

# FIRE PROTOCOL ST JOSEPH'S RC HIGH SCHOOL

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The purpose of PSHE this week is for both staff and pupils to familiarise themselves with the key points laid down in the school's procedures/protocols in the event of the fire alarm sounding and evacuation.

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We've all heard the piercing sound of a fire alarm and, more often than not, dismissed it as just another drill. Yet, these simulated exercises serve a much greater purpose than momentarily disrupting our daily routines.

As the old adage goes, "**Practice makes perfect,**" in the context of fire emergencies, practice can be the thin line between chaos and an orderly escape.

Practicing fire drills is not just a regulatory tick-box exercise but a crucial safety measure. Understanding the significance of these drills is paramount.



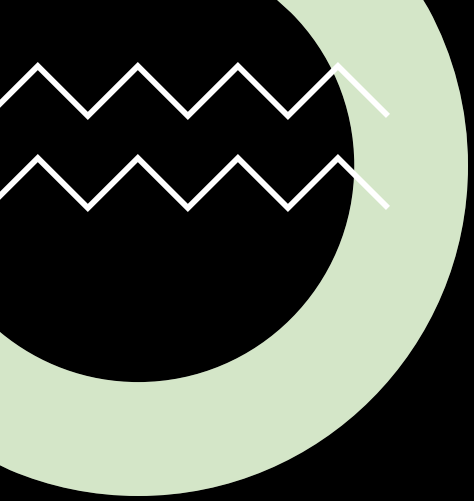
## What is a Fire Drill?



A fire drill is a method of practicing the evacuation of a building for a fire or other emergency. Generally, the emergency system (usually an alarm) is activated, and the building is evacuated as though a real fire were occurring.

Fire drills are an important part of safety procedures for schools. They ensure that everyone in the building knows how to get out safely as quickly as possible if a fire breaks out.

A fire drill ensures that all individuals are prepared, aware, and capable of taking appropriate actions should an actual fire emergency occur.



Practicing fire drills is essential for several reasons, all of which contribute to ensuring the safety of individuals in case of a fire emergency. Here are some key reasons why fire drills are important:

- **Identify Weaknesses**
- **Understanding signs and symbols**
- **Identify Potential Hazards**
- **Test Alarms**
- **Remain Up-To-Date With Fire Regulations**
- **Learn Safety Protocols**
- **Familiarize ourselves With Exit Routes and assembly points**
- **Increase Awareness**
- **Make Sure That Everyone Knows The Drill**





# FIRE PROTOCOL

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When the alarm sounds continuously, pupils and staff must leave the classroom **immediately** **in an orderly manner** and leave via the agreed route as outlined in the four points below.

- Leave classroom doors unlocked when you leave. Pupils to leave their bags/books in the classroom.
- Pupils and staff to leave the room as quickly as possible, **but do not run**. You should walk swiftly to the agreed assembly point (see next slide) at the front of the building (bus shelters) or rear yard.
- When the fire alarm sounds, forget the one-way system we have in place and follow the arrow above your classroom door to the nearest stairwell and leave the building and move to the assembly point.
- Teachers must stay with their class and ensure that there is orderly and respectful behaviour while waiting for the 'all clear'.

# FIRE PROTOCOL: ASSEMBLY POINTS

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- ✓ **At the front of school**, pupils to line up in the class they are in at the time of the alarm.
- ✓ The first class out should proceed to the chapel area and then all line up and so on, so the last class out is next to the thick white line outside O1/O2.
- ✓ All classes to line up in single file and the teacher will take a register.
- ✓ **At the rear of the school**, pupils to line up in the classes they are in at the time of the alarm.
- ✓ All classes to line up in single file and the teacher will take a register. Class teachers to identify any pupil who for any reason they know is not present and inform relevant SLT lead of their name(s).
- ✓ Names must be recorded on SIMS following the evacuation, along with any pupil who has failed to follow instructions.
- ✓ All pupils must remain in line even after roll call.
- ✓ 6th Form students must line up by the designated back gate sign well away from the building – this is important as role models to other students.





# FIRE PROTOCOL CONTINUED

- Staff who are “free” will assist colleagues with lining up to ensure the process is as quick and efficient as possible.
- Sweepers will check all areas of the school and report to Senior staff/Business Manager/Site Manager.
- The aim is to fully evacuate the building **in under 3 minutes**, so it is imperative that **everyone follows instructions that are given** to ensure own safety and the safety of all other pupils and staff.
- When safe to return to the building, the Senior Lead will inform the assembly points.
- Teachers will accompany their classes back to the classroom via the same route as quickly as possible.
- Staff with radios, will **refrain from speaking on channel 10** during fire drills as the channel needs to be clear for communication regarding responding to the alarm / determining whether it is a false alarm or a real fire.
- Those leading the evacuation will ask staff to respond at the appropriate time and provide advice and updates.



# Conclusion

Each drill is a powerful reminder that safety is a collective effort, and consistent practice can dramatically influence outcomes during emergencies.

We must move past seeing fire drills as mere obligations, understanding instead that they are instrumental in safeguarding lives. Every drill, every step that is taken, and every second saved emphasizes the old wisdom: it's always better to be safe than sorry.

Let us all commit to this practice with maturity, embrace the learnings, and ensure that should the unexpected occur, we are not left unprepared.

