READING BLUE COAT

Fire Safety Policy

Aim

This Policy and its supporting documentation is designed to demonstrate how Reading Blue Coat ("RBC") complies with its duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005 (commonly referred to as the FSO) to ensure that, where reasonably practicable, fire is prevented and that any fire risks are adequately controlled.

Objectives

To effectively manage fire safety (thereby safeguarding all persons from death or injury in the event of fire) by:

1. Minimising the risk of fire and to limit its spread;
2. Minimising the potential for fire to disrupt services, damage buildings and equipment, or harm the environment.

Legal Requirements

The FSO came into force on 1st October 2006. The purpose of the legislation is to place a greater emphasis on fire prevention by ensuring that all persons responsible for premises comply with their statutory duties and implement the general fire precautions which are needed to protect all persons from death or injury in the case of fire.

The policy and the process of managing fire safety has been developed based on guidance issued HM Government and the Articles of the FSO form 8-22.

Responsibilities

The School Fire Safety Policy forms part of the School's Fire, Health and Safety Management and extends through the whole School.

If inspected by The Fire and Rescue Authority (the enforcing authorities of the FSO), RBC will be required to provide the following:

- A Fire Risk Assessment ("FRA"),
- An emergency plan in the event of a fire, and
- Documentation and processes which evidence compliance with the FSO.

<u>Responsible Person</u>

The FSO requires that a 'Responsible Person', must be appointed who will be legally responsible for fire safety. In RBC's case this will be the school, namely the Governors. Certain day to day responsibilities can be delegated down to a 'duty holder'.

Key duties of a Responsible Person are:

- Conduct and maintain a Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs)
- Implement Fire Safety Measures
- Maintain Safety Systems
- Provide Information and Training
- Cooperate with Others

Specific responsibilities are allocated as follows:

1. Governors ensure that an appropriate policy is in place in the School and that arrangements are made for its effective implementation;
2. The Headmaster has the ultimate responsibility for the implementation and management of this policy;
3. The Bursar is responsible for the effective implementation of this Policy and its role within the School's Fire, Health and Safety managements systems and processes;
4. All employees have the responsibility to utilise their training and to cooperate with issued instruction, to ensure that the workplace is safe from fire and its effects and must not do anything that will place themselves or other people at risk.

Managing Fire Safety

RBC has appointed the Bursar as its 'duty holder'. The Bursar will:

1. Oversee the process of ensuring that effective, compliant FRAs are in place, thereby reducing the risk of fire incidences;
2. Ensure that the principles of prevention are applied as follows:
    a) avoiding risks;
    b) evaluating the risks which cannot be avoided;
    c) combating the risks at source;
    d) adapting to technical progress;
    e) replacing the dangerous by the non-dangerous or less dangerous;
    f) developing a coherent overall prevention policy which covers technology, organisation of work and the influence of factors relating to the working environment;
    g) giving collective protective measures priority over individual protective measures; and
    h) giving appropriate instructions to employees.
3. Ensure that all means of escape are properly, kept free from obstruction and are available for safe and effective use at all times when the School is occupied; and that the means of escape have adequate emergency lighting;
4. Ensure that any facilities, equipment and devices provided are maintained in efficient working order and kept in good repair;
5. Provide and maintain in working order all life safety systems and firefighting equipment including:
    a) fire detection and alarm systems;
    b) emergency lighting systems;
    c) firefighting equipment;
    d) notices and signage relating to fire procedures;
    e) Fire evacuation equipment, by taking into account the needs of any disabled users.
6. Provide appropriate instruction and training for all School staff on the action to be taken to protect people and property including regular fire evacuation practices for all the School;
7. Ensure that all staff, students, contractors, visitors and third-party hirers are made aware of and comply with the School's fire procedures;
8. Identify any special risks, e.g. the storage, process and disposal of hazardous materials, and put in place appropriate procedures to minimise the risks;
9. Implement additional emergency measures in respect of dangerous substances.
10. Liaise with third parties; the emergency services, and the School's insurers to ensure that best practice for fire prevention and procedures are in place;
11. Monitor and review this policy and its associated documentation on a regular basis so as to ensure that any new risk or alteration to regulations and guidance is addressed.

Monitoring and Testing

RBC utilises the services of various personnel and external contractors to carry out effective monitoring and testing of its duties as follows:

Area	Responsibility	Frequency
Fire Alarm	H&S Manager Property Team	Weekly
Firefighting Equipment	H&S Manager Property Team	Monthly
Emergency lighting units	Property Team	Monthly Annually
Final Exit Doors	H&S Manager	Termly
Fire Evacuation Chairs	H&S Manager	Termly
Fire Evacuation Procedure Fire Drills	H&S Manager	Termly
Fire detection and Alarm system Service	External Contractor (Currently ChurchesFire)	Quarterly
Ansul Kitchen Suppression System	C External Contractor (Currently ChurchesFire)	6 monthly
Kitchen Extract Duct Cleaning	External Contractor (Currently Hydro-X)	Annually
Fire Dampers	External Contractor (Currently Hydro-X)	Annually
Laundry Duct Cleaning	External Contractor (Currently JLA)	Annually
Fire Extinguishers Service	External Contractor (Currently RedBox Fire)	Annually
Fire Doors	H&S Manager Property Team	Annually
Fire Signage	H&S Manager	Annually
Fire Shutters	External Contractor (Currently Hart Doors)	Annually
Fire Chimney Cleaning	External Contractor (Currently JP Clarke)	Annually
FRA Review	H&S Manager	Annually
Fire Risk Assessment	External Contractor (Culhams Consultancy)	Schedule 2-5 years

Internal Monitoring and Testing

1. Final exit doors are opened and checked regularly, reviewed during termly fire drills also.
2. Means of escape routes, door mechanisms, signage, firefighting equipment are checked visually by the Health and Safety Manager on an ongoing basis.
3. A full survey of the means of escape and final exit escape doors is made at least annually by the Health and Safety Manager;
4. Fire doors are inspected at least annually by Health & Safety Manager or Property team.
5. The School fire detection and alarm system is maintained and checked by ChurchesFire on a quarterly basis;

6. The fire alarm system is tested on a weekly basis for audibility and function by the Health and Safety Manager or Property Team using different Fire Call Points each week;
7. Emergency lighting units are checked monthly and have a further three hour discharge test yearly by the Property Team.
8. Notices and Signage are updated as and when required and checked at least annually by the Health and Safety Manager;
9. Fire Extinguishers are checked, replenished or replaced annually by Red Box Ltd;

Records

A logging system is in place which contains records of fire safety issues and tests. These include:

a. fire evacuation drills;
b. unwanted, accidental or possible fire alarms;
c. hot work permits, etc;
d. the storing of hazardous materials;
e. the inspection and testing of:
    i fire detection and alarm systems;
    ii emergency lighting systems;
    iii firefighting equipment;
    iv staff training records

Records are kept documenting those actions listed above and the supporting evidence such as contractor's reports, certificates and/or invoices. These are maintained by the Health and Safety Manager and located in the Fire, Health and Safety section on the Staff Intranet and actions .

Fire Risk Assessment

The School has carried out a comprehensive Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) for each of its buildings. These assessment hard copies are kept in the Property Department and online on iProtectU where any actions raised are monitored and closed. Culham Consultancy completed a whole School FRA in 2022, and subsequent individual FRA's have been updated or created on an as needs basis (e.g. following building works).

The FRA identifies who will be at risk if there is a fire, where people may be working and who else may be at risk, either in the premises or nearby, such as members of the public, visiting contractors, etc., and where these people are likely to be located. The FRA will identify the required control measures to remove or reduce the level of risk to a tolerable level.

The FRA will be reviewed and amended annually by the Health and Safety Manager or if it is either no longer valid or if any changes are planned, such as:

1. Structural changes (alterations to the layout of the premises, erection of partitions, refurbishment etc) which may affect the spread of fire;
2. Change to the use of the premises which may affect the risk rating;
3. Change to work processes or work equipment which may introduce new fire hazards;
4. Change to the numbers of people using the premises to ensure that escape routes can accommodate the numbers safely.

The Health and Safety Manager will employ external contractors for guidance on Fire Risk Assessments and to complete new risk assessments for new buildings. A periodic full review/re-assessment of an existing Fire Risk Assessment will be conducted on a risk based approach.

Event Fire Risk Assessment

It is important that in the planning of any significant event or activity, the issue of fire safety and the emergency evacuation of relevant persons should be properly considered and where necessary an

Event Fire Risk Assessment carried out to address any additional hazards and increased risk. Such events may include:

- Students sleeping on site
- Theatrical productions
- Musical productions
- Events using fireworks or naked flames
- Cooking (other than Catering Contractor's normal operation)

Staff Fire Safety Training

All staff receive basic fire safety induction training at the start of each academic year or on a one-to-one basis for members of staff who join the School at other times. Staff attend refresher sessions annually.

Key staff in the individual School buildings and departments receive more detailed instruction on:

- The evacuation of persons with disabilities
- The practical use of fire extinguishers and fire blankets
- How to call the Fire and Rescue Services
- How to check escape routes
- How to test the alarm systems
- How to use the Fire Panel to control the fire alarm system
- How to inspect and maintain fire doors
- Fire evacuation roles and responsibilities

Student Fire Safety Training

Students 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. Whole school termly fire drills are conducted.

Fire Evacuation Practice

Fire evacuation practices are planned and delivered each term to evaluate and develop the effectiveness of the School's evacuation procedures.

The findings of the evacuation practices and other fire safety events are reported to staff through the completion of a short report by the Health & Safety manager in consultation with others, which is circulated to the Heads of Departments.

A summary of incidents and events will be reported at the Health and Safety Committee along with any conclusions and remedial actions recorded and implemented.

Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation procedures which are to be followed in the event of a fire alarm are annexed to this Policy. This document details the responsibilities of staff and individuals during an evacuation and subsequent roll call. The full Evacuation Plan is detail in the Fire Procedures.

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Agreed by:	 Mike Rumbelow (Health & Safety Governor) *on behalf of the Full Governing Board*
Date of Agreement:	June 2026

Audit and Measurement Criteria		
This policy will be reviewed annually in line with updated legislation and revised as required.		
No	**Action**	**Frequency**
1	Annual review of FRAs	Annually
2	Review of Policy	Annually
3	Review of incident reports at - H&S Committee	Termly
4	Review of compliance tests and maintenance - Estates Committee	Termly
5	Review of fire evacuation procedure – Fire Drills	Termly

Document Consultees	
Name	**Title**
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Associated/Linked/Related Documents			
Ref.	**Name**	**Type**	**Location/Link**
	Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005	Law	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents
iProtectU	Fire Risk Assessments, reviews & actions	FRAs	https://rbcs.iprotectu.co.uk/view/assessmentRegister
iProtectU	Checks, inspections and Maintenance records and actions	Database	https://rbcs.iprotectu.co.uk/audit/auditLibrary

Document History					
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