

Fire Safety Management Policy & Procedures



ADVANTAGE
S C H O O L S

Approved by: Trust Board

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Policy statement	1
3. Fire Safety Strategy	1
4. Roles & Responsibilities	2
5. Arrangements for fire safety	2
Risk Assessments	2
Maintenance of fire detection and fire-fighting equipment	3
Training	3
Fire Drills	4
Evacuation and other responsibilities	4
Fire Registers	6
Ensuring the safety of other related third parties	6
6. Pupils, visitors and employees with Physical or Sensory impairments	6
Evacuation Plan: Mobility impaired	6
Evacuation Plan: Hearing impaired	7
Evacuation Plan: Blind or visually impaired	7
Evacuation Plan: Other impairments	8
Evacuation Plan: Language difficulties	8
7. General Emergency Fire Procedures	8

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1. Introduction

Advantage Schools is a responsible employer and we take our fire safety duties very seriously.

The effects of a fire could be catastrophic and could have a devastating effect on the schools and is, potentially the greatest threat to individual health and safety in the schools.

Management of fire safety is therefore essential to ensure that fires are unlikely to occur; but if they do occur they are likely to be controlled quickly, effectively and safely, and that all occupants can escape to a place of safety easily and quickly.

This policy has been formulated in line with our legal obligations to staff, pupils, contractors and visitors under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Fire safety is everyone's responsibility. All staff, pupils, contractors and visitors are required to follow Trust and School procedures and to co-operate with staff to achieve the highest standards of fire safety.

2. Policy Statement

It is the Trust's policy to:

- Ensure that all staff, pupils, contractors, visitors and members of the public are protected from the risk of fire
- Ensure that all buildings comply with all statutory requirements
- Undertake suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments and to identify and implement reasonably practicable control measures to control risks from fire
- Provide staff, pupils, contractors and visitors with sufficient and appropriate fire awareness, instruction and training
- Complete regular fire evacuation drills and testing of emergency equipment
- Ensure effective liaison with the local emergency services as appropriate

3. Fire Safety Strategy

Prevention strategy:

- The Facilities Manager will organise formal recorded Risk Assessments for the buildings; and these will be reviewed annually or revised when major changes take place to building structures.
- Staff will be provided with fire safety training as appropriate
- Schools will be designed to ensure that the risks of fire through sources of ignition are suitably controlled; and risk assessments will be completed prior to occupation
- Materials will be stored appropriately and where necessary in specialised storage units or containers with signage
- Smoking will be prohibited from all Trust sites
- The storage of fuels and highly flammable materials will only be allowed with the permission of the Facilities Manager
- Activities involving naked flames or heat production will only be allowed with the permission of the Facilities Manager in assigned areas
- Activities of contractors will be subject to hot works permits

Response Strategy:

- All schools have established emergency action plans that are kept under review
- Fire wardens are trained and appointed to specific areas
- Fire evacuation drills will be carried out once each term
- Equipment to support the safe evacuation of individuals with mobility difficulties is provided where required
- Relevant staff are trained in the use of evacuation equipment and fire extinguishers
- Suitable means of fire detection shall be regularly tested and checked within all facilities

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Facilities Manager is responsible for health and safety and has overall responsibility for the effectiveness of the fire safety strategy. They will be supported in this role by the Chief Operating Officer, Principals and other members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

The Facilities Manager is responsible for:

- Monitoring compliance and effectiveness of the fire safety strategy and liaising with staff over their allocated duties and performance
- Effective implementation of procedures as outlined in the fire safety strategy policy and fulfil their allocated duties
- Ensuring all task and operational risk assessments are completed to identify the specific and general risks of fire and the preventative actions necessary within their managed areas
- Ensuring that staff are properly inducted in the local fire emergency procedures
- Ensuring on a daily basis that all areas are covered by fire wardens
- Ensuring that appropriate emergency action plans are in place by working with the Principals or their delegates

Teaching staff are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that a high standard of housekeeping is maintained within their areas of control
- Ensuring that all pupils and visitors within their areas participate in emergency evacuations

Employee's duties

Under fire safety legislation employees have a general duty to co-operate with their employer to include:

- Being aware of and co-operating with the Trust's policies on action to be taken in the event of a fire and the recommended evacuation policies
- Proceeding to the external assembly points in an orderly fashion as directed by fire wardens
- Being prepared to offer assistance to a fire warden if required
- To ensure they observe the information, instruction and training provided regarding fire safety and evacuation procedures
- To not knowingly place themselves and others at risk through their actions or failures to act at work
- To report immediately all hazards (including fire risk hazards) encountered in the workplace

5. Arrangements for fire safety

Risk assessments

As required under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments will be carried out for each school.

These arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis and in particular when significant changes to a building have been made.

The Facilities Manager is responsible for this process and will, as far as reasonably practicable, identify and implement control measures to control risks from fire.

Maintenance of fire detection and fire-fighting equipment

The Facilities Manager will ensure that all fire detection, fire alarm, fire-fighting equipment and emergency lighting systems will be maintained and serviced regularly in line with statutory requirements.

Training

Training – Emergency co-ordinator

The Facilities Manager will ensure that the nominated emergency co-ordinators will receive appropriate guidance and training for their role.

Training - Fire wardens

Arrangements shall be put in place to ensure that there are sufficient employees trained and appointed as fire wardens.

Fire wardens are primarily responsible for supervising and controlling the immediate response to an emergency situation and to ensure that staff and pupils follow emergency procedures.

Fire warden appointments are reviewed periodically by the Facilities Manager and the appointment of new fire wardens will be determined by the Facilities Manager.

Once appointed, fire wardens will receive additional guidance and information on their roles and responsibilities.

Training - Staff

All employees shall receive a fire safety briefing on commencement of employment, or if their employment location changes. All new staff will complete Fire Awareness Training as part of their induction.

All staff will be required to attend fire safety training as directed by the Trust.

The Facilities Manager is responsible for ensuring that employees who have specific responsibilities for fire safety management are trained appropriately to ensure statutory obligations are met.

Training - Pupil

All pupils shall be given fire safety instruction when they start at school. All pupils are expected to participate fully in fire drills supported by staff. There may be circumstances, especially involving younger children and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, where notice will be given of a drill to minimise risk / impact for those involved.

Fire drills

In order to comply with legislation and to ensure that appointed staff members fully understand their role in any evacuation, each school will undertake scheduled fire drills at least once each term.

The Facilities Manager will arrange, in consultation with the Principal, for evacuation drills to be conducted at suitable times and dates. As drills are intended primarily to train the staff rather than the public, it is not necessary to cover all eventualities.

The Facilities Manager will ensure that programmes of drills are conducted and shall carry out this programme without prior warning being given.

In all drill situations a check will be undertaken in an attempt to avoid exam situations. However, arrangements must be in place to ensure that there is an appropriate response if alarms sound during an exam. The Exams Officer is responsible for ensuring that all invigilators respond as appropriate to the emergency.

Evacuation and other responsibilities

Emergency co-ordinator

An Emergency co-ordinator has been appointed for each school and emergency actions plans are in place along with guidance notes related to the particular school.

On hearing the alarm, or having been advised of the emergency situation the Emergency co-ordinator shall proceed to the Fire Assembly point.

The Emergency co-ordinator will allocate duties to any member of staff as required.

The Emergency co-ordinator will carry out the following duties:

- Wear a high visibility jacket
- Take appropriate action to prevent people from re-entering the building
- Ensure that people move away from the building to the assembly point
- Prevent the movement of vehicles other than the Emergency Services on the site
- To assess and co-ordinate, if considered necessary, the retrieval of staff and/or pupils at designated refuge points

The Emergency co-ordinator should hand over control to the Fire and Rescue Service when they arrive, informing them of the up to date situation and any outstanding problems e.g. at risk persons or dangerous materials.

When the Fire Officer indicates that the emergency is over, the Emergency co-ordinator will organise the return of people to the building and ensure the school is returned to normal as quickly as possible by confirming the "all clear" or, in conjunction with the Principal, make a decision as to whether the school needs to be closed. This will be subject to advice given from the emergency services relating to damage or risk associated to the emergency / fire.

Fire wardens

The fire warden is the designated person in their area.

It is important that all staff including fire wardens conduct themselves in a calm and effective manner, setting an example to others and thereby contributing towards a safe and speedy evacuation.

When the alarm sounds the duties of the fire wardens are to:

- Check all rooms including toilets in their area to make certain a complete evacuation of the area has taken place.
- Check all refuge points and ensure that a member of staff remains in attendance, if required and where possible to proceed to evacuate the person using an evacuation chair.
- Close all doors on evacuating the building
- Report to the Emergency co-ordinator or as directed by the school emergency action plan and ensure that reporting in has been made
- Notify the Emergency co-ordinator of the whereabouts of any disabled persons awaiting evacuation
- To ensure that all staff and pupils move away from the building
- Undertake any other duties (e.g. traffic control, marshalling duties etc.) that may be assigned to them by the Emergency co-ordinator

Teaching Staff

The prime responsibility of a teacher taking a class, at the time the alarm is sounded, is to secure the safe evacuation of their class from the building.

The Teacher should:

- Instruct pupils to proceed in silence to the nearest emergency exit and to the assembly point (see fire action notice)
- Where persons with impairment are involved, assist those unable to use the stairs (if applicable) to the nearest refuge point and ensure that they or another member of staff waits with them.
- Ensure that the fire warden is made aware of their presence at that refuge point
- If not required at a refuge point, proceed to supervise pupils to the assembly point and remain there with their class. Continue supervising the pupils throughout the emergency situation, ensuring they move away from the building
- If working in a workshop or lab, ensure that all machines are switched off where it is safe to do so. Ensure that as long as no undue delay will be caused, all the gas and power supplies to equipment are shut off using the isolation means provided
- To provide support and assistance as necessary to ensure a smooth and effective evacuation

Teaching assistants will also have a role in this at some schools.

When the “all clear” is given by the Emergency co-ordinator, teachers will be allowed to return to the building with their pupils.

Reception Staff

The school receptionist should locate the visitor book, staff signing in and out book, student signing in late book and fire bag (if applicable) and take these to the assembly point. They should register all visitors and staff and inform the Emergency Co-ordinator of anyone who is unaccounted for.

Facilities Staff

Following an alarm, Facilities Staff will be responsible for:

- Assisting the Emergency Co-ordinator in establishing the facts and general information about the fire and guiding the fire services to the nearest control panels, isolation valves and locations of concern
- Assist in securing buildings as directed
- Aid the controlling of traffic and people as directed
- Aid and assist in the retrieval of a person from refuge points if the Emergency Co-ordinator assesses the need to do so
- Assist in securing a safe and effective re-occupation of buildings once the all clear has been given

First Aiders

On hearing a fire alarm, First Aiders who are not required in any other capacity and with easy access to portable first aid kits should collect these kits and report to the Emergency Co-ordinator.

The Emergency Co-ordinator will assess if there is need to establish a first aid point at a safe location.

Where a school holds inhalers for children in classrooms, the teaching staff will ensure that these are brought to the Assembly Point.

Fire Registers

Fire registers will be taken to the assembly point and dealt with in accordance with the Emergency Action Plan in each school.

Ensuring safety of other related third parties

Ensuring the safety of visitors

All visitors will be asked to read the emergency procedures on arrival at reception. In the event of an evacuation, the member of staff hosting the visitor is responsible for overseeing their safe evacuation.

Ensuring the safety of Contractors' personnel

The Facilities Manager is responsible for ensuring that contractors' personnel are made aware of fire procedures before they start work. The contractors' site supervisor is responsible for the accounting of their staff and the safety of their equipment and shall be advised to liaise with the Emergency Co-ordinator if they have concerns.

The Contractor and their personnel shall be responsible for observing school procedures and any failures will be investigated and may lead to their removal from site.

6. Pupils, visitors and employees with Physical or Sensory impairments

The school accommodates pupils, visitors and employees with physical and sensory impairments so far as is reasonably practicable to do so.

The Principal is responsible for accepting such individuals and the Facilities Manager must ensure that the school has adequate and appropriate staff trained in

the safe evacuation of these pupils and that a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is to be devised and implemented.

Evacuation Plan: Mobility impaired

It is the policy of the Trust not to locate those who are mobility impaired in a location in which their impairment would unduly expose them to the risk of injury due to a fire and the subsequent need for emergency evacuation.

Where the school buildings have more than one floor, they have emergency refuge points established which offer protection for at least 30 minutes to anyone in these areas.

In the event of an emergency situation the Emergency Co-ordinator will make an assessment on the location of people in refuge points in relation to the hazard, the ETA of the emergency services and will decide whether to instruct retrieval.

Where the blind or visually impaired person is in a classroom or office at the commencement of the alarm activation, it is the responsibility of the Teacher, supervisor or by default the Fire warden to ensure they have a member of staff or "Buddy" with them.

On arrival the Fire and Rescue Service will be informed immediately on the status of anyone at refuge points and they ascertain whether the lifts may be reactivated and used for any evacuation.

Evacuation plan: Hearing Impaired

There is no restriction on the location or movement of pupils, visitors or employees who have a hearing impairment, as they would be able to evacuate without undue concern, once made aware that the alarms are sounding.

It is the policy of the Trust that those who have a hearing impairment would be integrated in the same group(s) as those who do not; they would therefore gain knowledge of the danger from those around them.

A PEEP will be completed for each individual.

Should there be a need for the hearing impaired person to be left on their own either in class, office or for personal needs, then it would be the incumbent on their teacher or supervisor to ensure they are made aware and safe evacuation effected.

Evacuation Plan – Blind or visually impaired

There is no restriction on the movement of pupils, visitors or employees who suffer from blindness or visual impairment, as they would be able to evacuate with limited assistance.

It is the policy of the school that those who have a visual impairment would be integrated in the same group(s) as those who do not; they would therefore gain knowledge of the danger from those around them.

Should there be a need for the blind or visually impaired person to be left on their own either in class, office or for personal needs, then it would be the incumbent on their teacher or supervisor to ensure they are made aware and safe evacuation effected.

In order to ensure that the blind or visually impaired person does not receive undue pressure or cause obstruction, they should be encouraged and guided to use the left hand side of any stairway or corridor or moved to a Refuge Point. A PEEP will be completed for each individual.

Where the blind or visually impaired person is in a classroom or office at the commencement of the alarm activation, it is the responsibility of the Teacher, supervisor or by default the Fire warden to ensure they have a member of staff or "Buddy" with them.

Evacuation Plan – Other impairments

There are no restrictions on the movement of pupils, visitors or employees who suffer from sensory impairments (mental illness, mental health problems, learning difficulties, dyslexia and conditions such as diabetes or epilepsy), but there could be a greater degree of effort needed to control the individual or group in the event of a fire situation.

A PEEP will be completed for each individual if this is deemed to be necessary.

In order to ensure that the sensory impaired person does not receive undue pressure or cause obstruction to the able bodied during an evacuation they should be assisted and encouraged to use the left hand side of any stairway or corridor.

Evacuation Plan – Language difficulties

The Trust does not anticipate a situation where employees or visitors would not understand the evacuation procedure therefore no special arrangements are required.

As the Trust undertakes the education of pupils from a variety of national and ethnic origins there is the likelihood that some pupils may have difficulty understanding the instruction given. Even though all evacuation route signs are in accordance with the European standards, Health & Safety (Safety Signs & Signals) Regs 1996, there is still the possibility that some members of the class may not understand them.

Where the pupil is in a classroom at the commencement of the alarm activation, it is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure the pupils have a member of staff or other responsible person, whom they understand, with them.

7. General Emergency Procedures

What you should do if you discover a fire

- Leave the area quickly, closing the door behind you
- Raise the alarm at the earliest opportunity
- Do not attempt to tackle the fire yourself unless you have received fire extinguisher training and have a clear exit route. If in doubt – get out

What you should do when the fire alarm is heard

- Turn off any electrical equipment you are using, if this can be done swiftly and without delay.
- Close any doors as you leave
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings
- Leave the building by the nearest available fire exit unless advised otherwise by a fire warden
- Do not use the lifts to leave the building, where applicable, use the designated emergency escape routes
- If you are asked to help with the evacuation of an impaired colleague, pupil or visitor by a fire warden please do so without delay
- Go to the designated assembly point
- Do not re-enter the building unless you are given permission by the Emergency Co-ordinator. Only Emergency staff shall be allowed to re-enter the building during an emergency