



ST. CATHERINE'S BRITISH SCHOOL

A registered charity in the UK and member of HMC & COBIS

Fire Safety Policy

St. Catherine's Values, Character and Behaviour Policy

Nurturing our Culture of Respect and Responsibility

This Policy is in line with the strategy of the school.

- Purpose: To empower young people to understand, care and create a better future.
- Mission: Foster learning with a rich curriculum that develops intellectual, social, physical and creative skills, preparing students for global citizenship.
- Our Values of care, integrity, dedication and curiosity, from which everything flows:
 - **Care** – compassion, empathy, looking after each other, asking difficult questions with respect, wellbeing and happiness.
 - **Integrity** – honesty, fairness, transparency, doing our part, respect.
 - **Dedication** – commitment, putting my all, going the extra mile, consistency, showing up when things get tough, striving for excellence.
 - **Curiosity** – keep asking questions, drive to evolve, inquisitive, explore ways to do things better, keep learning, be creative.

We foster a community of opportunity and excellence, celebrating achievements and empowering students to take ownership of their learning, uphold high standards, and contribute positively. Policies provide the structure to support these goals.

At St. Catherine's, staff and students will work together to create an environment which is inclusive, nurturing, consistent, fair and enables all students to feel safe, thrive and feel a sense of belonging.

This policy, to be read in conjunction with the:

- [Anti-Bullying Policy](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [SEND Policy](#)
- [Exclusion Policy](#)
- [Online Safety Policy](#)
- [Mobile phone policy](#)
- Uniform policy
 - [Lower School](#)
 - [KS3 & KS4](#)
 - [IB](#)

Fire Safety Policy Statement

St. Catherine's British School regards fire safety as an integral part of its duty of care to students, staff, visitors and contractors on both the Lower School and Upper School sites. The school is committed to preventing fires, protecting life above all other considerations, and ensuring that every member of the school community knows what to do in the event of a fire alarm, whether during a planned drill or a real emergency.

This Policy sets out the arrangements by which St. Catherine's meets its fire safety obligations as:

- a British School Overseas (BSO), accountable to the Standards for British Schools Overseas (August 2023);
- a school registered and operating under Greek law, subject to Greek fire safety and licensing requirements; and

- a UK-linked institution that has regard to the principles of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 as a matter of good practice, where these exceed local minimum requirements.

This Policy should be read alongside the Whole School Health and Safety Policy, the Lower School Evacuation Drill Procedures, the Upper School Evacuation Drill Procedures, and the Earthquake Preparedness Checklist. Where fire and earthquake response are combined operationally (for example, on site notices), this Policy governs the fire-specific elements; earthquake response is addressed in the Earthquake Preparedness Checklist.

1. Scope and Purpose

This Policy applies to all staff, students, volunteers, contractors, visitors and other persons on the Lower School and Upper School premises, and to any school-organised activity off-site where the school retains a duty of care (for example, residential trips).

Its purpose is to:

- prevent fires from occurring so far as is reasonably practicable;
- ensure that, in the event of a fire, all persons can evacuate the premises safely and without delay;
- set out clear roles and responsibilities for fire safety management; and
- demonstrate compliance with the fire safety standards required of a BSO and of a school operating in Greece.

2. Regulatory Framework

2.1 British Schools Overseas (BSO) Standards

As an accredited (or accreditation-seeking) British School Overseas, St. Catherine's is guided by the Standards for British Schools Overseas (Department for Education, August 2023). Part 3 of the Standards, Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils, sets out at Standard 12 that:

“The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the relevant fire safety laws in the host country are complied with and that a written fire safety policy is drawn up and effectively implemented.”

The Standards make clear that where a standard reflects UK law, host country law takes precedence for an overseas school; the test applied on inspection is therefore compliance with Greek fire safety law, evidenced by this written Policy and its effective implementation. Part 5 of the Standards (Premises of and Accommodation at Schools) further requires that premises are maintained so that, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils is ensured — which includes safe means of escape and properly maintained fire precautions.

The school additionally has regard to the principles of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 as benchmarks of good practice, applying UK standards where they exceed Greek minimum requirements, consistent with the approach taken in the Whole School Health and Safety Policy.

2.2 Greek Fire Safety Law

As a school operating in Greece, St. Catherine's is subject to Greek fire safety legislation administered by the Hellenic Fire Brigade (Πυροσβεστική Υπηρεσία) and, for active fire protection systems, by licensed engineers registered with the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE). In practice this requires the school to:

- hold a current Fire Safety Study and Fire Protection Certificate (Πιστοποιητικό Πυροπροστασίας) for each site, prepared and signed off by a qualified engineer and, where required, approved by the competent Fire Brigade department;
- maintain the active fire protection systems (extinguishers, alarms, detectors, hydrants/hose reels, emergency lighting and signage) specified in that Study, in good working order, with maintenance records retained on site;
- renew or update the Fire Protection Certificate within its period of validity and whenever significant changes are made to the premises or their layout, notifying the Fire Brigade and City Planning Office as required; and
- comply with the Greek Health and Safety at Work framework more generally, which the school meets through its appointed Health and Safety at Work Consultancy (SAFEMED) and Occupational Health Doctor, as set out in the Whole School Health and Safety Policy.

Where Greek and UK-derived standards differ, Greek law takes precedence, consistent with the interpretation set out in the BSO Standards; the school will nonetheless apply the more rigorous standard where practicable.

2.3 Interaction Between the Two Frameworks

The BSO Standards do not require St. Catherine's to be tested against UK fire law directly; they require evidence that Greek fire safety law is complied with and that a written fire safety policy — this document — is in place and effectively implemented. This Policy is therefore the single reference point an inspectorate, the Board, or a Greek fire safety officer would expect to see, supported by the site-specific certificates, maintenance logs and drill records described below.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Fire Safety Responsibility
Board of Governors	Ultimate responsibility for this Policy; ratifies and reviews it annually and satisfies itself that the school meets BSO Standard 12 and relevant Greek fire safety law.
Principal	Delegated responsibility for implementation; ensures adequate resourcing, training and site arrangements across both sites.
Head of Risk & Compliance	Day-to-day oversight of this Policy; maintains fire drill and inspection records; liaises with SAFEMED, the Greek Health and Safety officer, and the Fire Brigade; reports to the Health and Safety Committee and Board.
Site Manager(s)	Maintenance and testing of fire detection, alarm and firefighting equipment; upkeep of fire exits, doors and escape routes; termly premises audits; liaison with contractors and the Fire Brigade.
Senior Member of Staff (on duty)	Overall command of any drill or real incident; oversees roll calls; liaises with emergency services on arrival; authorises re-entry to buildings.
Fire Marshals	Sweep designated areas to ensure evacuation, check classrooms/toilets, report to the senior member of staff, and await further instructions. Trained annually by Pyrognosi.

All Staff	Know the evacuation procedure, exits and assembly point for their area; act on the fire alarm without delay; report hazards; support students, including those with additional needs, during evacuation.
SAFEMED (Greek H&S Consultancy)	Twice-monthly inspection visits by a Greek Health and Safety officer (Τεχνικός ασφαλείας); recommendations on fire and general safety matters, recorded and actioned by the school.

4. Fire Risk Assessment

A fire risk assessment is maintained for each site, informed by the Fire Safety Study prepared by a qualified engineer and by the visits of the Greek Health and Safety officer through SAFEMED. The risk assessment identifies fire hazards, persons at risk (including those with disabilities or additional needs), existing control measures, and any further action needed. It is reviewed:

- at least annually;
- following any fire, near miss or significant fire safety concern; and
- whenever there is a material change to the premises, occupancy, or use of a building or area.

Findings and actions are recorded and monitored by the Head of Risk & Compliance and reported to the Health and Safety Committee.

5. Fire Prevention

All staff are expected to observe the following precautions as part of day-to-day fire prevention:

- keep fire exits, escape routes and access to firefighting equipment clear of obstructions at all times; never wedge fire doors open;
- keep working areas, and in particular areas not easily accessible (under desks, behind radiators, storage rooms), free of unnecessary combustible waste;
- keep combustible materials a safe distance from heating appliances and never place anything on heaters;
- report any potential fire hazard immediately, correcting it directly only if it is easy and safe to do so; and
- observe the school's non-smoking policy (including vaping and e-cigarettes), which applies everywhere on site and is treated as a serious fire risk as well as a health risk.

Contractors are subject to the additional controls set out in Section 12.

6. Fire Detection, Alarm and Firefighting Equipment

Each site is equipped with fire detection and alarm systems, firefighting equipment (extinguishers and, where applicable, hose reels) and emergency lighting and signage, specified in the site's Fire Safety Study and installed and maintained by qualified contractors. The Site Manager is responsible for ensuring that:

- fire extinguishers, alarms and detectors are serviced and tested at the intervals required by the Fire Protection Certificate, with maintenance records retained;
- fire doors, exit routes and external assembly areas are kept free from obstruction and are inspected as part of termly premises audits;

- any fault or damage to fire equipment, doors, or signage is reported to the maintenance department without delay (maintenance@stcatherines.gr for the Lower School site; maintenance_upper@stcatherines.gr for the Upper School site); and
- lifts are clearly marked as not for use in a fire evacuation.

Staff must familiarise themselves with the location of firefighting equipment in their working area and must never interfere with or misuse it.

7. Fire Marshals

Each site has a designated team of Fire Marshals. Fire Marshals receive professional training annually from Pyrognosi — the Hellenic Fire-Fighting Institution — with training to an advanced level where appropriate to the marshal's role. Staff interested in becoming a Fire Marshal should contact the Principal's office; the role and duties are set out in the Role of the Fire Marshall document.

In an evacuation, Fire Marshals:

- sweep their designated area of the building (or part of the building) to check classrooms, toilets and other spaces are clear;
- report the status of their area to the senior member of staff at the guard's hut; and
- await further instructions before re-entering the building.

8. Evacuation Procedures

Detailed, site-specific evacuation procedures are set out in the Lower School Evacuation Drill Procedures and Upper School Evacuation Drill Procedures, which form part of this Policy. The core principles are summarised below.

8.1 Response to a Fire Alarm — Evacuate Immediately

Unlike the response to an earthquake, the priority on a fire alarm is to evacuate the building immediately. On hearing the alarm, all staff and students must:

- remain calm and not panic;
- leave the building by the nearest fire exit without stopping to collect belongings, closing doors behind them;
- not use the lifts;
- report to a senior member of staff if smoke or fire is seen; and
- proceed directly to the designated assembly point for their year group or role (see table below) and remain there, in silence where instructed, until registers are complete and further instructions are given.

8.2 Assembly Points

Site / Group	Fire Alarm — Assembly Point	Earthquake — Assembly Point
Lower School — EYFS	Mini tennis pitch (adjacent to first pitch over the road)	TOP pitch (all Lower School, including EYFS)
Lower School — Years 1–4	Bottom pitch / KS1 pitch (adjacent to main entrance)	TOP pitch
Lower School — Years 5–6	First pitch over the road	TOP pitch
Lower School — Visitors	Small huts at entrance of the pitches	Small huts at entrance of the pitches

Lower School — First Aid staff	Next to the guard's hut, awaiting instruction from LS Nurses	Over the road, next to the tented area
Upper School — All students and staff	Basketball / football area in front of main entrance	Basketball / football area in front of main entrance
Upper School — Other staff, admin, visitors	Inside main entrance to the sports fields	Inside main entrance to the sports fields
Upper School — First Aid staff	Triage area at entrance of assembly area, awaiting instruction from school nurses	Triage area at entrance of assembly area, awaiting instruction from school nurses

All required entrances and exits are opened by the security guards on the sounding of the alarm. Students and staff evacuating from the Hall, Theatre or Canteen(s) follow the specific exit routes set out in the site evacuation procedures (for example, not through the canteen; via the side door next to the kitchen where applicable), walking around the school perimeter to the assembly area rather than crossing the building.

8.3 Registration and Release of Students

Lower School admin, and Upper School form tutors, distribute and complete registers as soon as students reach their assembly point. Staff must wait for further instructions once registers are complete. Students and children must not be released to parents or guardians until all registers have been taken and all children have been accounted for; any student leaving the site with a parent during an evacuation must be carefully and individually registered.

8.4 Command and Control

The senior member of staff on duty takes overall responsibility for a drill or real incident. They will oversee roll calls administered by class teachers/form tutors, meet emergency services on arrival and advise them of anyone believed to remain in the building, and give permission for re-entry once it is safe to do so. No member of staff or student should re-enter an evacuated building until this authorisation is given.

8.5 Earthquake Note

Fire and earthquake response are combined on site guidance because both can require evacuation, but the two follow different first-response principles: a fire alarm is evacuated immediately, while a real earthquake is not evacuated immediately — staff and students drop, cover and hold on until shaking stops before evacuating. Full earthquake guidance is set out in the Earthquake Preparedness Checklist and is outside the scope of this Fire Safety Policy.

9. Fire Drills

A fire evacuation drill is held on each site at least once per term, in addition to the annual whole-school earthquake drill. A record of each drill — including the time taken to evacuate, any issues identified, and corrective actions — is kept on file by the Head of Risk & Compliance and made available to the Board, to SAFEMED, and to any BSO inspectorate on request.

Where a drill or a real evacuation identifies a weakness in the evacuation arrangements (for example, a blocked route, a confused assembly point, or a registration delay), this is recorded and addressed before the next scheduled drill.

10. Training and Information

Fire safety training and information is provided as follows:

- New staff are briefed on fire precautions, the evacuation procedure, emergency exits and their assembly point as part of induction, alongside the wider health and safety induction described in the Whole School Health and Safety Policy;
- All staff are expected to know the evacuation procedure and assembly point for their working area, and this is refreshed whenever there is a change in circumstances affecting fire safety;
- Fire Marshals receive annual training from Pyrognosi, to an advanced level where appropriate; and
- Training is conducted during working hours and repeated periodically as appropriate.

11. Accident, Incident and Near-Miss Reporting

Any fire, near miss, false alarm with a cause of concern, or fault in fire safety equipment must be reported immediately to the Site Manager and the Head of Risk & Compliance, in line with the accident reporting arrangements in the Whole School Health and Safety Policy. Where an incident results in injury, the school nurse must also be informed and a medical report incident form completed. Where the Fire Brigade or other emergency services attend, the school will follow their instructions at all times and will take responsibility for communicating with parents and staff as appropriate.

12. Contractors and Construction Work

Contractors undertaking repair, construction or servicing work must comply with fire safety regulations protecting themselves and others on site, in addition to the general contractor requirements in the Whole School Health and Safety Policy. Before work begins, the Site Manager ensures that:

- fire exits, routes and firefighting equipment remain accessible and are not obstructed by materials, plant or hoarding;
- any hot works, use of flammable materials, or temporary disabling of fire alarm zones is risk-assessed, time-limited, and, where necessary, covered by a fire watch; and
- the Fire Brigade or Fire Protection Certificate holder is notified of any works that could affect the fire safety systems or means of escape covered by the certificate.

13. Monitoring, Review and Record-Keeping

This Policy is monitored and reviewed as follows:

- the Head of Risk & Compliance maintains records of fire drills, fire safety inspections, SAFEMED visits, equipment maintenance and any incidents;
- the Health and Safety Committee and Health and Safety Working Group consider fire safety matters on a termly basis, alongside other health and safety business; and
- the Board of Governors reviews and ratifies this Policy at least annually, or sooner if there is a significant change in legislation, premises, or following a fire safety incident.

Records demonstrating compliance — including the Fire Protection Certificate for each site, maintenance logs, risk assessments and drill records — are retained by the Head of Risk & Compliance and made available on request to the Board, to SAFEMED and the Greek Health and Safety officer, and to any approved BSO inspectorate.

14. Related Documents

- Whole School Health and Safety Policy
- Lower School Evacuation Drill Procedures
- Upper School Evacuation Drill Procedures
- Earthquake Preparedness Checklist
- Role of the Fire Marshall
- First Aid Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Review: This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Head of Risk & Compliance or sooner if required. The next review date is August 2027