FIRE SAFETY MANAGEMENT

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

**LEGISLATION**

* Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
* Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999

**WHAT YOU NEED TO DO**

* Develop a Fire Safety Policy for the establishment
* Nominate an individual with sufficient competency to manage fire safety
* Ensure that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment is completed
* Ensure that measures to prevent fires are identified and implemented
* Ensure that adequate fire safety precautions are in place
* Ensure that contractors maintaining equipment are competent to do so
* Ensure that procedures in the event of a fire are developed and implemented where necessary
* Ensure that means of escape are well maintained and safe to use at all times the establishment is occupied
* Ensure that there is appropriate out-of-hours response to any fire situation
* Ensure that staff, visitors and pupils receive adequate information, instruction and training in relation to fire safety
* Maintain adequate records and certification in relation to the duties under the Reform Order
* Review procedures, documentation and inspect the premises on a regular basis

**INTRODUCTION**

Each year more than 2000 schools in the UK suffer fires large enough to need action by the fire service. Of these 70% are started deliberately.

A fire would pose a major threat to the lives of everyone involved in it, but more especially for children, many of who would be highly dependent on members of staff to make good their escape from fire. Therefore, schools require a fire safety strategy based primarily on the prevention of fire.

In the event of fire however, there must be in place a means of rapid detection, containment and control supported by reliable procedures for evacuating all persons (with special attention to children and other vulnerable people) to places of safety.

**FIRE SAFETY POLICY, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Head Teachers and the Governing Body will be responsible for the day-to-day management of fire safety and should develop an appropriate policy in relation to fire safety. Appendix 1 has a template for a suggested fire safety policy.

**FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT**

The responsible person must ensure that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment of the premises is completed and reviewed on a regular basis.

A fire risk assessment is an organised and methodical look at the premises, the

activities carried on there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm

to those in and around the premises.

There is no set format or approach but a template is provided that may assist establishments in completing a fire risk assessment.

**Where establishments feel that they do not have the necessary competency to complete a fire risk assessment they should seek the assistance of a competent person.**

**FIRE PREVENTION**

In general, fires start in one of three ways:

* Accidentally, such as when smoking materials are not properly extinguished or when lighting displays are knocked over;
* Act or omission, such as when electrical office equipment is not properly maintained, or when waste is allowed to accumulate near to a heat source;
* Deliberately, such as an arson attack involving setting fire to external rubbish bins placed too close to the building.

Fire safety legislation requires the responsible person to take steps to reduce, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risk of fire occurring by adopting adequate fire prevention measures. The fire risk assessment should identify the measures necessary to prevent fires from occurring.

**Further information on preventative measures can be found in the Government guidance: Fire Safety Risk Assessment-Educational Premises**

**FIRE PRECAUTIONS**

In the event of a fire occurring, there should be suitable measures in place to detect a fire, give warning of fire and that mitigate the spread of smoke and fire.

* Fire detection and warning systems should be installed to the requirements of BS5839
* Emergency lighting should be installed to the requirements of BS5266
* Fire fighting equipment (fire extinguishers) should be installed to the requirements of BS5306
* Fire signs, notices and plans should be fitted to the requirements of BS5499
* Fire doors should be fitted in accordance with good practice and well maintained

**Further information on precautionary measures can be found in the Government guidance: Fire Safety Risk Assessment-Educational Premises**

**MEANS OF ESCAPE**

The ability of the occupants of a building to evacuate in the case of fire is a fundamental aspect of fire safety. In the case of a fire, or indeed any other emergency, people should be able to turn away from the hazard and escape to the open air or other place of safety.

**Escape routes should be inspected regularly to check they are not obstructed and that fire exit doors are unlocked.**

**FIRE EMERGENCY PLANNING**

When a fire situation is detected, it is vital that establishments have in place appropriate procedures. All establishments need to prepare a fire emergency plan. A template and guidance on preparing an emergency plan is available.

It is vital that the emergency plan is tested so as to ensure that all staff and pupils are aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

This can be achieved by undertaking a desk-top exercise and also by completing regular fire drills (at least once every half-term).

**PERSONAL EMERGENCY EGRESS PLANS**

There may be occasions when pupils, staff or visitors are present in the premises who require assistance when there is a need to evacuate the premises.

Where a person may be more vulnerable or have mobility issues, it is important that they are identified and that an individual Personal Emergency Egress Plan is prepared for that person.

Guidance and a template are available to enable appropriate PEEP’s to be developed.

**INFORMATION AND TRAINING**

During the first week of term or as soon as practically possible thereafter, all new entrants being pupils or staff should be conducted around the primary escape routes of the school/premises. They should also receive instruction on the school/premises fire evacuation routine.

All members of staff should receive instruction and training appropriate to their responsibilities. This training should:

* take account of the findings of the fire risk assessment
* explain the emergency procedures
* take account of the work activities and explain the duties and responsibilities of staff
* take place during normal working hours and be repeated periodically where appropriate
* be easily understood by staff and other people who may be present
* be tested by fire drills

A record of the training and instructions given should be maintained

**INSPECTION, TESTING AND MAINTENANCE**

A regular physical inspection should be undertaken of fire safety equipment and arrangements. A checklist is provided at Appendix 2.

All fire related equipment must be maintained in accordance with legislative requirements and good practice.

* Portable Fire Fighting Equipment: All portable fire fighting equipment has to be checked by a competent person on an annual basis (e.g. extinguishers, fire blankets and hoses).
* Fire Detection and Warning Systems (alarms): Fire alarm tests need to be carried out in accordance with BS 5839 Part 1. This requires weekly tests of the audible fire alarm system. On a quarterly and annual basis tests of all devices, heat and smoke detectors, call points and sounders should also be carried out by a competent contractor.
* Emergency Lighting: Emergency lighting should be tested on a monthly basis normally by the premises manager then on a six monthly, annual and three yearly basis by a specialist contractor, in accordance with BS 5266 Part 1.

**DOCUMENTATION AND LOG BOOKS**

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 makes specific requirements in relation to the keeping of records. Your records should be kept in a specified log book or file and should include:

* Details of any significant findings from the fire risk assessment and any action taken
* Testing and checking of escape routes, including final exit locking mechanisms, such as panic devices, emergency exit devices and any electromagnetic devices;
* Testing of fire-warning systems, including weekly alarm tests and periodic maintenance by a competent person; recording of false alarms;
* Testing and maintenance of emergency lighting systems;
* Testing and maintenance of fire extinguishers, hose reels and fire blankets
* Recording and training of relevant people and fire evacuation drills;
* Maintenance and audit of any systems that are provided to help the fire and rescue service
* The fire emergency plan

**APPENDIX 1: FIRE SAFETY POLICY TEMPLATE**

**Policy Statement**

*School name* will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the risk from fire will be managed in compliance with the appropriate fire safety legislation, guidance and best practice standards.

Management of fire risks will be undertaken in such as way as to prevent injury or ill-health to employees, visitors, contractors and others who may be affected by the activities of the organisation.

In doing so, *(School Name)* will ensure that:

* Fire safety risk assessments are carried out on all its premises
* A ‘competent person’ to assist with implementing the requirements of legislation is appointed
* Organisational arrangements for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of fire safety are implemented
* General fire precautions to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of its employees, students, contractors and visitors on its premises are implemented

**Organisational Responsibilities**

The ‘responsible person’ will ensure that adequate resources are made available to enable *(School Name)* to fulfil their duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.

*………………* will ensure that the appropriate policies, procedures and audit protocols are in place and reviewed from time to time.

………………..will ensure that these policies and procedures are implemented and adhered to on a sustainable basis in their areas of strategic responsibility.

………………will ensure that these policies and procedures are implemented and adhered to in their area of operational responsibility.

……………..will ensure that an appropriate system for carrying out fire risk assessments and developing emergency plans is in place and that suitable arrangements are implemented in all premises and for all activities within the premises.

…………………will ensure that action plans, fire precautions and evacuation procedures, resulting from fire risk assessments, are implemented and control measures for controlling the risk from fire are maintained.

………………..will ensure that regular inspections are carried out on control measures to ensure their continued effectiveness.

…………..will ensure that audits are carried out periodically to ensure the effectiveness of control measures.

Employees, visitors, contractors and others will ensure they participate as requested in the fire risk assessment process and will ensure they comply with the arrangements made to control risks from fire hazards.

**Arrangements**

*Fire Detection and Alarm System*

Automatic fire detection and alarm systems and break-glass call points shall be installed, maintained and tested in accordance with BS 5839.

A maintenance contract is in place with……………………..that provides a full check and service of the entire system in accordance with BS5839.

Fire alarms will be tested weekly by …………………..and any defects should be reported immediately to………………………..

*Provision and Maintenance of Fire-fighting Equipment*

Fire fighting equipment will be sited as recommended by the Fire Risk Assessment. ………….will have a responsibility to ensure that the equipment is accessible at all times.

An annual service contract is in force with ………………..for maintaining the fire extinguishers.

*Provision and Maintenance of Fire Escape Routes*

Emergency lighting, fire exit route directional signage (and other fire safety related signage), fire doors, fire lobbies and other parts of exit routes shall be available.

Emergency lighting shall be installed in all premises to the current British Standard.

The emergency lighting is under a maintenance contract with…………………………

Emergency lighting will be tested weekly by …………………..and any defects should be reported immediately to………………………..

*Provision of Training and Information*

Within ……….. of commencing employment, each new member of staff will attend an induction training course. This course will deal with all basic aspects of fire safety and fire equipment.

Within every………………. all staff will receive refresher training.

Fire action notices are posted in prominent locations within buildings.

Handouts containing fire prevention information for contractors and visitors will be issued by……………….

A permit to work systems for contractors engaging in 'hot work' is in force where necessary and is managed by………………..

A file of relevant information including plans and details of the locations of  hazardous substance areas etc. is kept at………………………. for use by the Fire Brigade and other emergency services.

*Fire Drills*

Fire drills will be held every………………….. These drills are to be arranged by………………………. who will trigger the alarms and reset them once the drill is completed.

**APPENDIX 2: FIRE SAFETY INSPECTION**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Premises/location of inspection | Date of Inspection |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Y/N/NA | Area of Concern/Comments | Action Required | Date Action Taken |
| Are floor surfaces on escape routes free from tripping and slipping hazards? |  |  |  |  |
| Have quantities of flammable or combustible materials/waste been allowed to accumulate in escape routes? |  |  |  |  |
| Are final exit doors free from obstruction both internally and externally? |  |  |  |  |
| Are final exits kept unlocked when the premises are in use? |  |  |  |  |
| Can the devices securing final exits be immediately and easily opened without the use of a key? |  |  |  |  |
| Are assembly points accessible and clearly marked?  |  |  |  |  |
| Are fire escape notices located in appropriate places, unobstructed and clearly visible?  |  |  |  |  |
| Do fire doors open and close freely? |  |  |  |  |
| Are fire doors wedged open? |  |  |  |  |
| Are fire doors marked with appropriate signs? |  |  |  |  |
| Are self closing devices working effectively? |  |  |  |  |
| Are magnetic fire door release catches (where fitted) working correctly? |  |  |  |  |
| Do items of equipment; waste materials or other items block fire doors? |  |  |  |  |
| Are fire doors in good condition (e.g. seals in place and free from defects)? |  |  |  |  |
| Do refuge points have the appropriate signage, communication and (where necessary) evacuation equipment? |  |  |  |  |
| Are all call points visible and accessible, with adjacent Fire Action notices displayed? |  |  |  |  |
| Is the Fire Panel showing a normal condition? |  |  |  |  |
| Has the fire alarm been tested in the last seven days? |  |  |  |  |
| Is the alarm difficult to hear in any areas? |  |  |  |  |
| Is fire fighting equipment visible and free from obstruction? |  |  |  |  |
| Are fire extinguishers free from obvious defects? |  |  |  |  |
| Have extinguishers been serviced in the last 12 months? |  |  |  |  |
| Are flammable and combustible materials or substances stored away from sources of ignition? |  |  |  |  |
| Have waste materials been allowed to accumulate externally against walls or buildings? |  |  |  |  |
| Are there any signs of illicit smoking taking place? |  |  |  |  |
| Has the fire manual and/or log book kept up-to-date (e.g testing, inspection and maintenance records) |  |  |  |  |
| Have staff received training and are they aware of the emergency procedures to be followed? |  |  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Additional Comments |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Inspection completed by | Signature |
| Date of next inspection |  |