



Mill Hill
EDUCATION GROUP

Fire Safety Policy

Instilling values, inspiring minds

Fire Safety Policy

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1. Introduction

Mill Hill Education Group (the 'Group') is the trading name of The Mill Hill School Foundation. It is a group of independent mainstream Schools which together educate girls and boys aged 6 months to 19 years. It currently comprises:

Senior Schools (Day and Boarding)

Mill Hill School
Mill Hill International
Cobham Hall
Heathfield School

Pre-Preparatory/Preparatory Schools (Day)

Grimsdell, Mill Hill Pre-Preparatory School*
Lyonsdown School*
Keble Prep*
St Joseph's in The Park*
Belmont, Mill Hill Preparatory School

All Through Schools

Abbot's Hill School (age 6 months to GCSE)*
Kingshott School (age 3 to GCSE)*
Westbrook Hay School (age 3 to GCSE)*
*Schools with EYFS provision

This Policy applies to all Group Schools (including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) settings. This Policy is published on the Schools' websites and is available in hard copy on request. The term 'Schools' in this Policy shall refer to each of the Group Schools, as appropriate.

The Mill Hill School Foundation is a Registered Charity. Both the Mill Hill School Foundation and Mill Hill School Enterprises are Companies Limited by Guarantee, employing both teaching and non-teaching staff. Legal responsibility rests with the Companies acting by the Court of Governors. The Head Teachers have day to day responsibility for the management of the Schools and the care of their Pupils.

The Group's Court of Governors recognises that under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 they have a legal duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all their employees, and that they have certain duties towards pupils, the public and people who use the Group's premises from time to time, these duties being implicit in the above Act.

The Group's Court of Governors also recognises that under the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2019 [the 'ISSR'] and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools [the 'NMS'] they have a duty to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The Court of Governors accepts these duties, and it will continue to be their policy to promote standards of health, safety and welfare that comply fully with the terms and requirements of the above Act, Regulations made under that Act and Approved Codes of Practice. It is considered by the Court of Governors that health and safety is a responsibility at least equal in importance to that of any other function of the Foundation.

2. Aims

The aims of the Fire Safety Policy are:

- 2.1 To ensure that Staff, Parent/s/Guardian/s/Carer/s, Pupils and Visitors to the Foundation are safeguarded from injury or death in the event of a fire.
- 2.2 To provide reasonable and appropriate systems and procedures to minimise the risk of fire and in the event of a fire to contain its spreading.
- 2.3 To minimise disruption to the Foundation's activities or damage to Foundation property or cause harm to the environment.
- 2.4 To eliminate or reduce risks from dangerous substances.
- 2.5 To comply with the ISSR, the Department for Education requirements, and relevant fire safety and fire prevention guidelines, standards and legislation including the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

3. Fire Evacuation

Each School will establish its own Fire Evacuation and Fire Risk Management procedures which will be shared with all users of the facilities. All Staff will be required to read and understand their responsibilities and know how to react in the event of fire and follow all local procedures. The local procedures of fire safety and management must form part of the staff induction process at each School and take place within the first two weeks of a person's employment commencing.

- 3.1 At least once per school term, within the first two weeks, a 'Fire Evacuation Practice' should be done during the school day at each school, unless an extension period has been agreed by the Director of Operations in advance. Apart from the first fire drill of the academic year (which may be announced to Staff and Pupils in advance), all the other drills during the year should be unannounced where possible, and all records retained.
- 3.2 The 'Fire Evacuation Practice' will be timed by the School's Fire Officer or other senior member of Staff appointed by the Head to conduct the practice. The practice will be considered inadequate if the evacuation is not achieved in the minimum of time consistent with the difficulties inherent in the buildings, and a further practice will be held on another date until the satisfactory standard is achieved.
- 3.3 At least twice per School term, usually one within the first week of the term, a night-time fire evacuation practice and day evacuation will be held at each boarding house that is organised and supervised by the Housemaster/mistress (Mill Hill School, Mill Hill International Boarding Houses), the Director of Boarding at Cobham Hall and the Bursar at Heathfield School.
- 3.4 A record will be kept of the date and time of every fire drill, and this must also include false alarms or actual fires. The exact time it takes to clear the buildings must be recorded, and this data will be available to members of the School and the Group Health and Safety Committees.
- 3.5 The warning, in case of fire, shall be given by a siren or bell that is not used for other purposes and can easily be recognised by staff and pupils and will be heard clearly in all parts of the buildings.

- 3.6 The fire alarm system must be tested weekly and records retained, by a competent person, and the testing will be undertaken sequentially from one operating point to the next. Details will be kept of these tests for inspection purposes.
- 3.7 Any person discovering a fire should immediately raise the alarm so that evacuation procedures may commence. Upon hearing the alarm, nominated staff will summon the Fire Brigade, inform the Head and Group Health and Safety Officer and undertake whatever duties are specified in the School's Fire Evacuation procedure.
- 3.8 All Teachers or other adults in charge of a Class/Pupil/s will be responsible for seeing that the whole Class is evacuated safely along the designated evacuation route to the defined roll call area. In the event of an actual fire, any subsequent movement will be decided by the Head or designated Deputy Head or Group Health and Safety Officer or at the instruction of the Fire Brigade.
- 3.9 The Heads will ensure that there is an effective system for ensuring that class registers current to that day are available for roll call. The person responsible for bringing out the registers will be the Senior Member of Staff present or a nominated Member of Staff.
- 3.10 Signs/directions for the evacuation of Pupils and others will be displayed in a prominent place.
- 3.11 Fire safety systems, including fire alarms, fire detectors and emergency lighting, and fire safety equipment, including fire extinguishers, will be provided in accordance with the advice of the Competent Person/s appointed by the Group for Fire Safety and serviced/maintained in accordance with relevant fire safety and fire prevention guidelines, standards and legislation.
- 3.12 Arrangements will be made locally for all appliances using gas and electricity to be switched off and laboratory experiments rendered safe, as far as time and travel distance allow.
- 3.13 Fire evacuation emergency routes and fire exit doors leading from School buildings should never, under any circumstances, be locked or obstructed during School hours or at other times when persons may be in the building
- 3.14 No unauthorised person can re-enter the school buildings, under any circumstances, during a fire practice or actual fire emergency.
- 3.15 Visitors will be provided with fire safety information through the written information given on the Visitor's Badge issued when signing in at the school or by a fire briefing on their first visit to the school.
- 3.16 Mill Hill School Enterprises (MHSE), Person Designated with Fire Safety Responsibility:
 - 3.16.1 In the event of an actual fire happening in any area or facility which is being used by outside organisations or the public by arrangement with Mill Hill School Enterprises, there will be a Designated Person at each School who will be responsible for ensuring the building is evacuated safely along the designated evacuation route and that people are accounted for in the designated place for that area.
 - 3.16.2 As above, the Designated Person will also be responsible for informing the Fire Brigade, School Health and Safety Advisor and the Group Health and Safety Officer.
 - 3.16.3 Directions for the evacuation for all the buildings and facilities will be displayed in prominent places around the various buildings in use, i.e., swimming pool, sports hall, gallery etc.

3.16.4 The Designated Person should ensure that no unauthorised persons re-enter the buildings under any circumstances, during a fire practice or actual fire emergency.

3.16.5 When School buildings are let to outside organisations fire safety information will be provided to the hirer which will include information on evacuation procedure. The hirer is required to inform visitors to the building/s of the fire safety arrangements and what to do in the event of fire during their visit. Any organisation hiring the Boarding Houses (Mill Hill School/Mill Hill International/Cobham Hall/Heathfield School.) must undergo a fire drill or briefing in the first week. Its advised fire drills take place at least yearly out of School hours to test School Procedures.

4. Fire Risk Assessment

In compliance with The Management of Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Fire Risk Assessment, Schools will ensure that all non-residential and ancillary educational buildings are inspected by a competent person not exceeding every 12 months to assess fire risks at work, with an updated Fire Risk Assessment every three years or if any significant change is made to the facilities, or management of the School.

The School Health and Safety Advisor and the Group Health and Safety Officer will ensure that appropriate measures to reduce or prevent a risk identified in the written Fire Risk Assessment will be considered within its Planned Maintenance programme and reported to the Executives Health and Safety Committee.

5. Fire Safety Systems and Equipment

The Head of each School will appoint a competent person with the necessary skills and experience to assist in undertaking the measures necessary to ensure a safe working environment with regard to fire safety. The Mill Hill Education Group ('MHEG'), Senior Leadership Team may appoint Fire Safety Consultants to assist in the management of fire safety for each School. The Fire Safety Consultants may undertake Staff training, the inspection and servicing of fire safety equipment, alarms and emergency lighting for example, in order that they are maintained in line with statutory requirements.

Appointed Fire Safety Consultant/Contractors should ensure that:

- Fire alarm system should be checked at least two times per year by a competent person
- Fire extinguishers should be checked by a contractor at least yearly
- All sounders and smoke detectors should be checked by a contractor at least yearly
- Any fire systems like Ansul (fire suppression system, muster point phones should also have yearly inspections
- Any external fire staircases should be inspected every 5 years by a competent person

Schools should

- Check fire extinguishers at least monthly visual check by a competent person
- Monthly drop-down tests on emergency lighting
- Monthly checks fire doors close correctly and check doors for damage
- Check all final exit doors and routes to check they are clear and without issues

- Report any fire related issues to the School H&S Officer and Director of Operations
- Check PAT testing and electrical safety is maintained
- Ensure all electrical items used comply with UK Electrical Law and Guidance produced by the HSE
- Additional checks may be added if requested by the School's H&S Adviser, Fire Contractor or if stated in the Fire Risk Assessment
- Have a Fire Warden meeting at least yearly with key staff to discuss fire arrangements and the minutes should be included in the School's H&S Committee
- School must ensure Fire Marshals have undertaken the correct training and records kept
- Check fire procedures are displayed in prominent places around the School
- Termly fire drills are recorded any issues must be brought to the Fire Officer to review
- Termly visual check of fire exits and fire escape stairs
- Ensure all Schools have a H&S law poster with responsible person named and displayed in an area visible to all staff for reference
- The School must have sufficient trained staff with the knowledge on how to check the fire panel and reset if required and have full understanding of the fire investigation process
- A building floor plan must be located next to the fire panel to assist in identifying the area of activation. Some Schools may have a zone chart to assist in identifying activations
- Fire evacuation procedures should be displayed by the fire panel.

6. Fire Safety Training

The Group's Fire Risk Management is directed at maintaining high levels of safety awareness in both Pupils and Staff to assist in minimising as far as is practicable the risk of fire.

To enable members of Staff to carry out their important functions of both monitoring levels of fire safety within their School, and to assisting or taking charge of any fire evacuations, they are given appropriate training by competent appointed persons (see above, paragraph 5).

Fire training at Induction:

- All Staff must have read the Fire Safety Policy
- All Staff must have read the Fire Evacuation Procedure including being shown fire escape routes and fire assembly points
- All Staff must complete an online Fire Awareness Course through EduCare

Ongoing Training

- Schools should arrange for face-to-face fire briefing at least every two years
- A Fire Warden meeting including Fire Warden training should take place yearly
- Pupils should be given fire evacuation briefings at the beginning of the academic year or upon enrolment to the School
- Contractors to be given training on arrival to the facilities including identifying any fire hazards or special arrangements that may be required in order that they may undertake their role
- Additional training may be given to the Schools if directed by the Director of Operations or Health & Safety Advisor

7. Mill Hill Education Group - Competent and Responsible Persons

In accordance with the ISSR to prove that the duties are properly discharged the Foundation has appointed the following as responsible persons at the Foundation and its Schools as follows:

Competent Persons:

Keith Mainstone, Group Health and Safety Advisor.
Sean Ryan, Group Director of Operations (DO).

Responsible Persons:

The Group Director of Operations (DO) has overall responsibility for Fire Management for the Group Schools. The Heads of Schools have overall responsibility for health and safety including fire safety. Heads may nominate a 'Responsible Person' to be the designated Lead Fire Officer. This individual should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team of the School and have undertaken the appropriate training and have the necessary experience to fulfil this role.

In order to prove that the duties under the regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 are properly discharged Schools must keep records of the following:

- The annual Fire Risk Assessments review for the buildings undertaken by the competent person.
- The Fire Safety Policy.
- Copies of School Fire Procedures and arrangements.
- Certificates for the installation and maintenance of fire-fighting systems and equipment.

The 'Responsible Person' for the Group and the Schools will monitor the operation of a suitable system for the maintenance of clear emergency routes and exits (with doors opening in the direction of escape), signs, notices, emergency lighting where required, fire detectors, alarms and extinguishers

8. Review

This Policy shall be reviewed annually by the Court of Governors, and/or following any concerns, and/or updates to national guidance or procedures. The Policy is subject to Governor review and approval.

Last Review August 2025
Next Review August 2026

This Policy was approved by the Court of Governors on 17 September 2025 by resolution of the Chair of the Court of Governors, Elliot Lipton.

Signed:



Elliot Lipton
Chair of the Court of Governors

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Mill Hill
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The Mill Hill Education Group is the brand name for The Mill Hill School Foundation.
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