



Fire Safety Policy St. Thomas' C.E. Primary School



This guidance note has been produced so that all staff can gain an understanding of certain basic rules for fire safety in schools. Following this guide should assist those concerned in complying with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Building Control legislation. Disregard for legislation can obviously lead to the "Responsible Person" e.g. the Head Teacher or any person who is knowingly negligent being prosecuted.

Means of Escape

The most important component of fire safety strategy in any building is the structural means of escape. St. Thomas' is provided with the appropriate number and width of escape routes to permit evacuation to a place of safety within a period of approximately two and a half minutes depending on the individual circumstances.

Door Fastenings

All doors on escape routes are easy to open without the use of a key. Where double doors are fitted both doors are easily openable without the use of a key. Where both leaves of a door are needed for means of escape they must not be secured by slip bolts at the top or bottom.

- ❖ **FIRE DOORS MUST NOT BE WEDGED OPEN.**
- ❖ **A CHECK THAT FIRE DOOR 'SELF- CLOSERS' ARE WORKING EFFICIENTLY IS COMPLETED DAILY WITH USE OF THE DOORS AS A MEANS OF EXIT, EITHER FOR PLAYTIME OR THE END OF THE DAY.**
- ❖ **All FIRE DOORS CAN BE EASILY RECOGNISED** ("Fire Door - Keep Shut" signs on each door face)

Housekeeping and Storage

Tidiness and cleanliness are essential fire prevention measures. The accumulation of rubbish and waste material is to be kept to a minimum

Corridors

Combustible storage in corridors must be in locked cupboards which should be constructed to resist fire for a minimum of 30 minutes. The doors are marked with a “**FIRE DOOR KEEP LOCKED SHUT**” sign.

Any cupboards should not obstruct the minimum exit width of 1100mm.
(**Note:** the minimum exit width in 'dead-end' corridors is 1600mm.)

Open storage of combustible materials (or any other form of obstruction) in corridors and lobbies is not to be permitted.

Sports Matting

This type of matting contains highly flammable foams and constitutes a most serious fire risk. Storage of the mats are behind sliding door which is not fire proof, however this is situated in the hall where all other doors are fire resisting doors. There is also passive smoke detection in this area to indicate a fire in the very early stages of development.

Refuse Storage

Refuse bins are not to be placed on escape routes particularly where combustible linings such as timber would greatly increase fire spread.

External bins are caged and secure at a safe distance from the building. Not all bins fit in the cage so they are situated at the side of the cage facing away from the building.

Skips located on the rear car park on a temporary basis are to be at a considerable and safe distance from the building (approximately 20 metres), if this is not possible they should be covered and located in a secure area.

Out of school hour groups

At St. Thomas' the school is open on a Saturday morning for Dodgeball, Drama and Lego groups. Holiday clubs also use the school at half terms. The same conditions apply to the use of the school outside normal hours. Fire safety information is provided to all groups using the school outside normal hours with all necessary fire escape routes available.

Surface Finishes

Legislation requires that surface finishes of walls and ceilings are of a prescribed standard. This has two important effects. Firstly it reduces the rate at which the fire can progress across ceilings and along walls and secondly it prevents burning material falling or dripping onto those escaping. At St. Thomas' all paint used on furnishings is water based.

Displaying work

Classrooms

- Areas of walls used for display should not exceed half the total floor area of the room.
- No displays to be positioned above an exit or classroom door.
- The provision of limited non-combustible ceiling decoration is permitted. This should be kept clear of lights or other ignition sources, and should not include materials which melt or drip in the event of fire, e.g. polystyrene.

Corridors and Entrances / Hallways

- The area of wall used for display must not exceed a single area of two square metres in every ten square metres of wall.
- In addition there should be a minimum of two linear metres between displays and a one metre gap should be left at doorways and adjacent to cloakrooms.
- The use of polystyrene and other similarly flammable materials are not permitted and display boards are to the standard required by the Building Regulations.
- Hanging displays are allowed provided they are up against windows and walls.

Fire Alarm System

The Fire Alarm System is a Vigilon Compact Fire System consisting of GENT smoke/heat detectors and break glass call points (BGCP's) which are provided throughout the school. The system is fitted in accordance with BS 5839 Part 1 and is an L2 type design. The main Fire Alarm Panel is located in the corridor between the year 3 and year 6 class (stock cupboard side) and is fully addressable meaning that the precise location of the detector which has actuated can be identified quickly and checked.

The system is NOT linked to a monitoring station so it relies on a staff member calling the Emergency Services once a fire has been confirmed. A zone plan is located adjacent to the panel to assist staff and the Fire & Rescue Service in the event of a real fire situation. The fire alarm system is serviced twice a year.

Evacuation Process

- On the sound of an alarm members of staff, children and visitors will leave the building by the nearest available exit. Leaving as calmly as possible and not running. Any adult that is last to leave a room is to close the door as they leave.
- Teachers will take the class list (which is situated near the class teachers desk in every classroom) out with them.
- For any member of staff with a visitor, they must escort them out of school.
- Members of staff, children and visitors are to assemble on the yard away from the building and close to the perimeter fence
- The children will line up in their class lines.
- Any support staff that are working with an intervention group, they are to escort the children out of school and to their classes. The staff member will then position themselves in their 'based' class line.
- Adults that are based in that class will be at the end of their class line facing the centre of the yard. From here they will take their class register.
- Visitors and kitchen staff are to position themselves in the centre of the yard.
- The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher will also position themselves in the centre of the yard.
- One of the above, will have their iPad with them and using the InVentry Evac APP (which is linked to the schools signing in system) will conduct an adult head count.
- The APP provides information about how many staff and visitors are in the building.
- If there are any children or visitors missing, this must be reported to the Headteacher.
- No one must attempt to re-enter the building to collect belongings or search for missing children.

Emergency Lighting

Emergency Lighting is provided to satisfy the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. It is designed and fitted in accordance with BS 5266 which requires a minimum lighting level of 1 Lux on all escape routes in an emergency situation. The emergency lighting is to be subjected to a monthly "flick test" by the caretaker. The log book will be completed indicating any defects and these will be brought to the attention of the Health & Safety lead immediately. This lighting will also be checked by the maintenance contractor twice annually.

Firefighting Equipment

St. Thomas' has 31 fire extinguishers and 3 fire blankets on site. Below is a breakdown of the extinguishers that are in the building.

Water	Water Additive	AFFF
7 – 6 litre	5 – 6 litre	4 – 6 litre
3 – 9 litre		
Dry Powder	Carbon Dioxide	
1 – 6 kg	11 – 2 kg	

The equipment is inspected by Pennine Fire & Safety Limited annually with the school's site supervisor testing them monthly.

Fire Instruction Notices

Printed notices are displayed in all classrooms stating concisely what staff and others should do if a fire is discovered or if they hear the alarm.

Arson prevention

At St. Thomas' we do as much as possible to deter arson or limit the spread of smoke and flames in the event of an accidental or deliberate fire involving school premises.

Precautions that we have put in are as follows:

1. To deter unauthorised entry onto the school premises there is a perimeter fencing that is maintained in good order and not easily breached.
2. Ensure the burglar alarm system is maintained fully functional in order to prevent unauthorised entry into the building via the easiest points of entry into school such as the windows and doors.
3. In order to reduce the opportunity for an intruder to start a fire all combustible waste is placed in the cage outside at the back of the building. All other combustible storage is locked securely.
4. To reduce the scope for potential fire damage, closing all doors at night will help to contain any fire or smoke within the room of origin, or at the very least, slow down the rate of fire growth.

Structural Alterations or Changes of Use

All proposed alterations, extensions and changes of use, e.g. use of corridor for library or work area, should be subject to consultation with Building Control prior to the commencement of work or changes. Where alterations are carried out in accordance with the Building Regulations 'exemption' rule, it would be advisable to consult the Fire Safety Officer, as any alterations could adversely affect the requirements of the fire risk assessment and may be expensive to rectify once the work has been completed.

Reviewed January 2016 by

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