

Fire Safety Policy

Introduction

The position as regards fire guidance & fire legislation has subsequently changed since 2006 with the introduction of new primary fire legislation & guidance.

Fire Legislation

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into effect in 2006. This order repealed the Fire Precautions Act 1971 & revoked The Fire Precaution (Workplace) Regulations 1997. The Order also gives effect to a wide range of EC Directives.

Compliance duties are based upon the **Responsible Person** which in any employment situation is the employer. What is new is that the duties of the Responsible Person extend to **Relevant Person**. Relevant Persons include for the first time not only employees but any person who is lawfully on the premises (pupils, visitors, contractors etc) or any person in the immediate vicinity of the school premises who would be at risk.

The first primary duty is to take such general fire precautions as will ensure so far as is **reasonable practicable** the safety of employees & also relevant persons. The term "general fire precautions" is defined to include the following:

- Measures to reduce fire risk & also the spread of fire.
- Effective means of escape (M.O.E.).
- Fire fighting.
- Fire detection & warning.
- Instruction & training.
- Measures to alleviate the effects of fire.

The next primary duty on the Responsible Person is to make a sufficient & suitable assessment of the risks to which the relevant Persons are exposed, for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions he needs to take to comply with the requirements & prohibitions imposed on him by or under this Order. In having this separate requirement for risk assessment, the subject of fire seems to have cast itself adrift from the risk assessments requirements of the Management of Health & Safety at Works Regulations 1999.

Whilst there is nothing prescriptive in the Order as to how the risk assessment is laid out, there is a requirement to take into account the following:

- As regards the use of dangerous substances, the matters set out in the schedule 1, Part 1.
- As regards the employment of young persons, the matter set out in Schedule 1, Part 2.
- As regards the elimination or reduction of dangerous substances, the measures specified in Schedule 1, Part 4.

The School Governors & the Headmaster have shared responsibility for fire safety. The employee is required to make suitable & sufficient assessment of general fire precautions to be taken or observed in relation to the risk of the safety of employees & others in case of fire. The remainder of the Order has Articles (ie Regulations) which provide additional requirements for the following:

Fire Safety Management

Main Duties:

- Make risk assessments (Available on request)
- Be responsible for fire safety training
- Produce an emergency plan & put up fire notices for all staff & pupils
- Information for contractors
- Conduct fire drills
- Check adequacy of fire fighting apparatus & its maintenance
- Consult with & implement recommendations of local fire brigade
- Conduct fire safety inspections
- Make more frequent informal checks
- Ensure fire escape routes & fire exits doors/passageways are unobstructed & doors operate correctly
- Check fire detection & protection systems are maintained & tested & records kept
- Ensure close down procedures are followed
- Include fire safety in the regular health & safety reports to the School Council.
- Training

A Fire Log Book is kept in the various areas throughout the school (Please See appendix a).

Close Down Procedure Checklist

- All flammable materials are locked away
- All valuable equipment is secured
- No cash is left unsecured overnight
- All rubbish/waste has been removed from the building & placed in the compactors
- Everyone has vacated the teaching areas, especially toilets & showers have been checked for anyone hiding
- External lighting is working correctly
- All windows are shut & locked
- All internal doors are closed (to prevent the spread of fire)
- All external doors have been made secure

The Order also requires the responsible Person to nominate **Competent Persons** for the following purposes:

- For fire fighting (training to be arranged).
- As “Fire Wardens” for implementing evacuation procedures.
- To assist the school in undertaking the preventative & protective measures required by this Order (ie those matters identified in the process of risk assessment).

Guidance Issued Under the Order

For the first time there is a formal guidance that applies everywhere & should not vary from county to county. Each guide carries the title **Fire Risk Assessment & the six that apply to Rossall Are:**

- Educational Premises
- Sleeping Accommodation
- Offices & Shops
- Large Places of Assembly
- Small 7 Medium places of Assembly
- Theatres, Cinemas & similar Premises

These are bulky documents extending to 150 pages each but all follow the same format. These documents are guidance only & are not “Approved Codes of Practice”. They are issued by the HSE. However, the likelihood is that this guidance will become, because of the nature of the subject of fire, fairly definitive.

Critical information given within the guidance includes:

- A 5-step risk assessment process where the first steps involves identifying & listing sources of ignition, sources of fuel & sources of oxygen.
- The concept of categorizing the fire risk in each area as **Higher, Normal & Lower** (Rossall use adequate or not adequate for its Fire Risk Assessments).
- The recommended travel distances whether in classrooms or boarding accommodation are defined according to the level of fire risk attached to the area.

Each of the guidance documents above carries an Appendix C (see appendix b) which deals with fire protection issues in historic buildings.

Enforcement of the Order

The Enforcing Authority is defined as being the Fire & Rescue Authority for any given area for the school. However, the Health & Safety Executive enforces the Order in any construction work being undertaken in the school.

Enforcing Authorities have the following powers under the Order:

- An Alteration Notice which linked to a premises changing its use.

- An Enforcement Notice which is linked to fire regulation compliance.
- A Prohibition Notice which prohibits or restricts the use of the premises.

The Fire Authorities have the usual powers as regards entry, access to documents & powers to take samples which are now the norm with HSE Inspectors.

There appears to be no statutory period between inspections under the Fire Safety Order.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

As an Independent School due to changes in the Education Act 2002 the school uses Standard 26 from the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools which refers to fire precautions & drills (see appendix c)

Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)

Where elected by the School, the ISI will be the primary inspection body for schools that have membership of one of the Associations which are members of the Independent Schools Councils.

The ISI will carry out inspections every three years to view compliance with The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulation 2003. Regulation 3 (5) states that:

“The School shall have a satisfactory level of fire safety, identified by-

- a) The school’s risk assessment under Regulation 3 of the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulation 1999 in so far as it relates to obligations under Part 2 of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) regulations 1977 &,
- b) Any report from the “Fire Authority”.

New Buildings & Alterations

Fire safety is an integral part of the planning process. Fire Authorities are statutory consultees. The Building Regulations 2000 utilise Approved Document B (Fire Safety) Volume 2, 2006 edition (see appendix d). The Buildings Regulations 2000 were amended by the Fire Safety Order.

Electrical Fire Safety

- Televisions should be unplugged when not in use
- Sockets should not be overloaded
- A blown fuse should only be replaced after the cause of its failure has been discovered & always with a fuse of the correct rating
- Procedures are in place for inspection & testing of equipment
- Flammable materials should not be kept in electrical switch rooms & boiler houses
- Materials stored in switch rooms should not be obstruct access to the switch gear

Displays

- Should be kept away from curtains, doors & heat sources
- Should not obstruct escape routes
- Should not obscure fire notices, fire alarms call points, fire fighting equipment, emergency exits signs or lights
- Should not be more than 2 metres long with gaps between displays in the ratio 1:3

Furniture

- The selection of furniture & soft furnishings must comply with current Regulations
- The layout of loose furniture & equipment should, particularly in the open plan teaching areas, not obstruct escape routes & should take account of the needs of occupants such as wheelchair users

NB: Particular attention needs to be paid to the layout of common rooms & corridors in Boarding Houses

Gas in Laboratories & Other Serviced Spaces

Isolating valves are fitted to these gas supplies & should be shut off at the end of each day's activities.

Flammable Liquids & Chemicals

- Amounts should be kept to a minimum
- Chemicals must be stored in locked areas
- Highly flammable liquids must be stored according to current Regulations (i.e. flash point below 32oC)

Portable Heaters & other Electrical Equipment

Portable heaters should not be used in school without the Headmaster's permission. Staff should not bring in their own equipment unless it has been P.A.T. checked & is registered with the school.

Waste Handling

- Waste must not be allowed to accumulate
- It should not be stored in school overnight
- External waste storage should be away from any building (10 metres is recommended)
- Skips should be removed the same day & not placed near the building (10 metres is recommended)

Community Use

- In the interest of security & energy conservation, only those parts of the school in use are unlocked. Users must be aware of the means of escape available (A copy of this policy will be provided).
- Any electrical equipment brought in should comply with current safety requirements & should only be used by competent people.

Public Performances & Discos

Competent attendants are required to look after everyone. They Should:

- Be identifiable
- Carry a torch whenever part of the public areas are in darkness
- Ensure no overcrowding
- Keep exits & gangways clear
- Be aware of the needs of disabled.

The school operates a NO SMOKING policy, including when there is community use or public performances.

Building Contractors

- Risks are anticipated through discussion with contractors. Arrangements are made to monitor escape routes & to prevent obstruction. Where obstruction is essential alternative arrangements are made. All workmen report to the Manager or Supervisor to which department they are working in.

Fire Practice

Fire Practices are normally held once a term.

Leaving the Building

In each area near to a final exit door there is a map showing the 'Rossall School Fire Assembly Points' (Please see Appendix). In the same area is a sign stating 'Immediately You Hear the Alarm' which clearly states the procedure to adopt on hearing the school fire alarm. It is the responsibility of each person using the room or area to be familiar with these instructions & the various exit routes. If any of these are missing or unreadable, notify the Headmaster or the Facilities Manager or both immediately. Children should be led out to muster at the Fire Assembly Points. Staff should ensure that all exit doors are fully open to avoid congestion.

Lining up Outside

There are 8 Fire Assembly Points throughout the school & staff & pupils should know where they are. Pupils will need to be lined up a register will be taken by the Master or Mistress in charge.

In the Event of a Fire – – follow the instructions on the Risk Assessment & Procedures poster (immediately you hear the alarm) (See Appendix)

Additional Points

- Obviously the normal route for leaving the building will not be appropriate if the exit is blocked by fire – in this case, leave by the nearest safe exit.
- Nursing staff will check that pupils in the medical room are evacuated.
- The Catering Supervisor in charge will check off personnel on duty at the Fire Assembly Point.
- The School Matron should report directly to the Estates Manager or most senior staff member present, as his assistance may be needed to check where the fire is from the main alarm board sited in the Main Reception or to direct the Fire Brigade to the fire area.
- Teaching staff who have no class to register should report to their House Group or Year Group to which they are attached.
- At lunch or break times there is an increased emphasis on making a careful check of the school to ensure that everyone has been evacuated.
- All pupils are reminded regularly that if they are out of the room at the time of a fire alarm they should leave the building by the nearest exit & proceed to the to the Assembly Point to await the arrival of their class.
- Other adults, who are in school on a regular or casual basis including peripatetic teachers, are made aware of the procedures for evacuation of the building by the teacher responsible for them. The deputy headmaster keeps any supply teachers informed.

NB: Accurate registration of pupils at morning & afternoon registration is essential for a register check in a real life situation to be reliable. Particular attention should be paid to the accurate recording of 'lates', medical or other appointments & children off site for what ever reason. The Reception staff are responsible for informing House Parents & Tutors if a day pupil has been sent home because of illness. The Headmaster or his deputy will inform the Reception staff if a child has been excluded.

- Information concerning sending day pupil's home in an emergency should be brought out to the Assembly Point.

Fire Drills

Fire drills must be entered in the fire log book. Details include:

- Date
- Time
- Zone

- Event
- Action Required
- Complete
- Initials

Fire Detection

- When school is in session every pupil & member of staff is regarded as an independent mobile fire detection system
- Fire detection systems are annually tested by a qualified service engineer

Houseparents/ Head of Departments will make regular checks of control panels in their immediate area

The Bursars Department will contact the insurance company through the Bursar. The Headmaster & Bursar will liaise with the loss adjuster & agree the insurance claim

All Members of School Staff Residing on School Property should keep copies of the lists of emergency contacts off-site

Extinguishing Fires

This should not be attempted if there is a risk of injury to the person using the extinguisher. Staff should only consider fighting a fire after they have evacuated any pupils in their charge & raised the alarm. They must if possible inform another adult of their intention to fight the fire.

Electrical Fire – switch off electricity at the mains if possible.

Training-

All staff will receive training on the use of fire extinguishers & fire blankets from a competent person.

Date of policy: October 2009

Review of policy: October 2010

Appendix a

Document No. DFL 1001100 Rev 1

FIRE ALARM SYSTEM LOG BOOK

USER: _____

SITE ADDRESS: _____

CONTRACT No: _____

RESPONSIBLE PERSONS ON SITE: _____

FOR SERVICE

NORMAL HOURS (MON-FRI): _____

OUTSIDE NORMAL HOURS: _____

MANNED CENTRE: _____

MANNED CENTRE CODE: _____

This log book must be maintained by the responsible person(s) on site and must be available at all times together with the system operating keys. Every "event" affecting the installation should be recorded, such as fire alarms, failures, tests, temporary disconnections, dates of installing engineers visits, and a note of any outstanding work or conditions.

Appendix b

Appendix C

Historic buildings

General considerations

This appendix offers additional information about listed and historical buildings.

Fire risk assessments conducted for sleeping accommodation which is within a listed or historic building will need to ensure that a balance is struck between ensuring sufficient fire safety measures are in place for the safety of people, yet avoid extensive alterations and helping to maintain the character of the building.

As well as the fire risk assessment it is recommended that a general fire policy statement and manual is compiled. A person must be nominated to take responsibility for all aspects of fire safety. Usually the person charged with the management and control of the premises will be the 'responsible person' under the Order.¹

The advice and/or consent of a building control body or any other relevant bodies (e.g. English Heritage) should form part of any fire risk assessment that impacts on the character of the building (e.g. replacement of doors, fittings, wooden panelling and decor) or material changes to existing escape routes. An ideal solution is one that is reversible, enabling the historic elements to be reinstated.

A fire safety adviser will be able to suggest alternatives to conventional fire precautions, such as:

- a fire engineering solution;
- upgrading existing doors and partitions in a sympathetic manner to improve their fire resistance; and
- considering the installation of specialist fire-detection or suppression systems.

Should the design and nature of the historic building preclude the introduction of conventional fire safety features, it will be necessary to manage the building in such a way that:

- limits the number of occupants, either staff or members of the public, inside the building;
- limits activities in the building; and
- provides adequate supervision within the building.

In buildings that are open to the public you may wish to designate parts as 'off limits' to the general public. The locking of internal doors or the use of fixed or movable barriers should not restrict alternative escape routes being made available.

Liaison with the fire and rescue service

The responsible person will need to ensure effective liaison with the fire and rescue service to enable them to carry out firefighting operations. These may include information on:

- the provision of water supplies, seasonal ponds, lakes and underground tanks, and any associated pumps;
- difficult access for fire engines;
- particular hazards in the construction features of the building (including asbestos);
- the use of combustible under floor insulation;
- underground vaults ducts and voids where fire may spread unchecked;
- worn stone slabs in stairway construction; and
- the presence of cast iron columns and wrought iron beams.

Emergency planning

An important consideration for the owners and trustees is the protection of valuable artefacts and paintings from the effects of fire. However, the efficient evacuation of all occupants must take precedence over procedures for limiting damage to property and contents. Salvage work should be limited to those parts of the building not directly affected by the fire.

Appendix c

Fire precautions and drills

OUTCOME

Boarders are protected from the risk of fire.

STANDARD 26

- 26.1 Boarders and boarding staff should be aware of emergency evacuation procedures from boarding accommodation. The school should comply with recommendations of the Fire Service, and should regularly carry out and record risk assessments in relation to fire, together with fire drills and any routine tests recommended by the Fire Service.**

ADDITIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR BOARDING SCHOOLS

- 26.2 Boarders know emergency evacuation procedures from sleeping and living areas in each boarding house.
- 26.3 Fire drills are regularly (at least once per term) carried out in 'boarding time'.
- 26.4 Emergency lighting, fire alarms and fire fighting equipment are regularly tested, and this is detailed in the appropriate records.
- 26.5 There are no significant recommendations of the Fire Service outstanding beyond any timescale set by that Service for their implementation

Appendix d



