



HANDEL HOUSE SCHOOL
Northholme, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. DN21 2JB
Telephone 01427 612426
Email: admin@handelhouseschool.com
W3W - cycle.proudest.series

Fire Safety Policy

and Emergency Evacuation Procedures

This policy, which applies to the whole school inclusive of the Early Years Foundation Stage, is in support of the health and safety policy and the individual health and safety assessments. This policy is publicly available on the school's website. On request a copy may be obtained from the school's office

Handel House School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

Fire Safety Statement

Handel House School is committed to providing, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe environment for pupils, staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors. Fire prevention forms an integral part of the School's overall Health and Safety Management System. The School adopts a proactive approach to fire safety through:

- Suitable fire risk assessments
- Effective maintenance of fire precautions
 - Staff training
 - Regular fire drills
- Monitoring of emerging fire risks
- Continual review of procedures

The overriding priority in any fire emergency is the preservation of life.

Legal Status:

- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended)
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
- Independent School Standards (England) Regulations 2014 (as amended)
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- DfE Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Duties for Schools
- Home Office Fire Safety Risk Assessment Guidance for Educational Premises
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Applies to:

- the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the out of school care and extra-curricular activities inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours;
- all staff (teaching and support staff), the proprietor, supply staff and volunteers working in the school

Related Documents:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Accessibility Plan

Monitoring and Review:

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher (who is also the Proprietor) will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed:

Date: July 2026

Mr Mark Raisborough
Headteacher/Proprietor

This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Headteacher/Proprietor of the School and the School Advisory Board in July 2026 and will next be reviewed no later than July 2027 or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Fire Safety

Our Fire Safety Policy and Procedures are based on risk assessment, a duty to maintain fire precautions which are for the use of fire fighters and new duties on fire authorities for fire safety, investigation and testing. The fire safety arrangements in Handel House School have been dictated by the provisions of the Fire Safety Acts, where, in such premises, there are at any one time either:

- a) more than twenty people at work; or
 - b) more than ten people at work elsewhere than on the ground floor,
- then the owner or occupier of the premises is required to apply for a fire certificate.

On establishing Handel House School, the Headteacher/Proprietor has undertaken a fire risk assessment in accordance with the Fire Precautions Workplace Regulations. The Headteacher/Proprietor ensures compliance and this is viewed as a minimum standard to be achieved. The Headteacher/Proprietor will ensure any further modifications required as a result of changes in legislation or established best practice are approved by the local fire authority. In accordance with legislation, there is an annual Health and Safety Fire Risk Assessment. The last full fire risk assessment was carried out in November 2025 by Prohas Health and Safety Consultancy and Support Services, Gainsborough

In compliance with both regulations and best practice, the Proprietor has ensured that:

- each week, 1 of 4 fire call points is tested;
- adequate and suitable fire extinguishing appliances are provided and maintained;
- suitable means of fire detection and signalling of the presence of fire is provided and maintained;
- adequate means of escape are provided and maintained;
- suitable signs designating fire fighting equipment and means of escape are provided and maintained;
- a fire logbook is provided and maintained;
- fire training is provided to employees;
- evacuation drills are undertaken at least termly and the results recorded;
- suitable fire procedures are published in respect of:
 - o Action to be taken on discovering a fire.
 - o Action to be taken on hearing the alarm.
 - o Responsibility of key personnel in the event of a fire.

Emergency Contact

A Pro-forma for emergency contact telephone numbers is issued to parents at the beginning of each academic year and this is to be completed and returned to the School Office as soon as possible. Notification of any change to these details must be reported to the School Office. Every employee at the School has been asked to complete a form giving details of next of kin, emergency contact numbers, and relevant details about medication. If they do not wish to do this, a "disclaimer" must be signed.

Were there ever to be a disaster or crisis affecting the staff and/or pupils of the School, there would be a need for easy access to certain data. It would also be essential for considered procedures to be pre-determined to avoid the risk of ill-considered action being taken during a time of stress.

- The primary aim of our Fire Policy is to safeguard life and to this end the Headteacher/Proprietor will assume this responsibility. Policies and procedures are available for all staff who are required to be familiar with and apply them.
- Regular health and safety inspections are carried out by the Headteacher, as the HSM, and the Advisory Board
- Advice is taken from the Fire and Rescue Service and appropriate specialist advisors.
- Problems will be noted, prioritised and acted upon appropriately.
- Outside teachers, visitors and contractors will be: asked to sign in and out, required to read, take note of and follow our emergency procedures. Each will be verbally advised by the Headteacher/Proprietor where call points are if the alarm is to be raised, and where to assemble in the event of an evacuation, and through the appropriate exit routes.
- Public events are assessed for all risks including fire.
- Fire Drills are held regularly, at least once a term and timed. Records of fire drills are kept in the Log Book in the School Office.
- Escape routes are clearly labelled and lead to a safe assembly point by the double gates on Charles Street.
- In the event that staff and pupils need to evacuate the site completely, the double gates can be easily unlocked; our 'safe' location is the Gainsborough Methodist Church, North Street. DN21 2HS. 01427 612913.
- All staff and pupils are instructed on action to be taken in the event of an emergency.
- Every room has prominently displayed clear notices describing the action to be taken.

- Fire doors are clearly labelled and unlocked.
- Clear and prominent signage directs visitors to the nearest evacuation route.
- The fire marshal for each floor checks that areas are evacuated and is on hand to assist those with a disability.
- Arrangements are in place for summoning the Fire and Rescue Service.
- A roll call is taken using class registers, staff signing in book and visitors book
- The alarm system is tested weekly, is distinguishable from the lesson bell and is audible in every part of the premises.
- The alarm is never switched off and is routinely serviced.
- All the fire fighting equipment is recommended by the Fire and Rescue Service and checked on a regular basis.
- Electrical equipment is regularly checked and maintained by an approved electrical contractor.
- Regulations concerning the control and storage of flammable liquids are followed.
- All appropriate risk assessments are in place and checked by the responsible person for Health and Safety

Fire-fighting equipment will be regularly serviced and clearly labelled. Signage is regularly checked and updated in line with current legal requirements.

There is a fire drill/emergency evacuation procedure every term. Neither staff nor children are warned of an impending practice. It is essential therefore, that each member of staff is aware of what the evacuation arrangements are for each area of the School. These are detailed in this document. In case of a fire or bomb threat, evacuation procedures will be tested each term. The evacuation and safety of visitors and contractors will be the responsibility of the person who they are visiting or working for.

The School has:

- Fire Safety Policy and Procedures
- Fire Safety Audit
- Evacuation Procedures

In accordance with statutory requirements there is an annual fire safety audit which includes checking all fire fighting equipment by an approved contractor and records maintained. All emergency lighting is subject to weekly functional tests and an annual full-duration test in accordance with relevant British Standards with records maintained.

Fire Drill

Staff are also informed of the location of the fire extinguishers. All employees and voluntary helpers are provided with a personal copy of the fire drill procedures including:

- evacuation from the premises;
- exit routes;
- checking the children are present;
- their responsibilities regarding the children they are supervising.

A copy of these procedures is also available in each classroom.

Execution

Our fire safety policy regime mirrors closely the Handel House School health and safety (H&S) systems and procedures. Fire safety is by definition a subset of the current H&S systems and procedures. Our School's H&S Policy starts with a statement that the Headteacher/Proprietor of the School has a duty to take reasonable precautions to safeguard the lives of pupils, employees and other visitors.

Allocation of Responsibilities

Responsibilities are as follows:

	Tasks	Comments
Proprietor	Responsible in law for what happens on the premises	
Responsible Person (Headteacher)	Plans, implements, monitors and reviews the policy	

Fire Marshalls	Assist the Responsible Person in the Management of H&S including fire precautions	Members of staff appointed by the Headteacher
Employees	Comply with H&S policy and take reasonable steps to protect themselves and colleagues at work.	
Visitors	Should be briefed on any H&S issues that will affect them, as required, when they are on site	

Risk Assessment. The Responsible Person (Headteacher) produces the risk assessment for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions that he needs to take. The Risk Assessment is based on an understanding of the relevant legislation, guidance and good practice in the fire prevention field. The overall risk has been assessed and agreed with the Fire and Rescue service

Fire Precautions Maintenance

The following arrangements have been made for maintenance:

	Item	By whom
Ongoing	Check signage, safety clips on fire extinguishers, ensure that fire doors are not wedged open, Emergency lighting	MR
Weekly	Test fire panels on Thursday's between 1315 -1330 hrs	MR
Bi-annually	Test fire panels	External Contractor
Annually	Test all fire extinguishers, check all fire blankets. Replace any missing fire evacuation signs.	External Contractor - Right Action

Smoking and Vaping

Handel House School operates a strict smoke-free and vape-free site.

Smoking, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes and roll-up tobacco, is prohibited throughout all school buildings, grounds and entrances. The use of electronic cigarettes (vapes), heated tobacco products and any other nicotine delivery devices is also prohibited anywhere on the school site. Visitors, contractors and hirers must comply with this requirement. Disposable vaping devices must never be disposed of in general waste bins within the School premises due to the fire risk associated with lithium batteries. Any breach of this policy will be managed under the School's disciplinary procedures or visitor management procedures.

Lithium-ion Batteries

Handel House School recognises that lithium-ion batteries present an increased fire risk if damaged, incorrectly charged or improperly stored.

Examples include: laptops, tablets, mobile phones, power banks, rechargeable tools, vaping devices

To reduce risk:

- Only manufacturer-approved chargers will be used
- Batteries will not be charged overnight

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- Batteries must not be charged on escape routes
- Damaged, swollen or overheating batteries must be removed from service immediately
- Charging equipment will be regularly inspected
- Batteries will not be covered whilst charging
- Charging will be undertaken in well ventilated areas away from combustible materials
- Defective batteries will be disposed of through an approved recycling contractor

Personal e-bikes and e-scooters will not be used to travel to and from School;

Any signs of battery overheating, smoke, unusual odours or swelling must be reported immediately to the Headteacher.

Electrical Fire Prevention

Handel House School will minimise electrical fire risks by ensuring:

- Electrical equipment testing (EET) where appropriate: (next due May 2027)
- Damaged electrical equipment is removed from use immediately
- Extension leads are only used where necessary
- Multi-plug adaptors are avoided unless surge protected
- Staff do not overload sockets
- Fixed wiring inspections at prescribed intervals: (next due April 2027)

Emerging Fire Risks

Handel House School recognises that changing weather conditions, increasing electrical equipment and rechargeable battery technology may increase fire risks. Fire risk assessments will take account of:

- Prolonged hot weather
- Increased use of portable electrical equipment (staff and pupils may not bring personal items into school for use unless they have been subject to an EET)
- Lithium battery charging
- Seasonal hazards
- Temporary electrical installations

Fire Doors

Fire doors are essential life safety equipment. As such, fire doors must:

- Remain closed at all times unless fitted with an approved automatic release mechanism
- Never be wedged open
- Remain unobstructed
- Be inspected regularly for damage
- Have self-closing devices maintained

Fire Alarm Faults

Any defect affecting:

- Fire alarms
- Emergency lighting
- Fire extinguishers
- Fire doors
- Smoke detectors

must be reported immediately to the Headteacher. Where a fault significantly reduces fire protection, interim control measures will be implemented until repairs have been completed.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

Where a pupil, employee or visitor may require assistance to evacuate safely, a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) will be developed. PEEPs will consider:

- Mobility impairments
- Temporary injuries
- Sensory impairments
- Medical conditions
- Pregnancy

- Neuro diversity where appropriate

Relevant staff will receive instruction regarding any agreed evacuation arrangements.

Contractors

Contractors working on site shall:

- Comply with the School's Fire Safety Policy
- Report hot works before commencing
- Obtain permission before undertaking welding, grinding or soldering
- Maintain clear escape routes
- Remove combustible waste daily

Hot works will be subject to a permit-to-work system where appropriate. Anyone carrying out any hot works on site should return to the work and check it for cooling down 15 minutes after completion and before leaving site.

Housekeeping

Good housekeeping is seen to considerably reduce fire risk. All staff must ensure that:

- Escape routes remain clear
- Combustible waste is removed regularly
- Storage is kept away from electrical equipment
- Combi-Boiler room (girls' cloakroom) remains free from storage as far as is practicable
- External bins are located away from the building where practicable (8m)

Records

Handel House School keeps full records of the following:

- Weekly fire alarm tests
- Emergency lighting tests
- Fire extinguisher checks and servicing
- Fire door inspections
- Fire drills
- Staff training
- Fire risk assessments
- Maintenance certificates
- Fire alarm servicing
- PEEP Records

Training

All staff receive basic fire safety awareness training and attend refresher sessions.

Key staff in the individual school buildings receive more detailed instruction through Fire Marshal Training provided by 1st Attendance Training Group. Pupils are given instruction by their form tutors during the first week of the Autumn term on their actions to be taken in the event of a fire. Fire drills are planned each term to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's evacuation procedures. The findings of the drill are reported to staff through feedback in the weekly staff meeting and any significant findings are brought to the attention of the School Advisory Board member responsible for Health and Safety (Mr Paul Cook). Any conclusions and remedial actions are recorded and implemented.

Fire Safety and Use of Fire Extinguishers:

Last Date: July 2026

Next Date: July 2027

Fire Marshal Training:

Last Date: July 2026

Next Date: July 2027

Practice Evacuation

There will be a number of practice evacuations each year. The aim of the practices is to familiarise children and staff with evacuation procedures, a full evacuation is considered successful when a building is evacuated within 2 and half minutes. The practice supervisor will set off the fire panel and monitor the time it takes to evacuate the buildings, these details are to be passed to the Responsible Person for record keeping purposes. The following practices should occur every term:

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	Detail	By whom
Whole School	One daytime evacuation practice	Headteacher

Action on Hearing a Fire Evacuation Bell. The following actions should occur when anyone hears a fire evacuation bell:

- **Evacuate** all buildings and carry out roll call
- **Confirm** what has happened; decide whether to call the fire brigade
- **Control** re-entering buildings. The Headteacher should investigate all false alarms, recording all details for record keeping purposes.
- **Fire fighting** The aim is to evacuate the buildings as quickly as possible. Staff are prohibited from fighting fire unless all available exits are blocked.

Annual Review

This document will be reviewed annually as part of the H&S Annual Report.

Fire risk assessments will also be reviewed whenever:

- Significant alterations are made
- Occupancy changes
- After a fire
- Following a near miss
- Where new hazards are introduced
- Following significant changes in legislation

Overview of hazards, people at risk, level of risk, records and review

1. Identification of hazards.

- General introduction.** With only a small number of people likely to be affected it is relatively easy to keep risk management under continual review.
- Sources of ignition.** The number of sources of ignition are relatively few. There are no hot surfaces, electrical sockets etc are constantly kept under review to minimise risk, there are few chances of mechanically generated sparks – contractors are supervised by School staff
- Sources of fuel.** The School is on both mains gas and electric supply.
- Sources of oxygen.** Doors are kept shut to reduce the levels of draft (an accelerant) and slow the spread of fire; there are no stored oxygen containers on site. All doors are fire doors and must not be wedged open.

2. People at risk.

- By day.** By day the numbers fluctuate and although at this stage we are a very small School with a high staff ratio there are often external people using the premises.
- By night.** At night there is nobody in the School.
- During holidays.** During the holiday periods there could again be occasions when the School is used for activities and continuing professional development but these numbers are low.
- People especially at risk.** At this stage, there are no people with a registered disability in this category. There are no pupils or staff with English as an Additional Language where English is **not** their first language.. All signage is in the English language and all instructions likewise. Handel House monitors the language of all new students and staff to the school.

Evaluation of risk.

- e. **Overall evaluation of risk.** The overall evaluation of the risk of a fire starting is assessed as **LOW** because there are so few ignition sources and combustible materials are kept away from them. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the School premises or the entrance area. Electrical equipment is inspected regularly and tested, and the chance of arson is assessed as low due to the security arrangements of the School.
- f. **Evaluation of risk to people from fire.** Risk to people from fire is low.
- g. **Reduction of fire hazards.** All adults are briefed on induction and annually on the importance of good housekeeping to prevent the build-up of combustible material.
- h. **Reduction of risk to people.**
 - i. **Detection and warning.** The premises are well protected with fire detection equipment, emergency lighting and warning bells.
 - j. **Fire fighting.** Most staff are trained in using fire extinguishers, although the School policy is not to fight fire unless it is to ensure a safe evacuation. Staff should only use fire extinguishers where they have received appropriate training; the fire is very small; they have a safe means of escape; and doing so will not delay evacuation
 - k. **Fire Marshals.** All fire marshals will receive annual training.
 - l. **Escape routes.** The School ensures that main escape routes are all appropriately signed.
 - m. **Signs and notices.** Signs and notices comply with H&S (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.
- 3. **Records and Review.** The Headteacher as the Responsible Person plans, implements, monitors and reviews the fire safety policy. He is responsible for record keeping and maintaining the emergency evacuation and liaison with other interested parties.

Fire Prevention and Control

Fire Marshals

Introduction

The Headteacher is appointed as the Fire Safety Coordinator at Handel House School. He is responsible for ensuring that all procedures, precautionary measures and safety standards are clearly understood and complied with. To assist the Headteacher staff have been appointed Fire Marshals (x2)

Tasks

Fire marshals have the following tasks on the fire alarm being sounded:

- Sweep designated areas
- Check toilets where safe to do so
- Ensure fire doors close
- Report missing persons
- Report hazards identified during evacuations
- Assist the Fire and Rescue Service

Additionally, but not limited to the following, fire marshals will

- To assist the fire safety co-ordinator (Headteacher) by reporting faulty fire fighting and fire detection equipment.
- To make recommendations to improve fire safety.

Appropriate procedures are in place for ensuring that safety precautions are properly managed, formulated and disseminated to all staff. These procedures include Fire Drills and the use of Fire Extinguishers. A copy of the School evacuation procedure is available in all key areas. There is one exit door from each room and on leaving the room the exit routes are clearly displayed. All staff, visitors and volunteers should be fully conversant with the evacuation procedures in the case of a fire/bomb threat. The procedure for this purpose at Handel House School is in full at the bottom of this document.

Bomb Threats

The aim is to prevent bomb or incendiary attacks, or when this is not possible, to minimise their effects in buildings to which members of the public must have access. This must be done without imposing unacceptable restrictions on them and the

Proprietor must weigh the seriousness of the threat against the need to maintain business as usual and decide the extent to which counter measures should be adopted.

Public Access

Consideration should be given to dividing the areas to which the public usually require access from the rest of the building. The rest of the building can then be made a secure area.

Package Bombs and Hoaxes

Postal bombs are unlikely to be in large parcels, rather in flat packages. Staff should be on their guard for:

- The post mark – especially foreign, and any name/address of sender.
- The writing – especially of foreign style.
- Stains – these could be sweating explosives
- The sound – if the parcel rattles, ticks, etc.

Staff should not:

- Touch
- Move
- Open
- Immerse in water
- Place suspicious items in bins

But should instead:

- Isolate the area
- Inform the Headteacher immediately
- Call 999 where appropriate
- Follow police advice

Telephone Calls

These are more of a common occurrence than parcels. All members of staff should be aware of the necessary procedures should they receive such a call:

- Alert security/police immediately.
- Above all, be calm, listen carefully, and report exactly what is said.

Fire and Bomb Alerts

In the event of a fire or bomb alert the Headteacher or designated person must:

- Ring the fire alarm to activate the evacuation of the premises of all adults and children (see fire drill procedure).
- Phone 999 for the fire brigade and police.
- Check that the evacuation procedure has been followed.
- Remain at the front of the school to meet the fire brigade/police and direct them to the incident.
- All children and adults must remain outside.
- Only when the all clear has been given will registers be sent back to classes enabling children and adults to re-enter the premises.

If an alert is a practice, then the fire brigade must be informed before the evacuation of the premises takes place.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure: Fire/Bomb

- the bell will ring continuously.
- leave all bags/belongings.
- close all windows and turn off lights.
- lead out in single file and in silence.
- last person out close the door.
- go to form positions on playground by double gate on Charles Street
- wait for form tutors in register order.
- all unexplained absences to be reported to the Headteacher immediately

Once Outside:

- Form Tutors should stay with their forms, keep the children silent and check if they are present.
- Non-Form Tutors should assist the office staff in delivering registers to Form Tutors.
- Form Tutors should report to the Headteacher that all children officially recorded on registers as present are present.

- All teaching and support staff should report their presence to the Secretary.

Prevention of Arson

Arsonists in schools often start their first fires by chance. Perhaps they break into the school just for the sake of it. ("Let's break into the school," "yeah" – and the bravado and adrenaline take over).

There is no planning, no organisation. Having got inside, they can't find too much to steal, they have matches in their pocket, they see the waste paper bin and they start a fire. It all happens by chance. This chance element in arson makes some people believe that arson is the hardest of all the security risks to control.

With the number of attacks on schools rising rapidly and the number of large fires also rising fast, some credence is given to this view. But the fact that the action of most arsonists is either unplanned or badly planned does give the school a good chance of preventing the fires.

Because it seems to be easy, because they don't get caught, because of the thrill they get from the adrenaline rush, because the school seems powerless to do anything about the problem, the arsonists do it again – which is why school fires come in cycles.

Larger scale attacks – a serious attempt to burn the whole school down – normally come after the smaller-scale events. Some arson is aimed at hiding the details of another crime – although this is rare in schools.

Arsonists do not normally bring the method of starting the fire into the school – they are reliant on finding scrap paper, etc., in the school to start the fire. There are few instances of arsonists seemingly tearing up books etc. in order to create the blaze – they look for loose paper on desks, in waste bins, etc.

The school policy on arson prevention is therefore:

- As far as practicable, inflammable materials are locked away.
- All waste bins are emptied into a bin which is locked at night.
- The Headteacher makes occasional unannounced checks that the procedure is being adhered to.

Fire Drills

- Evacuation drills are carried out once a term.
- The first drill should be carried out as soon as the new year begins so that all new pupils and staff are aware of the procedures.

Fire Alarm Test

The fire alarms are tested once a week by the responsible person for Health and Safety and records are kept in the School office. The Headteacher is responsible for reporting any defect and ensuring that they are repaired.

Fire Fighting Equipment

Fire fighting equipment will be examined and tested at least once a year by a competent service engineer - Right Action

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

A separate chart states and clarifies these procedures, and is to be found in all main rooms.

The Headteacher/Proprietor will ensure that the emergency plan is reviewed on an annual basis, or sooner if changes occur that affect this plan.