

Fire Safety Policy

1. Policy Statement

Bedford Modern School is committed to providing a safe environment for its staff, students and visitors. An integral part of this commitment is the provision, management and oversight of fire safety systems, controls and procedures.

Fire poses a significant risk to life, property, and the continuity of school operations. Effective management of fire risk is therefore essential. The School will manage the risk in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and any other relevant legislation that is implemented.

The main requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 include:

- Carrying out fire risk assessments and implementing fire precautions to minimise the risk of fire.
- Having the ability to detect and raise the alarm in the event of a fire.
- Providing and maintaining a means of escape.
- Providing emergency evacuation procedures and firefighting equipment.
- Providing information, instruction and training to staff in relation to fire safety.

The aim of this Policy is to provide a robust fire safety framework to secure the safety of everyone and protect School property.

2. Introduction

The Fire Safety Policy has been developed to protect staff, students, visitors and School assets from the risk of fire. The effectiveness of this Policy depends not only on physical precautions designed to prevent the occurrence and spread of fire, but also on the cooperation of every staff member, student and visitor.

The main objectives of the Fire Safety Policy are:

- To safeguard staff, students and visitors who may be affected by fire whilst on School premises.
- To safeguard the physical assets of the School.
- To reduce the risk of fires occurring.
- To minimise the occurrence of accidental or false fire alarm activations.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Harpur Trust

The Harpur Trust, as employer, is the 'Responsible Person' and has ultimate responsibility for fire safety management in respect of the School's activities and buildings.

Leadership Team and Heads of Faculty

The Leadership Team and Heads of Faculty are responsible for ensuring appropriate fire precautions are in place and for the effective management of fire risks related to the activities and areas under their control.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Review and implementation of actions identified by the fire risk assessment within

the recommended timeframes.

- Ensure the areas under their control and responsibility meet statutory fire safety standards.
- Ensure the means of escape within their department remain unobstructed and free from hazards.
- Ensure suitable and sufficient risk assessments dealing with hazardous materials and processes are documented and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure appropriate training for their departmental staff is undertaken.
- Ensure there are sufficient fire wardens appointed in their area of responsibility.
- Ensure that all students and visitors are adequately supervised by members of staff.
- Ensure that arrangements are in place for those with affected mobility or sensory disabilities or who are temporarily immobile to get to a place of safety.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the evacuation procedures for their area of responsibility.

Head of Estates and Operations (HEO)

The Head of Estates and Operations is responsible for ensuring the maintenance and management of fire safety precautions and controls for all school buildings, including;

- The completion of fire risk assessments and implementation of any recommendations
- Fire warning and detection systems and their regular testing
- Firefighting equipment
- Escape routes and signage
- Emergency lighting

The Head of Estates and Operations, in conjunction with the Head of Health, Safety and Compliance, shall ensure that contractors have adequate fire safety management plans and arrangements in place.

Head of Health, Safety and Compliance

The Head of Health, Safety and Compliance is responsible for the following:

- Liaising with the HEO and DFO regarding fire safety requirements.
- Maintaining fire safety records.
- Ensuring inspections of the fire alarm, emergency lighting, escape routes and fire extinguishers are being completed and any issues resolved.
- Ensuring that new members of staff are informed of the Fire Evacuation Procedures and existing staff receive regular refresher training.
- Ensuring the School maintains a team of Fire Marshalls who are suitably trained.
- Ensuring fire drills are completed and feedback is requested.
- Ensuring that all fire safety incidents are reported.
- Ensuring that Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are completed for any mobility or sensory impaired staff or students.

Fire Marshalls

Fire Marshalls are assigned to each of the School's buildings and will support the safe evacuation of all staff and students. Their responsibilities include:

- Familiarisation with all escape routes from the buildings in which they normally work/occupy.
- Awareness of the Fire Evacuation Procedures, refuge areas and assembly points.
- Taking appropriate and effective action if a fire occurs, including supporting the evacuation of staff and students.
- Reporting any visual defects of firefighting equipment or fire doors to the HEO.
- Ensure escape routes are kept clear at all times.
- Ensure good housekeeping practices are implemented.

- Attend additional training to support their role as a Fire Marshall as and when required.

Staff

Staff are required to comply with the Fire Safety Policy and Fire Evacuation Procedures to ensure their own safety and the safety of others.

Staff responsibilities include:

- Not interfering with or misusing any fire safety equipment.
- Completing all fire safety training as required.
- Raising the alarm upon the discovery of a fire.
- Evacuating the building as quickly as possible and only re-entering following the specific instruction of the Senior Deputy Head.
- Providing clear instruction to students in the event of a fire or a fire drill and taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safe evacuation of all students.
- Switching off all appliances using gas and electricity and ensuring laboratory experiments are rendered safe upon exit.
- Maintaining good housekeeping and ensuring waste bins are regularly emptied.
- Ensuring visitors in their care are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures in the event of a fire.

Contractors/Project Work

Where contractors are on site, it is the responsibility of the HEO (with the support of the Head of Health, Safety and Compliance) to ensure the appropriate level of fire safety provision is incorporated within any work schedule, contract agreement or risk assessment.

All contractors must be briefed on the School's Fire Evacuation Procedures relevant to their area of work prior to commencing any activity on site.

Where any work is likely to involve the application of a naked flame or mechanically induced heat source, a 'Hot Work Permit' must be obtained from the HEO prior to the commencement of the work.

4. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

A PEEP is required for staff or students who may need additional assistance during an evacuation due to a disability or temporary condition, such as:

- Mobility impairment
- Sight impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Cognitive impairment
- A medical condition or injury which might cause them to need assistance to evacuate safely

A PEEP will provide information regarding the additional support required to evacuate the building and any changes to evacuation routes or procedures.

Students

Where it has been identified that a student will require a PEEP, the students Form Tutor should complete the initial draft and send to the Lead Nurse for review and comment.

Once completed a copy of the PEEP should be communicated to relevant individuals as needed, i.e. teachers, HoD, HoF, HoY etc.

Staff

Where it has been identified that a staff member requires a PEEP, the staff member is responsible for requesting this from their Line Manager. The Lead Nurse will work with the staff member and their Line Manager to complete the PEEP as needed.

Review

PEEPs should be reviewed at least annually. More frequent reviews may be required if a person's condition changes or their working environment changes, i.e. move buildings.

5. Fire Safety Training

All staff are required to complete regular fire safety training. All new staff must complete fire safety training as soon as practicable after commencing employment.

In the event any new equipment, new technology or new regulations which impact the schools fire safety provisions are introduced, additional training will be required.

All fire safety training records are maintained by the Head of Health, Safety and Compliance.

New Staff

All new staff members must be informed of the Fire Safety Policy, Fire Evacuation Procedures and the fire safety provisions relevant to their work area as soon as possible when they start.

Line Managers are responsible for ensuring new staff members are aware of the following:

- Fire evacuation procedures and how they relate to their role and responsibilities
- Escape routes and fire exits
- Assembly points
- Location of firefighting equipment
- Any relevant PEEPs for individuals they may need to assist

The online 'Fire Awareness in Education' course will be assigned to all new starters by the Head of Health, Safety and Compliance. Line Managers are responsible for ensuring their direct reports complete the training as soon as possible.

The online course is to be refreshed every 2 years by all staff.

Fire Marshalls

Training will be provided to all new Fire Marshalls. Training will be refreshed every 3 years or sooner if required due to changes in fire safety provisions or legislation.

6. Fire Risk Assessment

The main purpose of the fire risk assessment process is to ensure that a methodical and structured approach is applied to assessing the suitability and effectiveness of the School's fire safety provisions.

The Fire Safety Order places a statutory duty on the School to carry out an assessment of the workplace for the purpose of identifying any risks to the safety of staff, students, visitors and others in respect of harm caused by fire.

A fire risk assessment will be completed by external specialists every year or sooner in the event any material changes are likely to impact on the School's fire safety provisions.

The completion of the fire risk assessment is the responsibility of the HEO, with the assistance of the Head of Health, Safety and Compliance. Following the assessment a report will be produced with specific recommendations for the improvement of fire safety within the School. Any recommendations will be prioritised in terms of risk and urgency of action.

The fire risk assessment report will be presented to the Health and Safety Committee. The HEO will work with the Head of Health, Safety and Compliance to ensure all recommendations are

actioned as required.

7. Fire Safety Systems and Controls

Planned Fire Drills

A fire drill will be undertaken every term, preferably within the first few weeks of term. However, consideration will be given to examinations and parent tours.

The Head of Health, Safety and Compliance will maintain fire drill records, including the time taken to evacuate the School and the time taken to complete student and staff registers.

Feedback will be sought from all staff following a fire drill and any subsequent recommendations will be recorded and actioned as required.

Unplanned Fire Drills

In the event the fire alarm is activated by anything other than fire, e.g. dust, a record will be maintained of the cause and any actions required to prevent a similar false alarm in the future.

Fire Doors

Fire doors designed to restrict the spread of fire are in place throughout the school. All fire doors should be kept closed at all times and not wedged open.

Fire doors are inspected regularly, and any damage or defects are addressed.

Escape Routes and Emergency Lighting

All escape routes are clearly signposted. To ensure escape routes are not compromised, equipment and materials should not be stored within any protected escape route or staircase. Escape routes should be kept clear at all times and it is the responsibility of all staff members to ensure this is maintained.

The Maintenance Department will carry out routine inspections of the escape routes every month.

The Maintenance Department will carry out routine testing of the emergency lighting system every month. The emergency lighting system will also be inspected annually by external specialists.

Fire Alarm System

A fire alarm system is installed in the school to provide an audible alarm in the event of a fire. The fire alarm can also be activated manually via one of the many call points around the school.

The fire alarm system is tested weekly by the Maintenance Department, with activation of different call points on a rotational basis to ensure full coverage across the site. The fire alarm system is inspected every 6 months by an external specialist.

Firefighting Equipment

Firefighting equipment, including fire extinguishers and fire blankets, are positioned around the school. Fire extinguishers must be provided in all school vehicles.

Fire extinguishers are inspected every month by the Maintenance Department and annually by an external specialist.

8. Fire Evacuation Procedures

The Main School site operates on a simultaneous evacuation basis, i.e. all buildings evacuate on a single fire alarm evacuation. The Swimming Pool and King Room fire alarm systems are not linked to the main School site and therefore will not evacuate if the alarm is triggered on the

Main School site.

Please refer to the Fire Evacuation Procedures for further information on the procedures and identified escape routes. All staff should be familiar with the escape routes and alternative exits for the buildings in which they work.

9. Fire Strategy

Due to the different ages and construction of buildings on site, the School has a number of different categories of fire alarms installed. As part of the RAAC Project, significant upgrades have been made to the fire alarm system and compartmentation in the Main School building. The School will continue to review and upgrade the fire protection throughout the rest of the buildings on site as required.

10. Contacting the Fire Service

If the fire alarm is activated during the day, the Maintenance Department will verify the location of the activation on the alarm panel and a member of the Maintenance Department will investigate to confirm if the fire is real or not.

In the event the fire alarm is activated, the School's remote monitoring service (Scutum) will attempt to contact the School to confirm if it is a false alarm. If they are unable to contact the School, they will contact the Fire Service directly to avoid delay.

The Senior Deputy Head or Director of Finance and Operations may also contact the Fire Service directly in the event of a real fire.

The HEO will liaise with the Fire Service upon their arrival and notify them of the location of the fire.

Night Procedure

If the fire alarm is activated at night, the School's remote monitoring service will contact the School's security contractor to confirm whether it is a false alarm. If they are unable to confirm or they do not respond, they will contact the Fire Service directly.

Mrs J Jackson
Head of Health, Safety and Compliance

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