



## FIRE SAFETY POLICY

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## Glossary

ACoP	Approved Code of Practice
BS	British Standard
H&S	Health and Safety
HSE	Health & Safety Executive
IT	Information Technology
UK	United Kingdom

## INTRODUCTION

The Education Alliance is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 legislation with regard to fire safety.

Fire is a destructive force, which not only threatens the life of students, staff and visitors but causes damage to property and disrupts student education. Even a relatively minor fire can have significant implications regarding loss or damage to records or equipment.

The consequences of fire in schools and other education premises can be especially serious because of the dangers and difficulties associated with the emergency evacuation of students, some of whom may be dependent.

The aim therefore, must be to ensure that, if possible, outbreaks of fire do not occur, but if and when outbreaks do occur, they are rapidly detected, effectively contained and quickly extinguished. An involvement in fire procedures is therefore a basic duty of all staff and an essential obligation for all persons with management responsibilities.

### 1. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all staff members who are responsible for or involved in the use of Trust premises for operational matters and education.

### 2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Education Alliance is committed to providing a fire safe environment for all students, staff and visitors.

This will be achieved through a framework of policies, procedures and training in addition to ensuring all premises meet mandatory and statutory fire precaution standards. **(See Appendix A)**

The management of fire safety is an ongoing process. Standards will be kept under constant review and the impetus for improvement maintained.

Caring for all personnel and minimising risk is inseparable from all other Trust objectives. The Trust accepts that a fire safety strategy or policy requires a high level of management commitment, professional competence and adequate resources.

This policy applies to all Trust premises.

This policy also applies to all staff of outside organisations frequenting Education Alliance premises or organisations leasing/renting part of or the whole of the premises from Education Alliance for use as clubs, business premises etc.

The Responsible Person from the outside organisation will be accountable as the 'Responsible Person' for implementing this policy and the appendices which will be deemed an 'umbrella policy' for leased or multi occupied premises owned by The Education Alliance.

### **3. DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **3.1 Chief Executive Officer**

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for compliance with all statutory fire safety requirements and Building Bulletin documents.

#### **3.2 Executive Principal and Heads of Schools**

The Executive Principal is responsible for assisting the Chief Executive Officer in the discharge of their responsibilities. The Heads of Schools are nominated as having responsibility for fire matters at school level.

#### **3.3 Fire Safety Manager [All Premises/Site Managers]**

The Fire Safety Manager is directly responsible for fire to the Executive Principal/Head of School and is responsible for the general fire safety standards, observance and review of fire safety policies for the premises and responsibility for continuing day to day compliance with fire safety.

The Fire Safety Manager is to act as a competent person to provide expert advice to the Trust's Executive Board, nominated fire officers, fire marshals, management and staff. Such a person must have enough training, experience and knowledge to enable them to advise and assist with regard to preventative and protective fire safety measures.

The Fire Safety Manager will ensure audits of premises are completed on an annual basis to ensure that fire precautions are suitable and provide a written report to the Executive Principal/Head of School highlighting any areas of concern. **(See Appendix B).**

The Fire Safety Manager will oversee organisational fire safety training packages including mandatory annual/bi-annual fire training **(Appendix E)** and fire warden/marshal training ensuring compliance across the Trust. The Fire Safety Manager is also responsible in law for ensuring that staff, including part time and agency personnel, undertake mandatory fire safety training and, if appropriate, specific instruction on the risks and procedure relative to their workplace.

The Fire Safety Manager is responsible in law for ensuring that fire safety policies and particular instructions are brought to the attention of all staff and observed by them.

The Fire Safety Manager will collate and retain all fire and false alarm reports and provide advice to managers to prevent recurrence.

The Fire Safety Manager may nominate persons as having managerial control of the area in accordance with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 to assist in the undertaking of fire safety duties (fire wardens); however it must be understood that such responsibilities cannot be abdicated and that overall responsibility will always remain with them.

The Fire Safety Manager has a legal duty to ensure that sufficient staff are available to facilitate a total evacuation of the premises in the event of a fire and full evacuation exercises (minimum 1 per term) take place to ensure staff are familiar with their roles and responsibilities during such an evacuation.

### 3.4 Responsible Person

A Responsible Person who will generally be of a managerial grade will be appointed in writing by the Fire Safety Manager for each of the sites The Education Alliance occupies. Responsible Persons of premises have a responsibility to ensure enough fire wardens are available at all times the premises are in use. This is a requirement under the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005.

### 3.5 Employees

All employees have a duty to comply with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 as well as any local policies and protocols which may be in place. This will include the participation in training, fire drills and evacuation exercises.

Employees should be encouraged to report to their line managers or the nominated fire officer (fire wardens) instances where properly agreed fire safety procedures are not being implemented or observed, i.e. sources of ignition, inappropriate storage of combustibles (**Appendix J**), anything affecting the integrity of escape routes and fire compartments, continued use of faulty equipment etc.

All employees have a responsibility to ensure they are familiar with the fire routine of any building in which they are working including familiarisation with escape routes, the location of fire alarm operating points, the location of fire extinguishers and the location of the assembly point.

## 4. PROCEDURES

The Trust's policy on Fire Safety is:

- In the event of fire, the action of staff will be in accordance with the fire procedure designed for the premises. (**See Appendix F**).
- The Fire and Rescue Service must be notified of all **FIRE** incidents.
- All fire and false alarm incidents must be reported by the Responsible Person of the premises to the Fire Safety Manager. (**See Appendix D**).
- Fires involving death or serious injury must also be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the Report of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations. Liaison with the Fire Safety Manager must take place before reports are made.
- Other matters relating to fire details and procedures are attached as appendices. (**See Appendix C & H**)

## **Appendix A – Statutory Requirements**

The primary legislation covering fire safety is the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety order 2005. All previous fire safety legislation is repealed or revoked.

This statute contains provisions which create a number of criminal offences and sets out the penalties for such offences. The penalties on conviction include fines, imprisonment or both.

### **The Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005**

This piece of legislation united nearly all the preceding pieces of UK Fire Safety legislation into one comprehensive law. The most significant actions in this respect were to repeal the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and to revoke the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997. The latter represented a significant shift of emphasis of the law toward Risk Assessment and it is in this direction that the new Order has continued.

### **Premises Accountability**

Under the Order, accountability for individual premises is given to the person deemed to be in managerial control of the premises, the employees and other relevant persons resorting to the premises, for example students and visitors. The Order requires this person to be the 'Responsible Person', accountable for the safety of the employees and other 'relevant persons' by properly managing the following;

- Premises Fire Risk Assessment
- Fire Safety Policy
- Fire procedures (including total evacuation)
- Staffing levels to facilitate total evacuation (adequate number of fire wardens)
- Fire precautions (protective & preventative)
- Staff training
- Fire drills
- Means of escape
- Signs and notices
- Emergency lighting
- Fire alarm
- Fire extinguishers
- Fire doors and compartments

Assistance can be given to managers with many of the above duties, such as the formulation of the fire risk assessment and evacuation policy. Other responsibilities however require a specific commitment from the manager alone, such as the day to day maintenance of fire precautions in the premises and the duty to ensure that staff receives suitable training in fire safety.

Managers also have a duty to ensure that efficient arrangements are in place to guarantee the evacuation of premises in the event of a fire. This is best achieved by

the appointment of trained fire wardens and the carrying out of regular fire drills/exercises.

Authorised inspections from the Fire and Rescue Service who have powers to visit premises and will require production of, for inspection the fire risk assessment and evacuation policy as well as evidence that training, evacuation exercises and weekly/monthly checks have been carried out. They may then inspect the premises to ascertain the adequacy of the fire safety arrangements.

Fire and Rescue Service Inspectors have the power to prohibit use of all or part of the premises until they are satisfied that efficient arrangements are in place to secure the safety of persons in the event of a fire.

In rare cases, usually following a fire incident where people are injured, legal action may be taken and such action will always be against the person(s) of 'most appropriate responsibility'.

### **Example**

- A fire breaks out in a building due to a fire door being wedged open and people suffer smoke inhalation as they make their escape. The person who wedged open the fire door is obviously responsible, but so are the manager and/or any person with managerial responsibility who has allowed the door to be wedged open. They are the persons of 'most appropriate responsibility' and legal action would almost certainly follow, possibly resulting in an unlimited fine and/or imprisonment.
- The storage (however temporary) of combustibles on escape routes such as corridors, stairway enclosures, entrance/exit lobbies etc.
- Insufficient staff on duty to facilitate the total evacuation of the premises.
- Staff not trained on a frequency commensurate with their role.
- Fire drills not held.
- No regular testing of doors, alarms etc.
- No maintenance of fire precautions including the alarm system, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers etc.
- Records not kept.
- Inadequate signage of exit routes

The above list is by no means exhaustive.

### **The Building Act 1984 and Building Regulations**

New buildings and material changes on existing buildings, including structural fire precautions and means of escape, will involve consultation with the Fire Authority to determine requirements for any active fire safety measures.

## **Appendix B – Fire Risk Assessments**

At least annually the Fire Safety Manager will arrange for the premises to be audited against the Fire Risk Assessment to ensure continuing compliance with the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005. The audit is to be recorded and retained with the copy of the Fire Risk Assessment.

Managers are responsible for the formulation and review of the Fire Risk Assessment which will;

- Identify potential hazards.
- Identify any persons (student, staff or visitor) at risk.
- Evaluate the risk and implement measures to remove, reduce or control the risk to an acceptable level.
- All identified risks from fire will be documented and systematically analysed and prioritised for action as necessary.
- All relevant staff should receive information on control measures, including policies, procedures and protocols put into place to minimise risk and where appropriate staff training is to be undertaken to reduce knowledge gaps.
- The Fire Risk Assessment will be in writing and made available to Authorised Inspectors on request.
- The Fire Risk Assessment will be regularly reviewed and revised if significant changes to the premises, procedures, processes, equipment or room use lead to new or increased hazards invalidating the original assessment.



## Appendix C – Fire Equipment Testing

At all Trust buildings/sites a record is to be maintained of fire equipment tests and checks. The record, which must be kept for at least 3 years in the fire file, should incorporate the following;

- Tests and maintenance on fire alarm and detection systems, emergency lighting and firefighting equipment.
- The date of the test or maintenance and who carried these out.
- Details of defects and action taken.
- Date defects rectified and by whom.

Where maintenance work on fire alarm and detection systems are being carried out by in-house staff or contractors, a permit to work (**Appendix I**) is to be issued to safeguard integrity of the system and ensure an adequate level of fire arrangements are maintained.

Electrical equipment accounts for a significant proportion of fire incidents in education premises. To minimise the potential risk of fire the following should always be observed:

- Unless it is designed to be permanently connected to the mains supply electrical equipment should be switched off and preferably unplugged or isolated when not in use or when it is unattended, especially overnight.
- No attempt should be made by non-competent persons to carry out an unauthorised adjustment, modification or repair to equipment or wiring.
- No official or private electrical appliance should be used until it has been subjected to Portable Appliance Test and approved by a competent person. Subsequent tests should then be carried out annually.
- Any suspect electrical equipment or electrical wiring must be withdrawn from service immediately, labelled and reported to the Estates Building
- Hot food preparation equipment must only be located in a kitchen environment. Toasters must be fitted with a bespoke plug and socket located in the kitchen before use.

## Appendix D – Fire Reporting Procedure

- In the event of fire, the action of staff will be in accordance with the fire procedure formulated for the premises.
- The Fire and Rescue Service must be notified of **ALL** fire incidents.
- All fire and false alarm of fire incidents must be reported by the manager of the premises to the Fire Safety Manager.
- Fire involving death or serious injury must also be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

## Appendix E – Staff Training

- Effective training in fire awareness, evacuation techniques and participation in fire drills for all personnel, without exception, is of vital importance.
- It is the duty of the Fire Safety Manager to ensure that all staff receive instruction in fire safety and, if appropriate, specific instruction on the risks and procedures relative to their workplace.
- Every member of staff must:
  - Undertake mandatory fire training.
  - Be able to identify fire hazards involved in the working environment.
  - Practice and promote fire safety in the workplace.
  - Know instinctively the right actions to take if fire breaks out or smoke is detected.
  - Be familiar with the evacuation procedure and escape routes appropriate to their location at the time of duty.
- The training requirement also extends to non-Education Alliance staff working in or having regular recourse to The Education Alliance premises.
- All staff should on appointment, attend an induction course which will include a fire safety module. Thereafter all staff are to receive fire safety training instruction within the organisation. Under the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 it is a management responsibility to ensure all staff under their managerial control complete fire safety training.
- Fire drills/exercises are to be organised by managers to test the effectiveness of emergency plans and fire safety training. One full evacuation exercise per term must be completed to be compliant with the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005. Completed evacuation exercises must be documented in the fire file and dates of the exercise forwarded to the Fire Safety Manager.
- Fire safety training will not only enable staff to learn about and practice basic fire prevention but also appreciate the wider implications of fire safety strategy and building design.

## Appendix F – Emergency Fire Plans

- Suitable emergency plans must be provided for each site. The plans are to be prepared having regard to the premises Fire Risk Assessment and set out, amongst other things, details of the action to be taken with persons in case of fire, the procedure to be followed during evacuation and the arrangements for calling the Fire Service and informing them of any special risks.
- The plans must also identify those persons responsible for supervising and reviewing the plans and the organisation and carrying out of fire drills.
- When formulating evacuation procedures, particular attention is to be paid to the needs of staff, visitors and students who may suffer physical or sensory disability.
- Methods and equipment should be made available for the safe evacuation of patrons of the building who may have mobility issues who are frequenting the upper floors of premises.
- Fire action notices complementing the emergency plans are to be prominently displayed in key locations such as by fire alarm call points and in staff rooms.
- The principal points to be included in the fire action notice are the actions to be taken on discovering a fire and on hearing the alarm, but these should be adapted or extended as necessary to suit an individual site.
- **There must be methods employed to ensure the safe evacuation of all persons safely without reliance on the assistance of the Fire Service.**

## Appendix G – Arson Prevention and Control

Arson is increasing in all types of premises, including education premises and is recognised as a major cause of fires.

Many fires started in premises occur in parts of the building used for storage.

Education premises, particularly schools and their externally and internally located storage areas are vulnerable to arson attacks from intruders.

The arsonist is assisted by the following factors:

- Site accessibility, often spanning 24 hours
- The dispersed nature of some sites
- The multiplicity of points of access to and from buildings
- Easy opportunities for theft and pilfering and the accessibility of combustible materials and flammable liquids.
- Bad housekeeping (**Appendix K**) measures such as poor management of waste collection, storage and disposal.

The activities of arsonists can be limited by:

- Alertness of staff to persons acting suspiciously.
- The regular removal of combustible waste to designated storage and disposal areas.
- Care in securing premises, particularly storage areas.

## **Appendix H – Fire Hazards During Alteration Work**

Premises undergoing alteration, extension, repair or maintenance are particularly vulnerable to fire. Some items, which need careful consideration, are:

- Structural fire and smoke barriers such as walls, doors, ceilings, etc, may be incomplete or temporarily removed and alternative safeguards may be necessary.
- Accumulation of flammable waste such as packing materials and wood shavings.
- Storage and use of combustible building materials which may constitute a temporary high fire load in an unsuitable area.
- Potentially dangerous processes such as hot cutting and welding techniques and the use of flammable adhesives. Hot works must not be carried out without the issue of a Hot Work Permit.
- Obstruction of escape routes by materials and equipment.
- The external storage of combustible waste or materials in such a position as can hazard the building.
- The temporary disablement of fire alarm and detection systems and the obstruction of firefighting equipment.
- The Trust's Fire Safety Manager should be kept advised of work being undertaken, particularly if external contractors are involved.

## **Appendix I – Hot Works Permits**

Serious fires frequently occur during maintenance and construction operations, where work is taking place on either machinery, plant or the building fabric. Most of them are the result of carelessness or ineffective supervision during operations requiring the use of open flames or the local application of heat.

The most common practices are:

- Gas or electric welding and cutting blowlamps and blowtorches.
- Grinding wheels and cutting discs.
- Bitumen tar boilers.
- Blowlamps may ignite adjacent or unseen material, heat may be conducted away by metal components and sparks or hot metal may travel a long distance whilst retaining the potential to ignite combustible materials.

On Trust property, hot techniques of the type described above are not to be carried out without the prior issue of a Hot Work Permit. Permits can be provided and authorised, requiring at least 24 hour notice, via the Estates Department.

The permit lays down specific conditions to be observed and is only valid for the duration of the operation for which it is issued.

## **Appendix J – Storage and Use of Flammables**

Flammable liquids give off vapours which, under certain conditions, can ignite or explode. Aerosol sprays may contain a flammable product or expellant and if the spray comes into contact with an ignition source a flame thrower effect can result.

Many fires are caused by the misuse, or careless use, of such substances and care is needed in their handling and storage.

Large stocks of flammables including cleaning materials, foam plastics and rubber should be held in designated storage areas. Only sufficient quantities for daily use should be kept within the workplace.

Flammable liquids should be kept in suitably labelled, securely capped containers and not left standing in direct sunlight or where they may be knocked over.

When using flammable liquids or aerosols, care is to be exercised to ensure that the liquid or spray cannot come into contact with flame equipment, hot surfaces or other ignition sources.



## Appendix K – Good Housekeeping

Good housekeeping practices can reduce the likelihood of fire. Some of the particular practices which are to be observed are as follows;

- Avoidance of the use of highly flammable materials and liquids wherever possible.
- Avoid storing combustible items near to sources of ignition.
- Immediate removal of waste packaging materials to external storage to await collection.
- Orderly methods of stacking in stores where linen, paper or plastic packaging are used, to reduce the risk of fire spread, and assist firefighting.
- Storage of equipment and packages in designated areas only.
- Regular checks should be made to ensure that storage, however temporary is never permitted in corridors, stairways, escape routes, adjacent to fire exits, firefighting equipment or fire alarm call points.
- Regular checks should be made for the accumulation of rubbish in out of sight spaces.
- Regular cleaning of workplaces, machinery and equipment spaces to prevent the accumulation of fluff, grease or debris in kitchens and similar areas.
- Correct storage of cleaning rags and materials in non-combustible containers after use.
- When leaving places of work, checking for possible causes of fire, such as non-essential electrical equipment left on or plugged in, gas appliances or other heating sources left on. Vulnerable doors and windows should be secured against intruders.
- Removal of un-fused multi-plug adapters, extension leads and mobile phone/computer charging units.
- The prohibition of unauthorised adjustment or repair to electrical appliances. No initial use of electrical equipment until it has been approved by the appropriate technical staff.
- Regular checking of electrical cables for signs of wear and the immediate withdrawal from service of suspect electrical equipment.