Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment

Fire safety and emergency evacuation

Policy statement

We are committed to ensuring the highest possible standard of fire safety for all children, staff, parents and visitors. We comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended), including relevant amendments made by the Building Safety Act 2022, and follow current Home Office and London Fire Brigade guidance. We also meet the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective 1 September 2026.

We maintain a robust fire safety risk assessment, undertake routine checks, and practise regular evacuation drills to ensure that, in the event of a fire or emergency, children and adults can leave the premises quickly, calmly and safely. Reasonable adjustments are made when required to support children with SEND or mobility needs.

A Fire Safety Log Book is maintained and kept up to date with all checks, risk assessments, equipment servicing, and evacuation records.

Fire-safety arrangements reflect the current EYFS framework and current fire-safety law. The Responsible Person must record the fire risk assessment in full and record fire-safety arrangements. Where more than one Responsible Person has duties for shared premises, they must cooperate, coordinate and share relevant fire-safety information.

Procedures

Fire Safety Risk Assessment

- A suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment is completed by a competent person in line with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended) and current Home Office fire safety guidance. The Responsible Person remains accountable for ensuring the assessment is suitable, sufficient, recorded and acted upon.
- The fire risk assessment and fire safety arrangements are kept under review and are reviewed whenever there is reason to suspect they are no longer valid, after significant changes to the premises or use, following a fire or near miss, and at an appropriate planned interval. An annual formal review is used by the setting as a minimum management check.
    - at least annually;
    - after any significant change to the premises or equipment; and
    - following any incident involving fire or near miss.

The risk assessment includes, but is not limited to:

- Electrical plugs, wires, sockets, and appliances.
- Gas boilers and heating systems.
- Cookers and kitchen equipment.

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- Smoking materials (if applicable – usually none on early years premises).
- Flammable materials such as furniture, furnishings, displays and paper.
- Chemicals and cleaning products.
- Storage arrangements to prevent fire loading.
- Means of escape and evacuation routes.
- Emergency lighting (if installed).
- Assembly point accessibility.
- Any additional risks identified specific to the building.

Premises shared or rented

- Where we operate from rented or shared premises, we:
    - obtain and retain a copy of the building's fire risk assessment,
    - communicate regularly with the responsible person (e.g., site manager, landlord, church warden),
    - Where duties are shared with a landlord, church, hall operator or other Responsible Person, responsibilities are documented and relevant fire-safety information is exchanged. The setting does not assume that the premises owner has discharged the setting's own duties.
    - ensure any actions relevant to our use of the premises are completed.

Fire Safety Precautions

We ensure the premises meet fire safety requirements by:

- Ensuring fire doors are clearly labelled, kept unobstructed, and open easily from the inside without a key.
- Ensuring fire detection and alarm systems, emergency lighting (where required), fire doors and firefighting equipment are appropriate to the fire risk assessment, maintained in efficient working order and good repair, and inspected/tested at suitable intervals by competent persons.
- Ensuring electrical equipment is maintained so far as reasonably practicable to prevent danger. Inspection and testing frequencies, including portable appliance testing where appropriate, are determined by risk assessment and manufacturer/competent-person advice rather than by an automatic annual PAT requirement.
- Ensuring staff and volunteers receive fire safety instruction as part of induction and are confident in evacuation procedures.
- Ensuring all exit routes are kept clear and that signage is visible and appropriate.
- Keeping evacuation procedures:
    - clearly displayed in appropriate locations and made accessible to staff and other relevant adults,
    - communicated to staff, students, volunteers and parents,

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- reviewed and practised regularly. Ready Steady Grow normally conducts evacuation drills at least once each term and at varied times/circumstances, with frequency increased where the fire risk assessment or learning from drills indicates a need.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

Our evacuation procedure ensures:

- Children understand the fire alarm sound through regular practice.
- Staff lead children calmly and promptly to the designated assembly point using the nearest safe available exit. Staff do not delay evacuation to collect personal belongings.
- Where it can be taken without delaying evacuation, a designated staff member collects:
  - the daily register,
  - staff signing-in sheet,
  - emergency contact information,
  - essential emergency medication and the emergency evacuation grab bag, where these can be taken immediately without delaying escape.
- At the assembly point, staff conduct a roll-call using the current attendance information and account for all children, staff, volunteers and visitors. Any person unaccounted for is reported immediately to the Fire and Rescue Service; staff do not re-enter the building to search.
- The alarm is raised immediately and 999 is called as soon as it is safe to do so. Staff provide the exact location, nature of the emergency and any known information about persons unaccounted for.
- No one re-enters the premises until the Fire and Rescue Service or other competent emergency authority confirms that it is safe. Parents/carers are contacted once immediate safety arrangements are secure.

We consider the needs of:

- children with SEND,
- children with mobility limitations,
- children who may become distressed by alarms.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs),
- Evacuation arrangements are individualised where necessary for babies/young children, SEND, temporary injury, medical needs, sensory needs or mobility needs. Any PEEP or equivalent individual plan identifies the assistance, equipment, route and staff support required and is reviewed when needs or premises arrangements change.
- The priority is immediate evacuation. Staff are not expected to fight a fire. Fire extinguishers may only be used by a person who is trained and only where it is safe to do so without delaying escape.
- visual supports,

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- designated staff to support individual children.

Fire Drills

Ready Steady Grow normally conducts fire drills at least once each term, at varied times and in different circumstances where practicable. Drills are planned so they do not create avoidable distress or unsafe practice and are reviewed against the fire risk assessment.
For each drill, we record in the Fire Safety Log Book:

- Date and time.
- Number of children, staff and visitors present.
- Evacuation time.
- Any delays or issues encountered.
- Actions taken to improve safety or procedures.

Patterns or concerns identified from drills are addressed promptly.

Additional Emergency Situations

This policy also applies to events requiring emergency evacuation such as:

- gas leak,
- flooding,
- electrical failure,
- bomb threat or suspicious package,
- nearby incident requiring emergency services lockdown or evacuation.

Staff follow the separate Emergency Evacuation and Lock-down Policy where evacuation is not the safest response. Decisions to evacuate, invacuate or lock down are based on the nature and location of the threat and, where available, emergency-service instructions.

Staff Responsibilities

- The legally defined Responsible Person has duties under the Fire Safety Order. The Manager is responsible for implementing the setting procedures within their control and for liaising with the premises Responsible Person where the setting occupies shared or rented premises.
- All staff must:
- know evacuation routes,
- receive fire-safety information and training at induction and refresher training at suitable intervals, and whenever changes to risk, premises or procedures make this necessary.
- know how to raise the alarm, call 999, support children requiring additional assistance, and report defects or blocked escape routes immediately.
- know their role during an emergency,

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- maintain calm and ensure children's safety at all times,
- report any fire safety hazards immediately,
- participate fully in fire drills and training.

Building Safety Act 2022, section 156 amendments to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
Current Home Office Article 50 fire-safety guidance for educational premises / small non-domestic premises, as applicable

Legal Framework

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 - where applicable to the premises (these regulations principally impose additional duties for relevant multi-occupied residential buildings)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Further Guidance

- Fire Safety Risk Assessment – Educational Premises (Home Office)
- London Fire Brigade Regulatory Fire Safety Guidance
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026
- London Borough of Bromley Early Years guidance and support; London Fire Brigade fire-safety guidance