



Vita et Pax
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Vita et Pax Preparatory School

Established 1936

Fire Safety Policy

Policy Originator	The Headmaster
Approved by	The Headmaster and Governing Body
Responsible Person (Fire Safety Order 2005)	The Headmaster
Date Approved	5 May 2026
Status	Statutory
Review Period	Annually (next: 5 May 2027)

1. Aims and Scope

The Governing Body and Headmaster of Vita et Pax Preparatory School are committed to the highest standards of fire safety for all pupils, staff, parents, visitors, volunteers and contractors at our site at 6a Priory Close, Green Road, Southgate, London N14 4AT. This policy sets out how the school identifies, prevents, prepares for and responds to fire and other emergencies that require evacuation or lockdown.

This policy applies to the whole school site, including the EYFS / Nursery wing, the main school building, the office areas, the kitchen, the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), the playgrounds, and any temporary structures. It applies during normal school hours, before-school and after-school clubs, lettings, evening events, and any occasion when the premises are occupied.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by and complies with:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 — primary fire safety legislation in England, imposing the duty of the Responsible Person to carry out and maintain a Fire Risk Assessment.
- The Fire Safety Act 2021 — clarifying the scope of the Fire Safety Order, including external walls and individual flat entrance doors where applicable.
- The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 — additional duties around information, instruction and signage, applied to the school's relevant occupiable areas.
- The Building Safety Act 2022 — applied where the premises or any letting partner falls within scope of higher-risk building duties.

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 — overarching duty of care to employees and others affected by the school's activities.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 — requiring suitable and sufficient risk assessment and arrangements for serious and imminent danger.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 5 — premises and accommodation standards for independent schools.
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage — fire safety, evacuation and safeguarding requirements applicable to children in the EYFS.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest edition) — safeguarding context, including lockdown and serious incident response.
- Building Regulations 2010 (as amended) and approved fire safety guidance (Approved Document B; HM Government Fire Safety Risk Assessment — Educational Premises).

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Governing Body / Proprietor has ultimate responsibility for fire safety at Vita et Pax. It ensures adequate resources are allocated, reviews this policy annually, and monitors fire safety performance through the Headmaster's reports.
- The Headmaster is the Responsible Person under Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The Headmaster ensures a suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessment is maintained, that significant findings are acted upon, and that all staff and pupils are trained in fire procedures.
- The Health & Safety Lead supports the Headmaster, co-ordinates the Fire Risk Assessment review, schedules drills and equipment servicing, and maintains the Fire Safety Logbook.
- The Site Manager / Caretaker carries out routine weekly fire alarm tests, monthly emergency-lighting flick tests, daily checks of escape routes and fire doors, and supervises contractors working on fire-safety-critical systems.
- Fire Wardens (one per major area, plus deputies) sweep their assigned area on evacuation, confirm it is clear, report to the Headmaster at the Assembly Point, and assist with crowd control. EYFS has dedicated Fire Wardens.
- All staff must know the location of fire alarm call points and extinguishers, the escape routes from any area they teach or work in, the location of the Primary and Secondary Assembly Points, and the procedure for evacuating pupils in their care.
- Pupils are taught age-appropriate fire safety, participate in drills, and follow instructions from staff during any evacuation or lockdown.
- Visitors and contractors receive fire-safety information on arrival as part of the visitor sign-in process and are accompanied where required.

4. Fire Risk Assessment

A written Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) is maintained for the whole school premises in accordance with Article 9 of the Fire Safety Order 2005. The FRA is carried out by a competent person (currently an external fire safety consultant) and follows the five-step methodology of:

- Identifying fire hazards (sources of ignition, fuel and oxygen).
- Identifying people at risk (pupils, EYFS children, staff, visitors, persons with disabilities).
- Evaluating, removing or reducing those risks.

- Recording findings, preparing an emergency plan and providing training.
- Reviewing and updating the assessment.

The FRA is reviewed at least annually, and immediately after any of the following: a fire or near-miss incident; significant changes to the premises, layout or use; introduction of new equipment or processes; change in occupancy or staffing; or a material change in legislation or guidance. Significant findings and recommended actions are tracked to completion in the Fire Safety Logbook.

5. Fire Prevention

- Good housekeeping — corridors, stairwells and escape routes are kept clear at all times. Storage of combustibles in escape routes is prohibited.
- Electrical safety — fixed electrical installation tested under EICR every five years; portable appliance testing (PAT) annually; only PAT-tested equipment may be used on site; multi-way adaptors and daisy-chained extension leads are not permitted.
- Heating and cooking — kitchen equipment serviced annually; portable heaters are not used in classrooms or offices; the boiler and gas appliances are serviced annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- Smoking — Vita et Pax operates a strict no-smoking and no-vaping policy across the whole site, including outdoor areas, the MUGA, and within school vehicles.
- Hot works — any contractor work involving heat, flame, sparks or grinding requires a written hot-works permit issued by the Site Manager and a fire-watch period before, during and after the work.
- Waste management — combustible waste is removed daily from internal bins and stored in lockable external bins kept clear of the building.
- Arson prevention — external bins are secured; the perimeter is checked at the end of each day; gates are locked outside school hours; flammable materials are stored securely and out of public view; any suspected attempted arson is reported to the Headmaster and the police immediately.

6. Fire Detection, Alarm System and Emergency Lighting

- The school is protected by a category L fire detection and alarm system installed and maintained to BS 5839-1, with manual call points at all final exits and escape routes and automatic detection in protected areas.
- The fire alarm is tested weekly by the Site Manager from a different call point each week, with the result recorded in the Fire Safety Logbook.
- The system receives a full service and inspection every six months by a competent fire alarm contractor.
- Emergency lighting is installed throughout escape routes and final exits to BS 5266-1, subjected to a monthly flick test and an annual full-discharge test.
- Fire detection, alarm and emergency-lighting test records are retained for the statutory period in the Fire Safety Logbook and made available for inspection.

7. Firefighting Equipment

- Portable fire extinguishers are provided in line with the FRA and BS 5306-8: water/foam for Class A risks, CO₂ near electrical equipment, wet chemical in the kitchen, and fire blankets in food-preparation areas.
- All extinguishers and fire blankets are serviced annually by a BAFE-registered engineer; monthly visual checks are carried out by the Site Manager.
- Staff are not expected to fight fires. Extinguishers are provided to assist escape only, where it is safe to do so. Personal safety always takes priority over property.

8. Fire Doors, Compartmentation and Escape Routes

- Fire doors are kept closed at all times unless held open on automatic releases linked to the alarm system. Fire doors must never be wedged or propped open.
- Escape routes are kept clear, well-lit and signed throughout. The minimum clear width of any escape route is maintained.
- Final exit doors can be opened from the inside without a key at all times the building is occupied.
- Compartmentation (fire-resisting walls, ceilings and service penetrations) is inspected as part of the FRA and any breaches are remediated promptly.
- Photoluminescent fire-action notices and directional escape signage are displayed in every classroom, office and corridor in accordance with the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 and BS 5499.

9. Fire Assembly Points

On hearing the continuous fire alarm, all occupants evacuate immediately by the nearest available escape route and proceed to the designated Assembly Point.

Primary Assembly Point — the MUGA Cage

The Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) playground cage at the rear/side of the school site is designated as the Primary Fire Assembly Point for the whole school. This designation is permitted under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 because the MUGA satisfies the following conditions verified in the Fire Risk Assessment:

- Safe distance from the building — clear of falling debris, smoke plume and radiated heat.
- Clear of fire-service access — does not obstruct the route used by the London Fire Brigade to reach the building or any hydrant or rising main.
- Sufficient size — capable of holding the full school roll (pupils, staff, visitors and contractors) at one time with room for class registration.
- Accessible to all — reachable from each escape route, including by wheelchair users and persons with mobility impairments, with a level / step-free arrival point.
- Securable — the cage perimeter prevents pupils, particularly EYFS children, from drifting into adjacent roads or unsupervised areas during a long evacuation.

Secondary Assembly Point

If the MUGA is unavailable, compromised, or unsafe (for example, the fire is on the side of the building closest to the MUGA, or the MUGA itself is the seat of the incident), the Secondary Assembly Point is the

front car-park area and adjacent open ground inside the school perimeter. Fire Wardens take direction from the Headmaster (or the most senior member of staff present) on which Assembly Point to use, and that direction is conveyed to staff using the agreed verbal command and, where possible, the school radio or PA system.

10. Evacuation Procedure

- On hearing the continuous fire alarm, the class teacher takes the class register (or accesses the digital register on a school device) and instructs pupils to leave the room calmly in single file, leaving belongings behind.
- Pupils proceed by the nearest safe escape route to the Primary Assembly Point (MUGA), or the Secondary Assembly Point if directed.
- Fire Wardens sweep their assigned areas (toilets, library, hall, staff room, kitchen) and confirm to the Headmaster at the Assembly Point that the area is clear.
- The Office takes the visitors' sign-in list and the contractors' sign-in list to the Assembly Point.
- At the Assembly Point, class teachers take a register against the class list and report present / missing to the Headmaster.
- No one re-enters the building until the Headmaster, or the senior fire officer in attendance, has given the explicit all-clear.
- If anyone is missing, the Headmaster informs the Fire Service on arrival and provides the last-known location.

11. Lockdown vs Evacuation

Not every emergency requires evacuation. The school operates a separate Lockdown Procedure for incidents where leaving the building would place pupils and staff at greater risk (for example, a chemical incident in the area, an external intruder, or civil disturbance). The Lockdown signal and the Evacuation signal are distinct and known to all staff.

- Evacuation — continuous fire alarm — leave the building by the nearest safe route to the Assembly Point.
- Lockdown — separate verbal / PA / digital signal — secure all classrooms, close blinds, move pupils away from windows and doors, take a register, and remain in place until told otherwise by the Headmaster or emergency services.
- Invacuation — where an external incident makes the MUGA unsafe — pupils and staff move to and remain in a designated internal safe area as directed.

12. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

A written Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is prepared for every member of staff or pupil who, because of a disability, medical condition, sensory impairment, mobility need, pregnancy, or temporary injury, may need additional assistance to evacuate safely. PEEP's are also prepared for any regular visitor with such needs.

- PEEP's are developed with the individual (or, for younger pupils, with the parents and the SENDCo) and reviewed at least annually or following any change in circumstances.

- Each PEEP specifies the primary and secondary escape routes from the individual's usual locations, the named members of staff who will assist, and any equipment required (for example, an evacuation chair on the stairs).
- Generic Emergency Evacuation Plans (GEEPs) are available for visitors not covered by an individual PEEP.
- PEEPs are stored confidentially and shared only with staff who need to act on them.

13. EYFS-Specific Fire Safety Arrangements

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Little Vitas, Nursery and Reception) require additional fire-safety arrangements consistent with the EYFS Statutory Framework requirement to maintain children's safety and welfare at all times.

- EYFS staff lead children calmly out of the EYFS wing by the nearest safe exit; the youngest non-walkers are evacuated using the designated evacuation cot / pram located by the EYFS final exit.
- Where a sleeping child is present, a named EYFS staff member is responsible for carrying or wheeling that child to the Assembly Point.
- EYFS classes have their own Fire Wardens. The EYFS register and any visitor / parent list are taken to the Assembly Point with each class.
- At the MUGA Assembly Point, EYFS classes assemble in a designated area inside the cage where they can be kept together and away from older pupils' classes for a clear count.
- Fire drills are pitched and explained at an age-appropriate level. EYFS staff reassure children throughout and avoid exposing them to unnecessary alarm.

14. Fire Drills, Lockdown Drills and Practice

- Fire evacuation drills are held at least once per term (a minimum of three per academic year), at varied times of day and including periods covering lunch, assembly and break.
- Lockdown drills are held at least annually.
- Each drill is recorded in the Fire Safety Logbook with date, time, evacuation time, weather, scenario, observations, and any actions taken to address issues identified.
- After each drill the Headmaster and the H&S; Lead debrief and circulate findings to staff. Recurrent issues are escalated into the Fire Risk Assessment review.
- At least one drill per year tests the use of the Secondary Assembly Point.

15. Training and Information

- All new staff receive a fire safety induction on or before their first day, covering the alarm sound, escape routes, the Assembly Points, fire wardens, and the use of extinguishers (information only).
- All staff receive refresher fire safety training at least annually.
- Fire Wardens receive enhanced training every two years from a competent external provider, including practical extinguisher use.
- Pupils receive age-appropriate fire safety teaching as part of PSHE and the wider curriculum.

- Fire safety information for visitors is displayed in reception and given verbally as part of sign-in. After-school club providers and lettings hirers receive a written fire safety brief and sign to confirm receipt.

16. Visitors, Contractors, Lettings and After-Hours Use

- All visitors sign in on arrival and are issued with a visitor badge. The sign-in system serves as the visitors' roll-call list at the Assembly Point.
- Contractors receive a site induction before starting work that covers fire alarm sound, escape routes, the Assembly Points, hot-works permit requirements, and designated welfare areas.
- Out-of-hours uses, lettings and external clubs (e.g. ballet, breakfast and after-school club providers) operate under a written agreement that requires them to follow this policy, brief their participants on fire procedure, and nominate a person responsible for evacuation and roll-call during their session.
- The school maintains a clear up-to-date hirer / occupier list available to the emergency services on request.

17. Records, Logbook and Inspections

- A central Fire Safety Logbook is maintained by the H&S; Lead containing: the Fire Risk Assessment and review history; weekly alarm test records; monthly and annual emergency-lighting test records; alarm system service certificates; extinguisher service certificates; drill records; PEEPs index; training records; and incident reports.
- The Logbook is kept on site, available for inspection by the London Fire Brigade, ISI inspectors, the local authority and insurers at all reasonable times.
- Records relating to a fire-safety incident are retained for the statutory period and any longer period required for ongoing inquiries.

18. Reporting Fires and Fire-Related Incidents

- Any actual fire, however small, must be reported to the Headmaster and recorded in the Fire Safety Logbook and the school's accident / incident system.
- Reportable events under RIDDOR 2013 (e.g. dangerous occurrences involving fire, overheating or explosion of installed plant) are reported to the HSE.
- Significant incidents are reported to the Governing Body and, where appropriate, to the school's insurers and the Department for Education.
- Lessons learned are fed back into the Fire Risk Assessment and into staff training.

19. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed at least annually by the Headmaster and approved by the Governing Body. It is reviewed sooner if there is any significant change in legislation, in the premises, in the school's activities, or following any fire, near-miss or unsatisfactory drill. All staff are informed of any material changes and the updated policy is published to the school website.

20. Related Policies and Documents

- Health & Safety Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Lockdown / Critical Incident Plan
- Site Fire Risk Assessment (held by the H&S; Lead)
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) — confidential
- First Aid Policy
- Premises and Compliance Schedule

Approved by: Governing Body of Vita et Pax Preparatory School

Date: 5 May 2026