



# The Clare School

South Park Avenue  
Norwich  
Norfolk  
NR4 7AU

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

# FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

Name and address: The Clare School  
South Park Avenue  
Norwich  
Norfolk  
NR4 7AU

Use of premises: A special school for pupils age 3 to 19 with physical disability, and or, sensory impairment.

Owner: Norfolk County Council

Responsible person: Rebecca Wicks (Headteacher)

Telephone: 01603 454199

Date of risk assessment: June 2007

Reviewed: Jan 2008

Jan 2009

Jan 2010

Jan 2011

Jan 2012

Jan 2013

Jan 2014

Jan 2015

Jan 2016

Jan 2017

Jan 2018

Jan 2019

Jan 2020

Next review Jan 2021

Assessment by: Helen Stanger (Business Manager)

## **General Description of the premises**

The Clare School was founded as an 'Open Air School' early in the 20th Century. The buildings have been added to and extended over the years, creating a varied, complex, sprawling environment containing a mixture of wooden, and brick built structures, including a modern 'architect designed' physiotherapy department. There are also three mobile classrooms on site. The majority of the build is on one level, but there is a small first floor section in the centre of the main building served by two stairways, one at each end.

The school opens to pupils at 08:45 and closes to pupils when the last bus leaves, normally at 15:45. Staff are typically on site from 08:00 to 18:00, although the Caretaker, and/or the Premises Manager, is on site between 07:00 and 19:00. Cleaners are also on site 15:30 to 18:30.

Up to 101 pupils and 116 staff may be on site at any time. There may also be contractors, students, volunteers and visitors present. A realistic total could, therefore, be 200 people.

Visitors sign in and out at Reception and are accounted for in fire evacuation practice sessions

## **Fire Safety Systems**

A phone call to the Emergency Services can be made from any of our telephone lines.

Break glass alarms are positioned at exit doors as follows:

Art Room  
Main Entrance  
Physiotherapy  
Life Skills  
Hall  
Patio  
Walkway  
Primary End  
Sensory Block  
Health Block  
Humanities  
Sixth Form

## **Escape Lighting**

The escape lighting runs along the main corridor. Doors also have emergency lighting in the Physiotherapy and Sensory areas.

The lighting has a duration of three hours, is maintained every six months and tested monthly. There is also escape lighting in the new build areas.

## **Other**

There are no sprinklers on site.

## **Fire Hazards**

Ignition Sources (Naked Flames):

Bunsen burners in Science Lab – no longer used

Gas hobs and ovens in Life Skills

The school maintains a non-smoking environment

## **Ignition Sources (Other):**

Kiln, in lockable room.

Central Heating Boilers, in boiler house

Gas heaters, in Mobile Classrooms and Health Block

## **Sources of Fuel:**

Paper and cardboard packaging are common features of any school environment. Good housekeeping is encouraged to keep potential fuels away from possible ignition sources. The shredding of confidential waste is contracted out.

## **Work Processes:**

Work processes are planned to avoid fire. See Science and Technology policies.

## **Structural Features:**

The wooden structures would be particularly vulnerable

The fabric of the buildings is maintained in reasonable condition.

### **Location of those at risk**

The staff and pupils are spread over the entire site. A fire breaking out at any specified location would, therefore, normally put a limited number at risk, although a fire in/near the Hall at assembly time would be an exception. There are no naked flames, or potential fuels stored at this location.

The Sensory Area contains pupils who are deaf, and or, blind who may be unable to sense a fire alarm. These pupils are, however, accompanied by staff at all times.

We have pupils in wheelchairs. Staff practice fire drill regularly (three times per year) and are skilled in getting everyone out rapidly.

There are numerous exit doors throughout the site (see plan) requiring very few steps to exit the buildings from any location.

All staff, and all pupils who understand, know the location and routes to the Fire Assembly Area. From sounding the alarm to full account of all on site typically takes from four to five minutes.

### **Fire Safety Signs and Notices**

Fire exit signs with direction arrows are in place at all exits to the outside

There are no internal fire resistant doors - these would prevent movement of pupils in wheelchairs.

There are some external Fire Exit Keep Clear signs

General Fire Action Notices are displayed in every room throughout the premises

Fire fighting equipment is indicated by signs

Doors have signs to indicate operation where necessary

## **Fire Warning System**

There is a fire warning system throughout the premises, with a mixture of bells and sirens

Deaf pupils are unable to hear the alarm, but are always under the charge of staff

The size and complexity of the site, combined with occupancy of all areas is assessed as unsuitable for automatic fire detection

## **Emergency Lighting**

Although there is some emergency lighting and some exits are lit this is an area where more consideration is necessary. I will take advice on this.

There is insufficient illumination to see all of the potential escape options

The system does operate under sub-circuit failure

The school has no residential facility, although some staff work on the premises after dark in the Winter months

Some pupils are blind, and so are accompanied by staff at all times

## **Fire Fighting Equipment**

Fire extinguishers are located throughout the premises, in/near every room and at escape routes

The fire extinguishers are of standard type and simple to use

The fire extinguishers are all checked annually by TP Fire

Some fire extinguishers conform to BS EN3

Some to BS 5423

Some have no kite mark, but are all checked and serviced annually

Some extinguishers are on wall brackets, whilst others are free standing on floors

## **Means of Escape - Vertical Evacuation**

The upstairs area comprises;

Two toilets  
Finance Office  
PE/Ed Vis Office  
Staff Study Room  
Storage area

The maximum number of persons (staff only) using this area at any particular time is unlikely to be more than five

There is a staircase at both ends and the doors are kept unlocked

The stairways are constructed within brick walls and both lead to the main corridor on either side of the Library

The storage area is clear and tidy

There are no evacuation signs in this area

## **Fire Safety, Warning and Means of Escape - Overall Conclusion**

Fire safety is generally good. There are only two areas where naked flames are used and these are not storage areas where potential fuels are significantly present. Both of these areas are risk assessed by their subject coordinators and are always controlled by qualified staff when in use.

The warning system is regularly tested and is audible throughout the site. There is, however, a theoretical weakness with reference to deaf/blind pupils that may need investigating. Some pupils are sufficiently frightened by the noise of the alarm to present challenging behaviors, although regular fire evacuation practice has reduced this problem and it will hopefully eventually resolve.

The current evacuation procedure was devised in 2006 and has been tested termly since. A record of evacuation practices is kept in Reception. Teething problems were ironed out as they emerged, the system was modified in 2009 and 2011 and we can have everyone on the Fire Assembly Point and accounted for inside of four minutes.

Practice evacuations are recorded in the Fire Log Books in the School Office.

Means of escape from the buildings require few steps as there are so many rooms, with many options for evacuation. Most escape routes are clearly signed, but there is a bit of a 'black hole' in the main corridor. This however, is not thought to be a significant problem due to there being so many potential escapes in several directions.