Heathwood Lower School

Premises Management Policy

Date policy last reviewed: October 2025

Signed by:

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Statement of intent

Heathwood Lower School has a duty to ensure that buildings under its control comply with the statutory and regulatory standards.

The school will consider each building's:

- **Condition:** focussing on the physical state of the premises to ensure safe and continuous operations, as well as other issues involving building regulations and other non-education centric statutory requirements.
- **Suitability:** focussing on the quality of the premises to meet curriculum or management needs and other issues impacting on the role of the school in raising educational standards.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Statutory Premises Management Documents
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- The School Premises (England) Regulations 2012
- DfE Advice on standards for school premises'
- DfE 'Site security guidance'
- DfE Managing asbestos in your school'
- DfE First aid in schools, early years and further education'
- DfE 'Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools'
- DfE Good estate management for school (GEMs)'
- DfE Good estate management for schools: estate management competency framework
- DfE Keeping children safe in education
- DfE 'Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings'
- DfE 'Protective security and preparedness for education settings'
- DfE: Ventilation and air quality in education and childcare settings

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Asbestos Management Plan
- Lettings Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Bad Weather Weather Policy
- Lockdown and Evacuation Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- School Cleaning Policy
- Legionella Health and Safety Policy
- Bomb Threat Policy
- Bomb Threat Checklist

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board and the headteacher are responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Taking a strategic approach to the management of the school's land and buildings, in line with business planning objectives.

- Having the right plans and documents in place to help create an environment that supports good teaching and learning.
- Ensuring the school's policies and procedures help to manage the estate effectively and efficiently.
- Understanding the legal interests, limitations, and responsibilities for the school estate.
- Possessing a comprehensive understanding of the condition, suitability and sufficiency of the land and buildings on the school estate.
- Using the knowledge of the school estate to inform strategic planning and decision-making.
- Delivering effective performance management across the estate.
- Ensuring energy, water and other resources are used efficiently and waste is kept to a minimum.
- Ensuring the school estate is safe for all users.
- Ensuring that the condition of the school estate and supporting policies fully comply with relevant legislation and regulatory standards.
- Ensuring maintenance is effectively planned and prioritised, informed by accurate and up-to-data condition data and the needs of the school's users.
- Ensuring all estate-related projects are clearly defined, follow approved processes, and use resources to best effect.
- Ensuring all estate-related projects deliver the desired outcomes.
- Ensuring asbestos is managed in line with the Asbestos Management Policy and Asbestos Management Plan.
- Ensuring the school is accessible and suitable for pupils, staff and visitors with disabilities.

The headteacher is also responsible for:

- Reporting any issues with the premises to the site manager, Office Manager and governing board as appropriate.
- Reviewing this policy in liaison with the site manager.
- Ensuring any potential risks are identified, formally recorded, assessed and managed – this should include taking appropriate preventative and protective measures.
- Promoting the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff.

The Office Manager is responsible for:

- Supervising the delivery of activities identified in the estate strategy and asset management plan.
- Identifying and addressing training needs of operative staff.
- Ensuring operational working practices that reflect the school's strategic approach are actively and consistently applied.
- Monitoring, collecting and assisting in producing information for reporting to senior leadership and governing body.
- Escalating staff and wider stakeholder complaints to senior leadership.
- Ensuring operative staff carry out their activities in accordance with organisational estate-related policies and procedures.
- Acts promptly to deal with estate issues and condition risks.

- Making sure work is approved and signed off in line with set processes and procedures as necessary.
- Helping to keep track of spending across the estate in line with available budgets.
- Challenging others appropriately where they see wastage and raising with team or manager as appropriate.
- Ensuring recognised financial procedures and practices are being followed.
- Supervising and supporting external contractors on-site to ensure procurement requirements are met.
- Supporting the implementation of business continuity and emergency planning processes.
- Managing or overseeing any lettings in line with the Lettings Policy.
- Purchasing new equipment and resources for the school.
- Managing the relevant staff members who are responsible for the management of the premises, e.g. catering staff and the site manager.

The school's security lead (Headteacher and Office Manager) is responsible for:

- Coordinating and overseeing the school's protective security measures.
- Developing, maintaining, and updating policies and procedures that promote an effective security culture.
- Determining how staff should respond to varying security incidents.
- Ensuring that all staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to protective security.
- Liaising with external agencies.
- Managing and delegating responses to a security incident within the school.

Security leads generally become incident leads once a security incident occurs. In line with the School Emergency Plan, Incident leads are responsible for:

- Leading the initial response to a security incident within the school.
- Making fast, clear, and safe decisions.
- Responding appropriately to any safety concerns.
- Leading the post-incident aftercare.

The site manager is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of the stipulations outlined in this policy, in collaboration with the headteacher and/or Office Manager.
- Identifying and escalating concerns about areas for improvement on the school estate.
- Providing basic information about the school estate to senior leadership as appropriate.
- Working within set processes and procedures relating to the management and operation of the estate.
- Assisting and supporting external contractors on site to ensure procurement requirements are met.
- Carrying out, recording and reporting premises walk-arounds and physical inspections on a regular basis.

- Following and ensuring adherence with any statutory guidance and documentation, such as asbestos surveys and registers to ensure no breaches occur.
- Reporting conditions and any health and safety issues to appropriate colleagues.
- Ensuring that any Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) that are in place in the school are understood and implemented when needed, including knowing how to identify and liaise with the responsible person for implementing the PEEP.
- Checking the school's compliance with the relevant health and safety and premises management legislation, and reporting any issues to the governing board.
- Ensuring that hygiene is maintained at the school, including that the appropriate drainage is in place.
- The security of the school, including locking down the school after-hours and reopening the school.
- Conducting the relevant premises risk assessments, e.g. fire safety.
- Arranging for periodic inspections to take place to comply with the requirements of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

3. Asbestos

The governing board, headteacher and site manager will ensure that the school meets its duty to manage asbestos in school.

A duty holder will be appointed who will be responsible for ensuring that asbestos materials are properly managed. The appointed person will be provided with the resources, skills, training and authority required to ensure the asbestos materials are managed effectively.

The school will have an asbestos register, including associated remedial actions, and an Asbestos Management Plan. The site manager will review the school's Asbestos Management Plan annually, and regularly monitor the effectiveness of asbestos management arrangements to ensure that the risks are controlled. The site manager will ensure that all staff are informed of any asbestos located within the school and, in collaboration with the governing board and Office Manager, will arrange for any necessary repairs to the school regarding asbestos. The site manager and headteacher will ensure that an asbestos survey is undertaken by a qualified contractor whenever necessary and that the outcomes are recorded.

The headteacher will ensure that the stipulations in the Asbestos Management Policy are adhered to at all times. All staff, workers and contractors will receive adequate training and understand the precautions detailed in the Asbestos Management Plan.

4. Water supply

The site manager will ensure that the school's water supply meets the regulatory requirements by carrying out the necessary checks at appropriate intervals, so that:

- The school has a clean supply of water for domestic purposes, including a supply of drinking water.
- Toilet facilities have an adequate supply of cold water and washbasins, and sinks and showers have an adequate supply of hot and cold water.
- Hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk.

Risks relating to legionella bacteria will be managed by the school in the following ways:

- A competent person will be appointed to take day-to-day responsibility for controlling any identified risks
- Sources of risk will be identified and assessed in line with the HSE's Approved Code of Practice L8
- The Legionella Health and Safety Policy will be adhered to at all times
- A Legionella Control Scheme (or course of action) for preventing or controlling risks will be implemented and this scheme will be monitored
- Records will be kept of checks conducted to ensure measures in place are effective.
- A legionella risk assessment and the preparation of the course of action will be undertaken by a company which offers these specialist services

5. Temperature

Where there is a below-normal level of physical activity due to ill health or a physical disability, e.g. medical rooms, the heating systems will be able to maintain a temperature of 21°C. Where there is a normal level of physical activity associated with teaching, private study or examinations, the heating systems will be able to maintain a temperature of 18°C. Where there is a high level of physical activity, e.g. PE sports halls, the heating systems will be able to maintain a temperature of 15°C. The school's heating systems will be capable of maintaining this at a height of 0.5 metres above floor level when the external air temperature is -1°C.

The surface temperature of any radiator, including exposed pipework, that could be touched by a pupil will not exceed 43°C.

Air extract systems will be employed to maintain a safe environment by removing hazardous fumes and dust. Local exhaust ventilation systems (LEVS) may be used in fume cupboards and in workshops. These systems will be examined and tested at least every 14 months. Closed water circuits which operate under pressure will be checked periodically for leaks. Fan heaters will be checked and inspected periodically to check the fan operation and condition of electrical connections. Air conditioning systems will be inspected by an energy assessor at regular intervals, not exceeding five years. Bi-annual checks and an annual maintenance schedule will also be undertaken.

6. Toilet and washing facilities

The school will ensure that all members of the school community have equal access to suitable toilet,washing and changing facilities.

Pupils will not be allowed into toilets designated for the opposite biological sex. This includes where the school is responding to a request to support any degree of social transition for pupils who are questioning their gender.

- For pupils aged **3-5**, there will be **1** toilet and washbasin for every **10** pupils.
- For pupils aged **5-11**, there will be **1** toilet and washbasin per **20** pupils, which will be segregated into male and female for those over **8**.
- No more than **two thirds** of male toilets will be urinals.

Toilet and washing facilities will be planned to ensure that handwashing facilities are provided within the vicinity of every toilet and the facilities are properly lit and ventilated. These facilities will be located in areas that provide easy access for pupils and allow for supervision by members of staff, without compromising the privacy of pupils.

In line with the Toilet, Washing and Changing Facilities Risk Assessment, disabled toilets will have a toilet, washbasin and where possible, a shower or wash-down fitting. Disabled toilets will also have a door opening directly onto a circulation space that is not a staircase and can be secured from the inside. Where possible, a number of facilities will be available, to ensure a reasonable travel distance that does not involve changing floor levels. Where possible, shower areas will be separate from toilets, and they will provide adequate privacy.

The Office Manager will ensure that there are appropriate facilities in place for pupils who are ill, including:

- A room for medical or dental examination.
- A washbasin.

7. Accessibility

The headteacher and SENCO will keep the school's Accessibility Plan up to date to ensure the premises is accessible to staff, pupils and visitors with disabilities and other specific needs. The Accessibility Plan will include the health and safety needs of individuals with disabilities and other specific needs.

The school will take account of its Accessibility Policy when managing and maintaining the school site.

The school will ensure that Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are in place for those who require additional assistance if an emergency situation occurs in the setting. The implementation of the PEEP is done so by the 'responsible person' identified in the PEEP (SENCO, school nurse, headteacher).

The school will ensure that the PEEP is flexible to suit a range of unpredictable emergency scenarios and are kept under review.

8. Drainage

The site manager will carry out regular checks to ensure that there is adequate drainage for hygiene purposes and for the disposal of waste water and surface water – external drainage specialists will be called in should problems arise.

The site manager will ensure gutters are regularly cleaned. Ponding on roofs will be dealt with as a matter of urgency as it can cause deterioration of roof finishes and, in severe cases, can overload roofs, contributing to structural failure.

9. Lighting

Lighting will be appropriate for a learning environment; where possible, natural lighting will be used. Adequate views will be available to the outside, to ensure comfort and avoid eye

strain, and lighting controls will be easy to use. Blinds or other window covers will be provided, to avoid glare or excessive sunlight.

External lighting will be provided to ensure safe pedestrian movement after dark. Car parks will be well lit. Emergency lighting will be provided for areas which are accessible after dark. Security lighting will be provided around the perimeter of school buildings with dusk-to-dawn lighting on all elevations where there is an entrance door. Lighting will be designed to eliminate potential hiding points.

Outdoor sports facilities will have floodlights if they are likely to be used out of school hours.

Some of the adaptations the school will make may include:

- Ensuring the school has colour and contrast, which helps in locating doors and handles, stairs and steps.
- Avoiding glare, including high gloss paint.
- Using light sources, such as high frequency fluorescent luminaires, to avoid subliminal flicker.
- Clearly marking large areas of glazing, e.g. with frosted glass, to avoid accidents.

The site manager will arrange for fixed electrical systems to be tested around the school site. This will cover all of the electrical wiring within the buildings and grounds, including:

- External lighting and supplies.
- Main panels.
- Distribution boards.
- Lighting.
- Socket outlets.
- Air conditioning.
- Other fixed plants.

10. Security

The Office Manager, site manager, and security lead will make adequate security arrangements for the grounds and buildings, including, but not limited to, ensuring:

- Each building is securely locked and alarmed each night.
- Each building has a secure entrance.
- The school's perimeters are sufficiently secure.

The school's security arrangements are based on a risk assessment, which is regularly reviewed by the Office Manager, site manager and SLT, that explicitly considers the:

- Location of the school.
- Physical layout of the school.
- Movements needed around the site.
- Arrangements for receiving visitors.
- Staff and pupil training in security.

The School Security Policy addresses the school's approach to ensuring the safety and security of all staff members, pupils and visitors. The site manager and security lead will

ensure the school's security arrangements are adequate for the effective safeguarding of pupils and adhere to the expectations of the DfE, the LA and any local safeguarding partners, where possible.

The school will compile emergency grab bags for use during a response to a terrorist incident. Grab bags contain a selection of items which can prove useful in an emergency, such as communications equipment, bottled water, and plasters and/or cotton wool for treatment of injuries.

The school will ensure that emergency grab bags are placed in strategic positions within the setting, as well as consider adjusting the contents to suit the individual needs of specific learners.

11. Bomb threat

The school will ensure that all bomb threats, however received (phone call, social media message, face-to-face), are treated seriously, however implausible they may initially seem.

If a bomb threat is received, the school will remain calm and record as much information as possible from the person making the threat. The school will use its Bomb Threat Checklist to understand and document what details to record.

When considering the actions to take following a bomb threat, the incident lead should consider the following options:

- Which exit and evacuation routes are the safest to use?
- Are there any pre-existing details of suspicious behaviour in or around the school setting that could be linked to the bomb threat?
- Is there any available recent CCTV footage which may be of help in identifying the person making the threat?

The school will ensure that any bomb threats are reported to the police.

12. Lettings

The Office Manager will be responsible for lettings and will ensure that the health, safety and welfare of pupils are safeguarded, and their education is not interrupted by others. The school's Lettings Policy will be adhered to at all times.

Hirers will make an application for hire to the governing board. When determining whether to approve an application; the governing board will consider the following factors:

- The type of activity
- Possible interference with school activities
- The availability of facilities
- The availability of staff
- Health and safety considerations
- The school's duties with regard to the prevention of terrorism and radicalisation
- Whether the letting is deemed compatible with the ethos of the school

An application will not be approved if the hirer's purpose:

- Is aimed at promoting extremist views.
- Involves the dissemination of inappropriate materials.
- Contravenes the statutory Prevent duty.
- Is likely to cause offence to public taste and decency (except where this is, in the opinion of the school, balanced or outweighed by freedom of expression or artistic merit).

The governing board will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep pupils safe when hiring or renting out the school premises or facilities.

Where services or activities are provided by the governing board under the direct supervision or management of school staff, the school's arrangements for child protection will apply, in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, these arrangements may not apply; therefore, the governing board will:

- Seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
- Inspect the body's policies and procedures as needed.
- Ensure that there are arrangements in place to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.
- Ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises.
- Inform the body that failure to comply with these requirements would lead to termination of the agreement.

13. Weather

The site manager will ensure that the school buildings provide reasonable resistance to penetration by rain, snow, wind and moisture from the ground by conducting regular visual checks. Any issues identified will be relayed to the Office Manager. The school's Adverse Weather Policy will be adhered to at all times.

14. Invacuations, lockdowns and evacuations

The site manager will ensure there is sufficient access so that emergency invacuations and/or evacuations can be completed safely for all pupils and staff, including those with SEND, by ensuring that all entries and exits are kept clear and unobstructed, and by carrying out regular checks.

To ensure the safety of pupils with SEND, the site manager will liaise with the SENCO to establish the needs of pupils. Any issues will be reported to the governing board and SENCO, where appropriate.

When assessing the safety of the school, the Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Procedures will be considered, and reviews will be made where necessary.

The site manager will also liaise with the school's security lead to determine the effectiveness of the school's emergency invacuation and/or evacuation procedures.

If a security incident occurs, the security lead adopts the role of the incident lead to direct the school's initial response to the incident within the setting. The incident lead must be aware of which pupils and staff in the school have additional needs and who therefore may require additional help when evacuating or invacuating.

15. Suitability

The Office Manager will maintain the school by referencing the Environmental Health Authority's appropriate documentation, to avoid being condemned. The Office Manager and site manager will further ensure that, in terms of the design and structure of school buildings, no areas of the school compromise health and safety, in line with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

16. Fire safety

School premises, accommodation and facilities will be maintained to a standard that ensures, so far as is reasonable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils and staff, including in relation to fire safety.

Fire risk assessments will be undertaken to identify the general fire precautions needed to ensure the safety of occupants in case of a fire. Procedures will be in place for reducing the likelihood of fire including fire detection and alarm systems. Those completing fire risk assessments, or providing advice in relation to them, will be appropriately qualified or experienced.

Staff and pupils will be familiarised with emergency evacuation procedures and risk assessments will be updated if there are any significant changes to the premises. All school procedures and provisions relating to fire safety are outlined in the school's Fire Safety Policy.

Fire detection and alarm systems will have a weekly alarm test. In systems with multiple manual call points, a different one will be tested each week, so that all are eventually included in the schedule of testing over a period of time. The site manager will ensure all fire doors remain in efficient working order and should be regularly checked and maintained.

17. Cleaning

The school's School Cleaning Policy will be adhered to at all times. The Office Manager will be responsible for managing cleaning staff and will ensure that classrooms and other parts of the school are maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state by monitoring standards. Adequate measures should be taken to prevent condensation and noxious fumes in kitchens and other rooms.

18. Acoustics

Learning spaces will be designed in a way to enable people to hear clearly, understand and concentrate, and there will be minimal disturbance from unwanted noise. Some learning spaces, such as music rooms or open areas, will require higher acoustic standards.

19. Maintenance

The Office Manager will ensure that there is a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration by implementing the school's planned maintenance programme, including statutory and good practice checks. Most of this work will take place during holiday periods, but smaller tasks may be completed during term time.

A number of documents will be held to assist in managing the estate and ensure it is safe for all users. These will include certificates and details of all statutory examinations, testing and remedial work.

20. Furnishings

The Office Manager, in consultation with the headteacher and relevant heads of department, will ensure that the furniture and fittings are appropriately designed for the age and needs, including any SEND or medical conditions, of all pupils registered at the school.

Consideration will be given to specific requests for furniture and fittings generated as a result of the annual departmental review of furniture and fittings conducted by the site manager.

21. Grounds

The Office Manager, in consultation with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and relevant heads of department, will ensure that there are appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play and exercise safely. Under section 77 of The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, playing fields are protected from development.

The condition of all playground areas will be monitored by the site manager and deficiencies will be addressed. The school will ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that the premises are safe and without risks to health. This includes external areas and means of access to and from the school.

The school will ensure risks associated with individuals entering or leaving the school estate are assessed and the school perimeter will be secured and controlled accordingly. There will be clear segregation and delineation of pedestrian and vehicular access routes, and separation of parking and playground areas.

22. Health and safety audit

The Office Manager will ensure that the school premises are subject to a regular health and safety audit. The site manager will monitor that health and safety risk assessments are completed annually for each department. Any risks identified will be formally recorded, assessed and managed. This will include taking appropriate preventative and protective measures. Risk assessments will be reviewed regularly and kept up to date. This could be as a result of changed circumstances such as bringing in new equipment, using an area for a different purpose or if someone reports a hazard.

As well as formal risk assessments undertaken by competent persons, staff and pupils will be encouraged to report risks, and there will be a system in place to formally record and act on issues raised.

Health and safety monitoring arrangements will be referred to when carrying out any repairs, maintenance and improvement projects.

23. Electrical testing and inspection

A PAT exercise will take place annually. The schematic of the supply route and primary distribution will be updated annually. Fixed wiring and all distribution boards and safety devices will be inspected annually. All fixed wiring and all distribution boards will be tested at least once every five years.

All electrical testing and inspection will be carried out by a competent person.

For portacabins, the time interval between periodic inspection and testing of is a matter of engineering judgement and will depend on a variety of factors, including the level of supervision of the unit previously, the frequency of use and the severity of the external influences to which it is exposed, e.g. the weather.

A visual inspection will be carried out on all connecting cables, plugs and socket outlets before every use of the unit. The results of the visual inspection will be written in a log book as a permanent record of the condition of the electrical equipment.

It is at the discretion of the designer of the installation to use their professional engineering judgement and indicate the recommended inspection timeline on the certification provided.

Testing of all distribution boards in mobile accommodation will be conducted on an annual basis.

24. Other equipment, systems and storage

In line with The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER), the school will ensure that lifts used by employees for work are safe to use. Plans will be implemented to ensure the safety of users in the event of the lift breakdown or stopping between floors.

The school will ensure equipment used for physical education is safe to use. To ensure that equipment is maintained in a safe condition, it will be regularly inspected.

25. Gas

Gas and electrical safety posters will be displayed around the school, including classrooms. Appropriate signage, e.g. clearly visible hazard warning posters, will also be placed on storage room doors which are used for electrical and gas equipment.

All staff members working in areas with gas equipment will be made aware of the location of isolation valves, which are kept accessible at all times. In the event that electrical and gas supplies are shut off in an emergency, these will only be turned on again by a competent person.

Gas equipment and appliances will be purchased from reputable suppliers, and equipment that is hired or borrowed will be suitable for use before using it and maintained as necessary. The site manager will maintain an accurate inventory of all gas equipment purchased by the school.

All gas equipment will be installed by a suitability trained engineer and placed in appropriate locations with regard to fire safety and fire escape routes. The engineer's suitability to install or repair gas equipment will be confirmed, e.g. by showing their Gas Safe identification card.

The physical environment where gas equipment is installed will be assessed by the site manager to ensure its suitability, e.g. that it is dry, clean and ventilated. All gas equipment will be kept clear of combustible materials, heat sources and naked flames and stored appropriately, in line with the school's COSHH Policy.

Liquified petroleum gas (LPG) tanks will be inspected and maintained by a competent person on an annual basis.

All gas equipment will be inspected and maintained, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, by the site manager. Equipment will also have confirmation of the approved test authority mark, indicating compliance with the relevant standard.

Gas pipes and flues will be made a suitable rigid material, e.g. metal, and these will be checked for any damage on a daily basis by the site manager. All gas appliances will have the ability to be isolated from the gas supply.

Carbon monoxide detectors will be installed by the site manager and inspected on a monthly basis.

Gas cylinders will be stored in an upright position, with valve protection fitted, away from exit routes and combustible materials. No more than 15kg of flammable gases will be stored on the school premises at any time.

Any isolation valve defects will be reported immediately to the site manager so that appropriate repairs can be arranged, and the equipment is not used. Damaged or leaking gas equipment will not be used and will be immediately reported to the site manager for repair or safe disposal.

Repairs to gas appliances and fixtures will be carried about by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Engineers carrying out repairs on gas equipment will be given sufficient space, access, ventilation and illumination to allow them to carry out the work safely.

26. Ventilation and air quality

The school recognises that good ventilation is essential for maintaining a healthy, safe and productive learning environment. The school will ensure that fresh outdoor air is introduced into buildings and that stale indoor air is removed effectively.

Ventilation across the premises will be provided through a combination of:

- Natural means, such as opening windows, doors or vents.
- Mechanical systems, such as fans and ducted systems.

The school use effective ventilation to:

- Improve pupils' alertness and concentration and prevent overheating. Remove polluted and stale air.
- Reduce the concentration of airborne contaminants, including virus particles, thereby helping to reduce the spread of respiratory infections.

The school will manage ventilation levels carefully to balance health, comfort and energy efficiency. The school will adjust ventilation to maintain comfortable temperatures during colder weather while conserving energy wherever possible.

Monitoring ventilation and air quality

The school will regularly monitor ventilation and indoor air quality across its buildings. The school will use carbon dioxide (CO_2) monitoring as an indicator of the proportion of fresh air within indoor spaces, recognising that CO_2 levels increase when occupants exhale in poorly ventilated areas.

By monitoring CO_2 levels, the school will:

- Identify poorly ventilated spaces.
- Manage and adjust ventilation more effectively.

The school will take into account factors that affect CO_2 levels, including:

- The number of occupants in a room.
- The activity levels within the room.
- The level of ventilation provided.

The school will use suitable CO_2 monitoring equipment, prioritising non-dispersive infrared (NDIR) monitors where possible. The school may also use multi-functional environmental sensors capable of measuring additional factors such as temperature, humidity, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10).

Where environmental sensors are used, the school will:

- Position them away from doors, windows and ventilation outlets.
- Place them at seated head or table height.
- Ensure they are at least 0.5 metres away from occupants.
- Mount them securely on walls or desks as appropriate.
- Calibrate and test them periodically in line with manufacturer guidance.

The school will normally use one sensor per standard classroom unless a risk assessment indicates otherwise.

Responding to CO_2 readings

The school will use the following thresholds to guide action:

- Under 800ppm – the school will consider ventilation to be good. During colder periods, the school may partially or fully close windows to maintain comfort, while continuing to monitor readings and reopening windows if levels rise.
- Between 800ppm and 1500ppm – the school will consider ventilation to be adequate and will consider opening windows or doors further to improve airflow.
- Over 1500ppm – the school will consider ventilation to be poor and will increase ventilation promptly by opening windows and doors where safe and appropriate.

Ensuring adequate ventilation

The school will actively maintain buildings to ensure that adequate ventilation is consistently available. This will include ensuring that:

- Windows are not painted shut and remain safe and easy to open.
- Mechanical ventilation systems are operational.
- Ventilation systems are inspected regularly.
- Filters are checked, cleaned and replaced in accordance with manufacturer guidance.

When ventilation is required during colder weather, the school will balance air quality and thermal comfort by:

- Partially opening windows and doors.
- Opening higher-level windows to reduce draughts.
- Ventilating rooms between periods of use, e.g. by opening windows for approximately 10 minutes during lesson breaks.

Fire doors will not be wedged or propped open under any circumstance.

Use of air cleaning units (ACUs)

Where an adequate supply of fresh air cannot be maintained, the school will consider the temporary use of air cleaning units (ACUs) until remedial works are completed. The school may also consider ACUs in areas affected by external air pollution or where specific air quality concerns have been identified.

The school will recognise that ACUs:

- May reduce airborne contaminants, including pathogens.
- Do not improve ventilation or reduce CO_2 levels.

- Are not a substitute for adequate ventilation.

The school will not use ACUs as a reason to stop opening windows or operating mechanical ventilation systems where these are available. The use of ACUs will not delay necessary building or ventilation improvements.

The school will base any decision to use ACUs on appropriate risk assessments and will consider the individual needs of pupils, including those with hearing impairments.

Procurement of ACUs

When purchasing new ACUs, the school will follow the DfE's procurement guidance.

The school will only procure DfE-recommended HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filtration units and will not purchase air ionisers, ozone generators, or devices using unenclosed ultraviolet (UV) fields.

Where air filtration is being considered due to external air quality concerns, the school will seek advice from a ventilation specialist to determine the most appropriate solution.

Maintenance of ACUs

Where ACUs are installed, the school will ensure they are properly maintained by:

- Following manufacturer guidance for operation and maintenance.
- Replacing filters typically every 6 to 12 months, or as indicated by the unit.
- Budgeting appropriately for replacement filters and maintenance costs.

The school will remain responsible for maintaining any equipment supplied through previous DfE programmes, including replacement filters and repairs.

Compliance and further guidance

The school will ensure that ventilation and air quality arrangements form part of its wider health and safety risk assessment processes. The school will have regard to relevant guidance issued by the HSE, the UKHSA, the Royal Academy of Engineering, and the DfE when managing ventilation and indoor air quality.

27. Estate management training and competency

All individuals who are responsible for any element of the school's estate management will be fully equipped with the competency, skills and knowledge to fulfil their role.

The school will use the DfE's 'Estate management competency framework to:

- Ensure that those conducting estate management roles possess the skills and knowledge required.

- Benchmark existing skills and experience against the framework and identify gaps to help estate management staff with their professional development.

The school will ensure that all staff members and contractors responsible for specific elements of estate management have undertaken relevant training in relation to the following:

- Asbestos Awareness
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM)
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)
- Environmental Awareness
- Fire Safety and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Health and Safety Awareness
- Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Working Safely
- Use of ladders
- Legionella Awareness
- Lone Working
- Managing contractors
- Manual handling
- Portable appliance testing (PAT)
- Working at Height

26. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the headteacher and the site manager. The next scheduled review date for this policy is July 2026

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant staff members.