ALMA EDUCATION

Fire Safety Policy

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Approved by:	 Melanie Steel, Director of Education
Approved by:	Laura Kay, Advisory Board

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Statement of Intent

Alma Education is committed to ensuring that every session takes place in an environment that is as safe as possible from the risk of fire. Sessions are delivered in community settings, family homes and Alma hubs, and fire safety arrangements are designed around the variety of settings in which our learners and staff work.

Alma Education works in partnership with the hosts and owners of each setting to understand and apply the fire safety arrangements that are in place at that location. Before a new session location is used, the learning mentor confirms that fire safety provisions meet an appropriate standard, and this is recorded in the session-level risk assessment.

All learning mentors are briefed on fire safety procedures, understand what to do in the event of a fire, and are able to support learners to evacuate any session location safely. The welfare of every learner is the absolute priority.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance
Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)
The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
Department for Communities and Local Government: Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Educational Premises
Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
Non-School AP Voluntary National Standards (Aug 2025)

1. Legal Framework

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places a duty on the "responsible person" for any non-domestic premises to carry out a fire risk assessment and implement appropriate fire safety measures. For sessions taking place in community venues or Alma hubs, the responsible person is the premises owner or operator. For sessions in family homes, fire safety responsibility rests with the household.

Alma Education acknowledges its duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its staff and the learners in its care. This policy sets out how Alma Education meets that duty in the context of its community-based delivery model.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is responsible for:

- Overseeing the development and implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that this policy is reviewed annually and following any significant incident.
- Ensuring that the Director of Education has the resources needed to maintain appropriate fire safety arrangements.

The Director of Education

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that a fire safety check is completed for each new session location before sessions begin.
- Ensuring that all learning mentors are trained and briefed on fire safety procedures.
- Maintaining a record of session locations and the fire safety arrangements confirmed at each.
- Reviewing this policy annually and following any significant fire safety incident.

Learning Mentors

All learning mentors are responsible for:

- Completing a fire safety check at the start of each session at a new or unfamiliar location.
- Identifying the nearest fire exit, assembly point and any fire safety equipment at each session location.
- Being able to support the learner to evacuate the session location safely in the event of a fire.
- Calling 999 immediately in the event of a fire.
- Recording any fire safety concern or incident and reporting it to the Director of Education without delay.

Session Location Hosts

Where sessions are hosted in a community venue, the venue operator is responsible for the fire safety arrangements of the building, including fire risk assessments, fire detection equipment, fire exits and evacuation procedures. Alma Education will satisfy itself that these arrangements are in place before using any venue for sessions.

3. Risk Assessments

Before a new session location is used, the learning mentor completes a session-level risk assessment which includes a fire safety check. This check confirms:

- The location and accessibility of the nearest fire exit.

- The assembly point to be used in the event of evacuation.
- The presence and condition of smoke alarms or other fire detection equipment.
- Any specific fire risks associated with the location.
- Any specific needs of the learner that may affect evacuation.

The completed risk assessment is submitted to the Director of Education and retained on file. Risk assessments are reviewed and updated if the session location changes or if a concern is identified.

For sessions at Alma hubs, the Director of Education ensures that a full fire safety risk assessment is in place for each hub and that it is reviewed at least annually.

Check before every session at a new location

If you are visiting a session location for the first time, complete the fire safety section of the risk assessment before the session begins. Do not start a session at an unfamiliar location without confirming fire exits and assembly points.

4. Preventative Measures and Good Housekeeping

While Alma Education does not operate its own building, learning mentors are expected to apply good housekeeping principles at every session location:

- Do not block or obstruct fire exits or escape routes.
- Do not use electrical equipment that appears damaged or unsafe.
- Do not bring flammable materials to session locations unless required for a planned activity and risk assessed in advance.
- Report any fire safety concerns about a session location to the Director of Education immediately.

Where sessions involve any activity that creates a fire risk (for example, cookery sessions or outdoor fires), a specific risk assessment is required and must be approved by the Director of Education before the activity takes place.

5. Procedure in the Event of a Fire

In the event of a fire or the activation of a fire alarm at a session location, the learning mentor will:

- Remain calm and immediately guide the learner to the nearest fire exit.
- Leave all belongings behind.
- Proceed to the assembly point and remain there with the learner.
- Call 999 if the fire has not already been reported.
- Contact the learner's parent or carer as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Contact the Director of Education immediately.

Never attempt to fight a fire

No member of Alma Education staff should attempt to tackle or fight a fire. Evacuate the learner immediately and call 999. Belongings are not more important than safety.

Following any fire evacuation or incident, the learning mentor will complete a written record of the incident, including the time, location, what happened and any actions taken. This is submitted to the Director of Education on the day of the incident.

The Director of Education will notify the commissioning school of any fire incident involving a learner placed by that school, and will review the risk assessment for the affected location before sessions resume there.

6. Fire Safety Awareness for Learners

Where appropriate, learning mentors will discuss basic fire safety with learners as part of their planned programme. This may include:

- What to do if they discover a fire or smell smoke.
- The importance of not tampering with fire alarms or fire safety equipment.
- How to escape from a building safely.

At the start of any session at an unfamiliar location, the learning mentor will briefly explain to the learner where the nearest fire exit is and where they would meet if they needed to leave the building in an emergency. This should be done in a calm and reassuring way, appropriate to the learner's needs.

7. Learners with Additional Needs

Some learners may need additional support to evacuate a session location safely. Where a learner has a physical, sensory or cognitive need that may affect their ability to evacuate independently, this will be identified in the learner's individual plan and discussed with the commissioning school and the learner's family before sessions begin.

The learning mentor will take account of any such needs when completing the fire safety risk assessment for each session location, and will confirm that the location can accommodate safe evacuation for that learner. If the location cannot meet the learner's needs, an alternative location will be identified.

Where sessions are held at a community venue with a formal Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) process, Alma Education will cooperate with the venue to ensure the learner's needs are recorded and accommodated.

8. Staff Training

All learning mentors receive fire safety briefing as part of their induction with Alma Education. This briefing covers:

- The requirements of this policy.
- How to carry out a fire safety check at a new session location.
- What to do in the event of a fire.
- How to support learners with additional needs to evacuate safely.

Fire safety is reviewed with all learning mentors at least annually. The Director of Education will communicate any updates to fire safety procedures or legislation to all staff without delay.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Director of Education and the Advisory Board, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or statutory guidance. Any necessary amendments will be communicated to all staff. This policy was approved by Melanie Steel, Director of Education, in August 2026 and is due for review in August 2027.