & safety team
 - reflective improvement: learning from drills, incidents, and staff / student feedback is essential to strengthening policy effectiveness and fostering a culture of continuous improvement

3.0 Legal and statutory framework

- 3.1 Dixons Academies Trust is committed to ensuring the highest standards of fire safety and emergency preparedness across all schools in our trust. This section sets out the legislative requirements, core statutory guidance, and best-practice documents that inform our fire safety procedures. It ensures consistency with national regulations, Department for



Education (DfE) expectations, and the inspection frameworks of Ofsted and other statutory bodies.

3.2 Key statutory instruments

3.3 This policy is underpinned by the following primary legislation, which places legal duties on schools and academies to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005: requires each academy to have a 'responsible person' who ensures that fire risk assessments are conducted, maintained, and acted upon. Measures must be in place to reduce risk, protect escape routes, and safeguard all building occupants.
- Fire Safety Act 2021 & Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022: strengthen duties on building owners and responsible persons, including obligations to manage fire risks associated with external walls and to improve fire safety communication in multi-occupancy buildings.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974: places a general duty on employers to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of employees and those affected by school activities, including fire safety.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: requires appropriate emergency procedures to be established, with competent persons appointed to support evacuation and health and safety compliance.
- Building Regulations 2010 (Part B – Fire Safety): provides the statutory basis for fire protection in building design, including structural integrity, means of escape, and fire spread containment.
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014: applies to academies and free schools; mandates that schools implement fire safety procedures, conduct fire drills, and ensure staff are trained in evacuation processes.

3.4 Core statutory and recommended guidance

3.5 Implementation of this policy reflects the following key statutory and government issued guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- EYFS Statutory Framework
- Emergency Planning and Response for Education, Childcare and Children's Social Care Settings
- Responsibilities and Duties for Schools, DfE
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations

3.6 These documents inform the design and operational delivery of procedures across all academies.

3.7 Compliance with legislation and inspection frameworks

3.8 Our trust ensures full compliance with statutory safeguarding and health and safety obligations through:

- alignment with Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework and FE and Skills Inspection Framework
- ongoing review of site-specific risk assessments and emergency plans in accordance with HSE guidance (Managing Health and Safety in Schools – HSG268)
- inclusion and accessibility planning in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, ensuring all students including those with SEND or protected characteristics are safeguarded during emergencies
- monitoring and reporting via SmartLog and internal audit processes led by our trust's health & safety team
- compliance with local fire and rescue authorities who are empowered to inspect under the Fire Safety Order
- maintaining a clear governance and assurance framework to meet legal expectations and respond to inspection bodies

3.9 Each school or college maintains a current, reviewed fire risk assessment and documented fire evacuation plan, centrally recorded and monitored by our estates centre of excellence team.

3.10 Fire drills, staff training, and alarm system maintenance are conducted in line with legal and recommended timelines, with evidence logs maintained at both local and trust level.

3.11 A central compliance dashboard is used to track fire risk actions, training completions, PEEP updates, and site safety reviews across our trust.

3.12 PFI-specific guidance and contractual compliance

3.13 Where fire safety responsibilities are shared with a PFI (Private Finance Initiative) provider, our trust applies additional standards to ensure statutory compliance is not compromised by third-party arrangements.

3.14 The following documents inform and support safe and compliant fire safety arrangements in PFI schools:



- BSI PAS 79-1:2020 – Fire Risk Assessment: Code of Practice: outlines methodology for fire risk assessments in non-domestic premises, including those managed under third-party or contractual arrangements.
- HM Government: Fire Safety Risk Assessment – Educational Premises: includes best practice guidance for coordinating fire safety where multiple duty holders are involved (e.g., under PFI).
- National Audit Office (NAO): Managing PFI Assets and Services as Contracts End (2020): offers strategic insight into compliance and service continuity in PFI environments, with focus on risk ownership and asset handover.

4.0 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 To comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and other statutory instruments, Dixons clearly defines roles and responsibilities for all individuals during a fire evacuation. These are structured at trust, academy, and individual levels to ensure preparedness, swift response, and duty of care.

4.2 All stakeholders have a part to play in maintaining a culture of preparedness, safety, and coordinated response.

4.3 Trust board and school and college trust leaders

4.4 Approve and oversee our trust-wide policy for fire safety and evacuation.

4.5 Ensure compliance with statutory requirements

4.6 Provide strategic direction and resource allocation to support training, risk assessment, and system readiness.

4.7 Monitor implementation and impact through regular reports from our trust health & safety team.

4.8 Ensure inclusion and safeguarding principles are embedded across all emergency planning.

4.9 Oversee all external communication in relation to an incident.

4.10 Responsible person (as per Fire Safety Order 2005)

4.11 Our trust designates the school and college trust leader responsible for estates as the overarching responsible person for fire safety across all academies. The school and college trust leader ensures that:

- fire safety policies are in place and compliant with the Fire Safety Act 2021 and related regulations
- all schools and colleges maintain current fire risk assessments and evacuation plans
- training, drills, and compliance checks are monitored through our trust compliance dashboard
- fire safety communication is supported and consistently implemented across the whole of our trust

4.12 Estates centre of excellence

4.13 The estates centre of excellence is responsible for:

- reviewing and quality-assuring site-level fire risk assessments
- providing guidance and training resources based on NFCC and DfE guidance
- maintaining oversight of site compliance and responding to inspections

4.14 Principal (site responsible person)

4.15 The principal has operational responsibility for ensuring fire safety in their academy. The principal is responsible for:

- ensuring fire drills are conducted at least once per term and after any significant change in occupancy or structure
- verifying that personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) are in place and communicated
- leading post-drill reviews and ensuring lessons learned are addressed
- performing and recording safety walks monthly
- ensuring all staff and visitors have read and understand the induction pack

4.16 Estates teams

4.17 The facilities team on site are responsible for:

- day-to-day management of fire safety equipment (alarms, extinguishers, signage)
- maintaining clear escape routes and ensuring access to fire exits
- coordinating with contractors and maintaining records of testing, servicing, and inspections (as per Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022)



4.18 Fire wardens

4.19 Appointed and trained staff responsible for:

- sweeping designated zones during evacuation to confirm full clearance
- reporting completion of checks to the principal or SLT at the assembly point
- assisting with the evacuation of persons with PEEPs

4.20 Teaching and associate staff

4.21 All staff are required to:

- be familiar with the location of fire exits, escape routes, and the sound of the fire alarm
- be aware of, and where to find, PEEPs for any students they work with
- evacuate immediately upon alarm activation without stopping to collect belongings
- escort and supervise students to the designated assembly point
- remain with their form / tutor group and conduct headcounts or registers
- report any missing persons to the leadership team or senior staff present
- support personnel (e.g., administrative staff, catering, cleaning teams) must follow the same evacuation protocols and support the fire wardens where appropriate.

4.22 Students

- Follow staff instructions promptly during any lockdown, shelter-in-place or evacuation.
- Remain calm and move to designated safe areas without delay.
- Avoid using mobile phones or communicating externally unless instructed.
- Report any safety concerns or missing peers to staff discreetly.
- Participate in drills and understand their role in keeping the school community safe.

4.23 Visitors, contractors, and volunteers

4.24 In line with Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, all non-permanent occupants must:

- sign in upon arrival and receive the site specific induction pack which includes fire safety instructions (including nearest exits and assembly point)
- follow staff directions during an evacuation
- if working on site as a contractor, be briefed by the facilities manager and comply with safe work protocols (including hot works permits and fire watch procedures where relevant).

4.25 Reception staff are responsible for bringing the visitor sign-in log to the assembly point to verify accountability.

4.26 PFI schools and colleges: roles, responsibilities, and legal interface

4.27 In schools or colleges operating under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract, fire safety responsibilities are shared between the school or college and the PFI Facilities Management (FM) provider, as outlined in the project agreement and FM contract. However, under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the principal remains the statutory responsible person for the site.

4.28 Principal (site responsible person)

4.29 The principal has operational responsibility for ensuring fire safety in their school or college. Duties include:

- ensuring fire drills are conducted in line with agreed timetables and after any significant change in occupancy or structure
- verifying that personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) are in place and communicated
- leading post-drill reviews and ensuring lessons learned are addressed
- performing and recording safety walks once a cycle
- ensuring all staff and visitors have read and understand the induction pack

4.30 PFI FM provider responsibilities:

- Conduct or commission the site's annual Fire Risk Assessment in accordance with PAS 79-1:2020 and the PFI contract.



- Maintain fire alarms, emergency lighting, fire doors, and extinguishers in line with statutory testing and servicing requirements.
- Provide documented evidence of compliance, maintenance logs, and action plans upon request.

4.31 Academy responsibilities:

- Review the fire risk assessment provided by the PFI partner to ensure completeness and accuracy.
- Monitor resolution of high-risk findings and escalate delays through formal PFI contract governance routes.
- Integrate the fire risk assessment actions into the school or college's evacuation plan, PEEPs, and safety drills.
- Ensure FM provider performance is regularly reviewed for compliance with the Fire Safety Act 2021, Building Regulations, and inspection readiness.

4.32 Trust oversight:

- Our trust maintains audit and intervention rights under the PFI contract governance structure.
- Where legal compliance is at risk, our trust may escalate to the Local Authority, DfE, or Fire and Rescue Service, as appropriate.
- PFI schools or colleges are held to the same compliance expectations as non-PFI academies, with risks tracked via our trust's central compliance dashboard.

5.0 Fire risk assessment

5.1 To fulfil its duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Fire Safety Act 2021, and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, our trust implements a robust fire risk assessment process across all schools and colleges. This ensures a safe environment for students, staff, and visitors, while maintaining compliance with national legislation and inspection standards.

5.2 Frequency and site-level responsibility

5.3 Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, each site must have a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment conducted by a competent person.

5.4 Our trust expectation is that a comprehensive fire risk assessment (FRA) must be conducted annually at minimum and an interim review is triggered immediately following:

- any significant structural changes or refurbishments
- a fire incident or near miss
- a change in use of space or building occupancy

5.5 The principal is the designated responsible person at the academy level. They must ensure that the FRA is completed and reviewed within the required timescales.

5.6 The facilities team supports the process by ensuring:

- outcomes are documented, shared with relevant staff, and integrated into the site's action plan
- any urgent or high-risk issues are immediately addressed in collaboration with the facilities manager and trust estates team
- access for external assessors or competent internal personnel
- relevant building plans, maintenance records, and equipment logs are available
- action plans are implemented from the FRA

5.7 PFI Schools: roles, responsibilities, and legal interface

5.8 In academies operating under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract, fire safety responsibilities are jointly managed between the academy (as occupier) and the PFI Facilities Management (FM) provider (as service contractor). While certain operational duties may be delegated through the PFI agreement, the legal obligation to ensure fire safety compliance remains with the principal, acting as the statutory 'responsible person' under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

5.9 The principal must ensure that a suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) is conducted and maintained, whether by the academy or the PFI FM provider.

5.10 Our trust's estates team retains oversight and governance responsibility for ensuring compliance across all academies,



including those under PFI.

- 5.11 This structure reflects the requirements of:
- Fire Safety Act 2021 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
 - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- 5.12 In accordance with the PFI contract and related service level agreements, the FM provider is contractually responsible for:
- commissioning or conducting the site's annual Fire Risk Assessment, compliant with BSI PAS 79-1:2020
 - maintaining fire detection systems, alarms, emergency lighting, fire doors, extinguishers, and signage in line with Building Regulations 2010 (Part B – Fire Safety)
 - ensuring all maintenance, servicing, and inspection records are up to date, retained on site, and available for trust or regulatory audit
 - addressing fire safety actions identified in the FRA in a timely and documented manner
- 5.13 The academy, led by the principal and supported by the site / facilities manager, must:
- review the FRA provided by the FM provider to ensure it is complete, relevant, and up to date
 - monitor completion of actions—especially high or intolerable risks—and escalate delays via PFI contract governance mechanisms
 - ensure PEEPs (personal emergency evacuation plans) are completed and aligned with the FRA, with input from the FM provider if access or lift systems are relevant
 - integrate PFI fire safety obligations into evacuation planning, drills, and training to ensure coordination between academy staff and FM personnel
- 5.14 Our trust's estates and health & safety team retains the right to audit any FRA, system records, or site condition reports in PFI academies.
- 5.15 Any breach of statutory duty, unresolved safety risk, or delay in action implementation may be escalated through:
- the PFI contract governance board
 - the Local Authority (as contracting authority)
 - the Department for Education (DfE)
 - the Local Fire and Rescue Authority, if there is an immediate threat to life safety

6.0 Fire evacuation plans

6.1 A proactive approach to emergency planning is essential to ensure the safety of all individuals on site. Each academy within our trust must implement robust, site-specific risk assessments and plans that address a wide range of threats, account for individual needs, and promote inclusive safeguarding.

6.2 Frequency and site-level responsibility

6.3 Each academy must complete a trust-approved plan for fire evacuation, led by the health and safety team and in consultation with the principal.

6.4 Our trust expectation is that the plans must be reviewed annually at a minimum and an interim review is triggered immediately following:

- any significant structural changes or refurbishments
- a relevant incident of near miss
- a change in use of space or building occupancy

6.5 The principal is the designated responsible person at the academy level. They must ensure that the plan is completed and reviewed within the required timescales.

6.6 These plans must:

- identify safe zones, evacuation routes, and communication methods
- identify and assess credible threats relevant to the site and local area



- reflect the site's unique layout, staffing, and student profile
 - be reviewed after significant changes, incidents, or drills
 - be stored centrally and monitored via SmartLog for compliance and audit purposes
- 6.7 Early years and post-16 provisions must include tailored sub-assessments reflecting the needs and contexts of these settings.
- 6.8 The facilities team supports the process by ensuring:
- any urgent or high-risk issues are immediately addressed in collaboration with the facilities manager and trust estates team
 - access for external assessors or competent internal personnel
 - relevant building plans, maintenance records, and equipment logs are available
- 6.9 Safeguarding and welfare considerations**
- 6.10 Emergency planning must prioritise the wellbeing and safeguarding of all students. This includes:
- ensuring drills are age-appropriate and take into account the needs and experience of the students
 - minimising distress to students with anxiety, trauma history, or safeguarding concerns
 - recording any adaptations for individuals to ensure all students can be safe in an emergency
 - embedding post-incident wellbeing support, including access to counselling, opportunities for reflection, and staff debriefs
- 6.11 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be involved in reviewing procedures to ensure safeguarding risks are fully considered.
- 6.12 Inclusive provision for SEND and vulnerable learners**
- 6.13 Fire evacuation plans must be accessible and appropriate for all students. Each academy must:
- identify students who may need additional support
 - develop individual action plans (e.g. within Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) or Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)) outlining roles, safe zones, and communication strategies
 - train staff in how to support students with SEND or other vulnerabilities during emergencies
 - provide alternative or adapted drill participation for students where required, with rationale documented and reviewed

7.0 Fire prevention and detection systems

- 7.1 Effective fire prevention and early detection are critical to ensuring the safety of all building occupants and meeting our trust's legal duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Fire Safety Act 2021, and the Building Regulations 2010 (Part B). Our trust ensures that every school or college is equipped with reliable, well-maintained systems and equipment to detect, alert, and suppress fires, supported by rigorous inspection, testing, and recordkeeping.
- 7.2 Fire alarm and detection system**
- 7.3 Each school or college must be fitted with a fire detection and alarm system that:
- meets the requirements of BS 5839-1:2017 (fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings)
 - is designed appropriately for the size, use, and occupancy of the building
 - covers all teaching spaces, corridors, plant areas, and high-risk rooms (e.g. kitchens, science labs)
- 7.4 Key expectations:
- weekly alarm tests conducted by the site or facilities manager, with outcomes recorded.
 - any faults or false activations are reported, investigated, and resolved promptly.
 - alarms must be audible throughout the building, with visual indicators in high-noise or hearing-impaired areas.
- 7.5 Firefighting equipment and fire blankets**
- 7.6 Fire extinguishers must be:
- positioned in line with risk type (e.g. CO₂ for electrical areas, foam for general use)



- mounted securely and easily accessible
 - inspected annually by a competent contractor and visually checked monthly by site staff
- 7.7 Fire blankets are required in:
- kitchen areas
 - food tech rooms
 - any designated cooking zones
- 7.8 Staff must not fight fires unless trained and it is safe to do so. Evacuation remains the priority.
- 7.9 Emergency lighting, fire doors and signage**
- 7.10 Emergency lighting must:
- mainly comply with BS 5266-1:2016 and provide illumination of escape routes and fire exit doors during power failure
 - be subject to completed and logged monthly function tests and annual full-duration tests
- 7.11 Fire doors must:
- be clearly labelled, self-closing, and kept free from obstruction or wedging
 - be subject to weekly visual inspections and annual inspections by a competent person
 - have intact and functioning intumescent seals and closers
- 7.12 Fire exit signs must be:
- photoluminescent or illuminated
 - clearly visible from all occupied areas
 - compliant with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
 - escape route maps must be displayed at key locations, especially in multi-storey or high-occupancy buildings.
- 7.13 Routine maintenance and recordkeeping**
- 7.14 All fire prevention and detection systems must be subject to routine maintenance schedules, in accordance with:
- manufacturer specifications
 - statutory regulations
 - trust health and safety policies
- 7.15 Recordkeeping in relation to this maintenance includes:
- fire alarm test logs (weekly)
 - fire extinguisher service certificates (annually)
 - emergency lighting tests (monthly and annual)
 - fire door inspection reports
 - fire risk assessment action logs
 - contractor maintenance reports
- 7.16 Records must be retained for a minimum of five years and be available for inspection.
- 7.17 PFI schools and colleges: roles, responsibilities, and legal interface**
- 7.18 In PFI schools and colleges, fire safety systems are typically maintained by the PFI facilities management (FM) provider, but legal accountability remains with the school or college principal as the 'responsible person' under the Fire Safety Order.
- 7.19 The PFI FM provider is responsible for:
- maintaining, testing, and servicing fire alarm and detection systems, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, fire doors and fire stopping systems
 - ensuring statutory compliance with BS 5839, BS 5266, and Building Regulations Part B
 - providing documentation, service logs, and fault rectification reports to the school or college and / or our trust upon request
- 7.20 The school or college is responsible for:



- monitoring the PFI provider’s performance and escalate delays or non-compliance via the contractual governance structure
 - ensuring weekly alarm checks and fire door inspections are supported or conducted, as per PFI agreement terms
 - verifying that contractor actions align with FRA outcomes and trust policy requirements
 - coordinating PFI involvement in evacuation drills and incident responses
- 7.21 Our trust is responsible for the continued oversight of health and safety. The estates centre of excellence retains the right to audit PFI-maintained systems, regardless of contractual ownership and where the FM provider fails to meet compliance standards, our trust will escalate through:
- PFI contract management boards
 - the Local Authority (as contract holder)
 - DfE or Fire Authority (if safety is compromised)

8.0 Phase and context specific considerations

8.1 Early years and primary-specific protocols

- 8.2 Procedures should be developmentally appropriate and emotionally safe.
- 8.3 EYFS staff must always maintain visibility and close supervision.
- 8.4 Visual cues or familiar routines (e.g. story time, quiet play) should be used to help younger children settle.
- 8.5 Headcounts and staff ratios must be maintained, and adjustments for students with additional needs must be in place.

8.6 Post-16 specific protocols and considerations

- 8.7 Post-16 students may be in unstructured, unsupervised or off-site areas during an evacuation.
- 8.8 Students must be briefed in advance on where to go and how to respond if not in a supervised lesson.
- 8.9 Site-specific maps must include all post-16 areas and external pathways.
- 8.10 Systems such as SMS check-ins, digital attendance logs, or self-reporting via Teams may be used to confirm their safety. Emergency signals and check-in protocols (e.g. secure messaging or SMS) must be clearly communicated.

8.11 SEND specific considerations

- 8.12 Students with SEND may need tailored support during incidents.
- 8.13 Each identified student must have an individual action plan (e.g. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)) outlining:
- safe locations
 - communication strategies
 - assigned support staff.
 - sensory or mobility accommodations
- 8.14 Staff must be aware of these plans and trained in how to apply them calmly and effectively.
- 8.15 Adjustments may include:
- visual supports (e.g. now / next boards, social stories)
 - sensory tools or noise-cancelling aids
 - physical assistance or buddy systems

9.0 Communication during and after an incident

- 9.1 The principal or major incident coordinator is responsible for initial and ongoing contact with emergency services during an incident.
- 9.2 No direct contact should be made with parent / carers during an incident. Post-incident communication will be coordinated by the principal and our trust’s communications centre of excellence.
- 9.3 Only school and college trust leaders or communications centre of excellence are authorised to engage with the media.



- 9.4 All communications must be documented and retained for a minimum of three years to ensure safeguarding and audit compliance.
- 9.5 During incidents, all staff and students must refrain from posting on social media. Misinformation can escalate panic and compromise safety; only authorised messages should be shared publicly.
- 9.6 Post-incident briefings will include clear updates to dispel rumours and provide reassurance to parents and the community.

10.0 Training, drills and exercises

- 10.1 To ensure a safe and effective response to emergencies, all academies must embed regular, role-appropriate training and practical exercises into their operational routines. This includes induction, refresher training, scenario-based drills, and awareness education aligned with national guidance and statutory duties.
- 10.2 All staff must receive fire safety and evacuation training as part of their induction. Annual refresher training is mandatory for all employees and should include:
- detail of policies and procedures
 - information about site-specific plans and procedures
 - details of inclusive support for SEND and vulnerable students
 - key roles (e.g. DSLs, reception staff, estates teams) must complete role-specific training and participate in simulations
- 10.3 All students must participate in termly drills unless exempted with a documented rationale. Outcomes must be recorded in SmartLog and used to inform local risk assessment updates and training refinements.
- 10.4 Academies must train staff and students to respond flexibly, particularly in open-access areas (e.g. playgrounds, corridors).
- 10.5 Each academy must conduct at least one fire evacuation drill per term. Drills must:
- include a range of scenarios (e.g. lunch, unstructured time)
 - be evaluated using a standardised trust-wide form
 - involve a debrief for staff and, where appropriate, students

11.0 Safeguarding and mental health support

- 11.1 The physical safety of students and staff is the immediate priority during any emergency. However, safeguarding must also extend to emotional and psychological wellbeing. All academies must embed trauma-informed, inclusive post-incident support to reduce anxiety, build resilience, and maintain a safe, supportive learning environment.

11.2 Psychological first aid and trauma-informed practice

- 11.3 Staff must provide psychological first aid (PFA) following a lockdown or evacuation, offering calm reassurance and emotional regulation techniques.
- 11.4 Trauma-informed approaches must underpin all post-incident support, especially for vulnerable students or those with prior adverse experiences.
- 11.5 Key actions include:
- using non-judgmental listening
 - normalising emotional reactions
 - reassuring students about safety
 - avoiding over-explanation or sensational language

11.6 Student welfare post-incident

- 11.7 All students must be offered space to reflect, talk, or decompress after a lockdown or evacuation event.
- 11.8 Follow-up should include:
- circle-time discussions (EY / primary) or tutor group conversations (secondary)
 - individual check-ins for high-anxiety or at-risk students
 - access to wellbeing or pastoral staff for targeted support



11.9 Parents / carers should be informed of the event, reassured of student safety, and advised of any observed signs of distress to monitor at home.

11.10 Staff wellbeing and debriefing

11.11 Staff involved in an incident must have access to structured debrief sessions.

11.12 Line managers or senior leadership should facilitate reflection, clarify events, and identify any residual stress. Where needed, referrals can be made to internal wellbeing champions or external support services.

11.13 Staff feedback should be used to improve future drills and protocols.

11.14 Referral pathways for ongoing support

11.15 Where a student or staff member continues to experience distress following an incident, clear referral pathways must be followed:

- students: DSL, pastoral teams, SENCO, school counsellor, or CAMHS referral (as appropriate)
- staff: access to our trust's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or occupational health services

11.16 Safeguarding disclosures linked to the event must be recorded and actioned in accordance with KCSIE and local safeguarding protocols.

11.17 SEND and mental health adaptations

11.18 Students with SEND or known mental health needs must receive individualised post-incident check-in and support, where necessary led by the SENCO and pastoral staff. This support may be provided by mental health professionals working within the academy already, such as Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) or counsellors, and referral to external agencies should be made if needed.

11.19 Reasonable adjustments may include:

- reduced timetable or quiet space access
- support from trusted adults
- sensory regulation activities
- use of social stories or visual debriefs for understanding.

11.20 Any adaptations or observations must be recorded and reviewed with parents / carers and relevant professionals.

12.0 Post incident procedures

12.1 After any procedure activation, a structured post-incident response is essential to support recovery, ensure accountability, and strengthen future preparedness.

12.2 A formal debrief must be conducted within 48 hours of the incident, led by the principal and involving key staff. A comprehensive account must be completed using SmartLog as soon as possible after the incident. Reports should document:

- the nature of the threat
- actions taken (including timings)
- staff roles and decisions
- relevant communication logs (internal and external)
- any safeguarding concerns raised
- lessons learned and policy revisions

12.3 All incidents must be reviewed to identify lessons learned and required changes to local procedures or trust-wide policies. Outcomes may include:

- amendments to signals or communication methods
- adjustments to drill routines or safe zone locations
- additional staff training needs

12.4 Revisions must be reflected in updated risk assessments, action plans, and included in the next scheduled staff training cycle.



13.0 Data protection and information sharing

13.1 All emergency procedures must uphold the principles of data protection, ensuring that personal data is handled lawfully, fairly, and securely. Our trust is committed to maintaining compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), even during crisis response.

13.2 Student privacy and emergency data

13.3 Access to student data (e.g. medical needs, EHCPs, contact details) during emergencies is strictly limited to staff with a legitimate safeguarding or operational need.

13.4 Emergency contact information and individual risk assessments must be kept up to date and securely accessible to designated personnel (e.g. DSL, SENCO, first aiders, SLT).

13.5 Any additional data collected during incidents (e.g. incident logs, welfare notes) must be recorded and retained securely on approved systems such as CPOMS or SmartLog.

13.6 Information sharing during emergencies

13.7 During a critical incident, information may be shared with emergency services, local authorities, or safeguarding partners where it is necessary to protect life, safety, or welfare.

13.8 Such sharing must follow the principles of:

- necessity
- proportionality
- timeliness
- security

13.9 Staff must not share any personal or incident-related information via unauthorised channels (e.g. personal phones, social media, or messaging apps).

13.10 A record must be kept of all external data disclosures made during or after an incident.

14.0 Monitoring and review

14.1 Consistent with legal duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, this section outlines how our trust ensures continuous improvement, compliance assurance, and statutory fulfilment in fire safety management through structured review and audit practices.

14.2 This policy will ordinarily be reviewed every year to ensure its continued appropriateness to current legislative, and organisational requirements.

14.3 All academies must undertake an annual audit of their fire safety and evacuation arrangements.

14.4 Audits must assess:

- physical security of access points
- functionality of communication systems
- staff training and student awareness
- accuracy of risk assessments and safe zone plans

14.5 Findings must be logged and actions tracked via SmartLog. Our trust health and safety team may conduct spot checks.

14.6 Serious incidents or identified compliance risks must be escalated immediately through our trust's risk management framework.

14.7 PFI schools and colleges: roles, responsibilities, and legal interface

14.8 The school or college remains the 'responsible person' under the Fire Safety Order, regardless of PFI partnership status.

14.9 PFI facilities management (FM) providers must supply records of:

- Alarm servicing and tests
- Fire door inspections



- Evacuation system faults and repairs

14.10 Annual audits at PFI schools must include:

- A joint walk-through with the FM provider
- Access to the PFI helpdesk / CAF system logs
- Review of any unresolved fire risk actions from the PFI risk register

14.11 If the PFI contract specifies that the FM performance compromises fire compliance, issues must be formally raised via:

- The PFI contract governance process
- The DfE's Good Estate Management for Schools (GEMS) escalation protocol