

JUNE 2026: General Fire Precautions in Schools

Suffolk County Council recognises its legal and moral duty to provide a safe environment for pupils, staff, and visitors. Fire safety is a collective responsibility. This statement outlines the commitment to rigorous fire prevention, robust maintenance, and efficient emergency evacuation procedures across all educational settings.

Statutory Duties and Leadership Responsibility

- **Risk Assessments:** A comprehensive Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) should be conducted annually and reviewed immediately following any structural changes or building incidents.
- **Competent Persons:** Schools should appoint designated Fire Wardens or Marshals who receive training / awareness to oversee evacuations and daily hazard spot-checks.
- **Record Keeping:** A central Fire Logbook must be maintained, documenting all tests, drills, faults, and maintenance work.

Daily Housekeeping and Hazard Reduction

All staff members share the daily responsibility of mitigating fire risks within their classrooms and workspaces:

- **Clear Escape Routes:** Corridors, stairwells, and final exit doors must remain completely unobstructed at all times.
- **Combustible Storage:** High-risk materials, including art supplies, chemicals, and paper stock, must be stored securely in designated fire-rated cabinets, cupboards or rooms.
- **Display Materials:** Wall decorations and pupil artwork must not exceed recommended surface area limits and must never cover light fittings, heaters, or electrical points.
- **Electrical Safety:** Portable Electrical Equipment Testing (PAT) must be conducted annually. The use of unauthorised personal electrical items or daisy-chained extension leads is strictly prohibited.

Maintenance of Systems and Infrastructure

The school must ensure that all active and passive fire protection systems are fully operational through a strict testing schedule:

- **Alarms:** Fire alarm systems are tested weekly using different call points, with annual servicing by certified engineers.
- **Equipment:** Extinguishers, fire blankets, and hose reels are visually checked monthly and serviced annually.
- **Emergency Lighting:** Escape route lighting is tested monthly to ensure functionality during a power failure.
- **Structural Seals:** Fire doors are checked regularly to ensure they close fully against seals and are never propped open.
- **Utility Hazards:** These include areas such as plant rooms (including boiler rooms) and server hubs which should undergo strict preventative maintenance to eliminate electrical fire risks.

Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation

The primary objective if a fire occurs is the safe and swift evacuation of all occupants on the premises.

- **Evacuation Drills:** Full school evacuation drills must be practiced at least once per term, simulating different blocked exit routes.
- **Assembly Points:** Clearly designated assembly zones must be established away from the main buildings and kept clear for emergency vehicle access.
- **Inclusive Planning:** Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) should be created and practiced for any pupil or staff member with mobility or sensory difficulties.
- **Visitor Safety:** All guests must sign in, receive a fire safety briefing, and be escorted by a staff member during an evacuation.

Further guidance can be sought from your Fire Risk Assessor, the installers of your fire extinguishers / detection points / service engineers for alarm systems.

The Home Office has published a comprehensive guide to fire prevention. This document is named [Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Educational Premises](#) .