

# Newton International Academy Smash



## Fire Safety Policy

Updated August 2023

### Policy Statement

The school is committed to providing a safe environment for its staff, pupils and visitors. Part of this safety responsibility is in the provision and management of fire safety systems and procedures. All members of the school, their visitors and contractors, have a statutory responsibility in ensuring compliance with the law and complying with the safety provisions defined within this policy.

Fire is recognised as a major threat to the activities of the school. An outbreak of even a small fire creates risk to both life and property, damage to the environment and may compromise our normal business activities.

The aim of this policy is, therefore, to provide a robust fire safety framework which will be implemented to secure the safety and wellbeing of everyone within the school community and to protect the school's assets.

### Roles & Responsibility

The CEO, as the employer has the ultimate responsibility for fire safety management in respect of the activities and premises under school control. It has delegated the day-to-day running of the School, which includes the management of fire safety, to the Principal, Senior Leadership Team and Health and Safety Committee.

All staff have a responsibility to undertake fire precautions and the safe management of fire risks in areas of the school they occupy.

This will include the following:

- Undertaking simple fire safety reviews in respect of their areas of responsibility, at least annually or more frequently if the risks require.
- Review and implement actions identified by the fire risk assessment process within the recommended times.
- Ensure areas under their control and responsibility meet statutory fire safety standards.
- The means of escape from their area of responsibility are maintained in a safe and unobstructed condition.
- That suitable and sufficient risk assessments dealing with hazardous materials and processes are provided and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure appropriate training for staff is undertaken.
- There are suitable and sufficient Fire Marshals appointed in their area of responsibility.

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- Ensuring that all pupils and visitors are adequately supervised by members of staff.
- Ensure that arrangements are in place for those with restricted mobility, sensory disabilities or who are temporarily incapacitated to get to a place of safety.
- Where the department shares premises with others, arrangements must be made to co-operate with other occupants.

### **Health and Safety Officer**

The H & S Officer is responsible for ensuring arrangements are made in respect of the maintenance and management of fire safety provision for the school's premises, this will include;

- Fire Risk Assessments and their recommendations.
- Fire warning and detection systems.
- Firefighting equipment.
- Means of escape are maintained as required.
- Emergency lighting, escape lighting and signage.
- Electrical installation tests are undertaken as required.

### **Estates Manager**

The Estates Manager will ensure that during project works, the contractors have adequate fire safety management plans and arrangements in place to demonstrate a clear fire strategy during the works. This plan should include the protection of the means of escape, the maintenance of suitable fire compartmentation; storage, housekeeping and raising the alarm internally and externally to the site. Furthermore as part of any project handover that the fire alarm is tested to ensure that it works correctly on completion and a fire familiarisation briefing is arranged for the building occupiers.

### **Chief Fire Marshals**

The appointment of a Chief Fire Marshal (CFM) is required for each school building and department. The CFM is the designated Responsible Person for each building. In carrying out the duties indicated, the CFM will act with the delegated authority and support of the Fire Officer.

This will include:

- Liaise with the School's Fire Officer and other appropriate personnel regarding fire protection requirements.
- Maintain the building Fire Log Book.

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- Ensure daily and weekly inspections in their area of responsibility regarding escape routes, fire alarm indicator panels and alarm tests are being completed.
- Ensure that new members of staff are given instruction on Fire Emergency Procedures, that existing staff receive periodic refresher training and that each area for which they are responsible maintains a team of Fire Marshals, where appropriate.
- Ensure appropriate fire drills are completed.
- Ensure that all fire incidents and fire alarms are reported.
- In collaboration with other staff within the building, ensure that in a situation requiring the attendance of the emergency services, adequate information is available to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, their being exposed to risks to their health and safety.
- Assist in the development of appropriate arrangements for aiding the evacuation of sensory or mobility impaired occupants.
- Ensure the posting of appropriate warning fire signs and notices and report deficiencies to the Estates Department.

### **Fire Marshals**

Fire evacuation can be achieved more easily with the support of staff who are routinely familiar with the building. Fire Marshals who occupy a building can be best utilised to support safe and efficient evacuation procedures. These individuals will provide assistance and support to the CFM, including delegated responsibilities from bullet points above, where appropriate.

Fire Marshal duties include:

- Familiarisation with all exit routes from the building in which they normally work.
- Full understanding of the evacuation procedures and assembly points.
- Taking appropriate and effective action if a fire occurs.
- Carry out visual checks of fire- fighting equipment, doors etc. (weekly).
- Ensure escape routes are clear and clearly signed.
- Ensure fire doors are labelled.
- Ensure good housekeeping practices are carried out.
- How to isolate power supplies to machinery (if applicable).
- How to report incidents/concerns.

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### **Staff & Pupils**

Staff and pupils are required to comply with this Fire Safety Policy and all measures set in place by the School and its Departments to secure their safety of others with respect to fire.

They must:

- Not interfere with or misuse anything provided by the School in the interest of fire safety.
- Take reasonable care of themselves and all others who may be affected by their acts and omissions.
- In the event of a fire alarm sounding, evacuate the building as quickly as possible and only re-enter upon the instructions of the School Fire Officer, Chief Fire Marshal, Security Manager or the Fire Service.
- Cooperate fully with local fire safety induction and familiarisation arrangements.

### **Teaching Staff**

All teaching staff have a 'duty of care' to pupils under their supervision whilst studying or carrying out associated activities, to ensure that they are safe from fire. Teaching staff must ensure that:

- Pupils activities do not place others at risk who may be affected by their acts and omissions.
- Pupils are provided with clear information and instructions in the event of a fire situation, and take all reasonable steps to ensure safe egress of pupils in any teaching space used by them, regardless of the location.

### **Contractors**

Where contractors are on site it will be the duty of the relevant person with the responsibility for the works undertaken by them, to ensure the appropriate level of fire safety provision is incorporated within any work schedule, contract agreement or risk assessment. And, where such works are likely to impact the existing fire safety provision, notification must be communicated to the Operations Director for their consideration.

Contractors will also require to be made aware of the Fire Action Plan relevant to the area they are working in or are likely to attend. Where any work requires to be undertaken that is likely to involve the application of a naked flame or mechanically induced heat source a 'Hot Work Permit' must be acquired and agreed prior to the commencement of work.

### **Visitors**

Members of the public or other visitors require to be advised of the evacuation plans for any relevant premise they access. To ensure this is accomplished adequate 'Fire Action Notices' are required to be displayed at prominent locations.

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Where possible, all buildings which the public have access to should be managed in such way as to ensure that staff can account for all visitors within the premises at any given time to ensure safe evacuation.

### **Calling the Fire and Rescue Service**

In the event of a confirmed fire the Principal or delegate / relevant SLT Member will call the Fire & Rescue Service and notify Security.

### **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS)**

Where there is a requirement for assistance by any person to evacuate any relevant premise during an emergency a PEEPS will be required. Once persons with such needs have been identified by the relevant Year Leader then a suitable person (such as the Line Manager) shall be nominated to conduct a PEEP so that any necessary individual arrangements can be put in place in advance.

### **Staff Fire Safety Training**

The Health and Safety Committee will ensure that all employees within their management control receive regular fire safety training and all new employees undertake fire safety training as soon as is practicable after commencement of employment. Account must also be taken of circumstances that may impact on fire safety provision such as the introduction of new work equipment, new technology, new or changed risks etc.

### **New Staff**

All new employees must to be informed of the fire safety provisions that are relevant to the workplace. The line manager is responsible for ensuring that arrangements are made to ensure new employees are advised of the following:

- Fire action arrangements, including the Fire Safety Policy
- Means of escape within the premise
- Location of fire exits
- Location of firefighting equipment
- Details in relation to relevant findings of the fire risk assessments and dangerous substances
- Completion of the eLearning fire safety training module. The school's eLearning fire safety training course is available.

### **Marshals**

Fire Marshal training will be provided as and when deemed necessary.

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Notwithstanding the requirement as dictated by demand, the maximum period for refresher training should not exceed 3 years.

### **Fire Safety Risk Assessment**

The main purpose of the fire safety risk assessment process is to ensure that a methodical and structured approach is applied to assessing the suitability and effectiveness of the fire safety provisions applicable to a relevant premise and the fire hazards within.

### **Fire Safety Policy Emergency Procedures**

The H & S Committee will ensure that fire evacuation drills are carried out according to the School's Fire Drill Frequency schedule. It is accepted that drills should be avoided during times such as exams and events; however, consideration should be given to ensuring advantage is taken of peak occupancy times and ensure that all fire exits are utilised.

### **Dangerous Substances**

The impact of dangerous substances when exposed to fire can create a hostile and unpredictable environment. Where such substances are stored and used within the School, particular attention should be given to the safe use and storage guidance supplied with the substance's Safety Data Sheet. Pupils and staff should only be exposed to dangerous substances in an appropriately controlled and supervised environment.

### **Dangerous Conditions (Fire Safety)**

Where, in the opinion of any member of staff, a dangerous condition exists that is likely or has the potential to compromise the safety of any person in the event of fire, the condition should be brought to the attention of the relevant Year Leader / HOD. In the first instance, the Chief Fire Marshal should investigate the concerns and, where necessary, implement the appropriate means to negate the risk, or contact the Health & Safety Manager to seek assistance. Where the Chief Fire Marshal cannot resolve the concern, they must bring the matter to the attention of the Health & Safety Committee as soon as is reasonably practicable.

### **Alarm Activations and Incident Reports**

In the event of a fire or an alarm activation within a relevant premise, an Accident Incident Investigation Report Form must be completed. This process enables the Health & Safety Officer to be aware of all incidents where the Local Authority Fire and Rescue Service has been summoned to the School but, more importantly, allows for investigations to be carried out where necessary.

Where a small fire has occurred and was subsequently extinguished without activating the fire warning system, an incident report must still be completed and forwarded to the Health & Safety Officer.

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### **False Alarms - Unwanted Fire Alarm Signal (UFAS)**

Unwanted fire alarm signals are activations of the fire warning system that are activated by any effect other than fire.

These signals ultimately have a negative effect on the School's core business and also encourage complacency, as well as eroding user confidence. It is the intent of the School to strive towards zero tolerance of UFAS, whilst recognising the importance of fire detection systems in protecting staff, students, visitors and the building environment from the effects of fire.

#### **Action Plans**

Fire action notices are located at various points within all relevant premises detailing the relevant information from the fire action plans. All employees are required to be familiar with these notices as well as the detail within the fire action plans. Each notice will clearly indicate the following:

- The type of audible sounder within the relevant premise
- The location of the assembly point
- Simple guidance on actions to be taken. Fire action plans require to be adapted to accommodate all known hazards or risks that are likely to impact on evacuation. These will include details of isolation procedures for processes and equipment, as well as information sharing with the Fire and Rescue service when in attendance. The fire action plan will also detail the relevant evacuation procedures that are to be adopted for persons with impairments.

#### **Fire Safety management**

All of the School's premises have a number of fire safety provisions incorporated within them. These provisions are often referred to as either an active provision, examples of which can be fire safety systems and smoke extraction, or a passive provision, examples of which can be fire doors or intumescent treatments etc. Irrespective of the provision, it is necessary to recognise the importance of such features and ensure that their function is not compromised, as to do so will ultimately have an impact on the operational capability of the provision and affect the safety of occupiers and the integrity of the building itself.

#### **Fire Doors**

Fire doors are doors that are designed to restrict the spread of fire and the products of combustion within a predicted time period and will normally feature self-closing devices. All fire doors are marked as a fire door and should be kept closed at all times. The use of wedges and other items as hold open devices is not permitted within any of the School's premises and must be positively discouraged. The use of electromagnetic hold open devices on fire doors may be considered in some instances. Where such devices are to be considered, it may impact on the fire safety provision, therefore, full consultation with the Director of Operations will be required.

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### Exit Routes

All exit routes are indicated by signage. To ensure exit routes are not compromised, no equipment or materials may be accommodated or stored within any protected exit route or protected stair enclosure. All exits must be maintained clear, free from any obstruction and all final exit doors require to be easily and immediately openable from the direction of travel.

Additionally, the surface finish to wall linings within stair enclosures and protected routes should be maintained free from any form of combustible wall decorations. Notice boards will be accepted in such areas as long as they are enclosed and effectively managed. Corridors and stairways that form part of escape routes should be kept clear and hazard free at all times. Items that may be a source of fuel or ignition should not be located within escape routes.

### Fire Warning Systems

A fire warning system is a system designed to provide an audible alarm and may include activation by means of detecting the elements of combustion. In all cases the alarm can be activated by means of a manual alarm call point. Manual alarm call points are normally situated in exit routes and at final exits. Where fire is known or suspected, the alarm should be raised immediately utilising a manual alarm call point (break glass point). On hearing an alarm all occupants of a premise must evacuate the building by the nearest available exit and assemble at the prescribed assembly point, with the exception of authorised persons for specific tasks, such as alarm investigation or PEEPs implementation.

### Fire Fighting Equipment

Fire fighting equipment is provided within fire exit routes and may be placed adjacent to some specific risks, such as computer servers, electrical transformers etc. The extinguishers are provided for use by trained, competent persons but should **only be used when it is safe to do so and the escape route from the seat of fire is not compromised. Under no circumstances should a fire be confronted without first raising the alarm.**

All staff are required to familiarise themselves with the extinguishers provided within the relevant premises and the fire classification that may influence their limitations of use. Where any firefighting equipment has been used or is deemed unsatisfactory, Estates should be advised to facilitate replacement or investigation as necessary.

### Structural Alterations

Where any structural or material alterations are carried out within premises that are likely to impact on the fire safety provision, it will be the duty of the Estates Manager to ensure that a copy of the proposal is made available to the Director of Operations for their attention.



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Thereafter, it will be incumbent on the Director of Operations to ensure that a review, if deemed necessary, of the Fire Safety Risk Assessment is carried out. It is also prudent to ensure the Director of Operations is included at an early stage of correspondence in regard to any proposed material changes/alterations to any of the School's relevant premises.

### **External Waste Containers & Refuse Bins**

External waste containers, refuse bins and industrial skips are a potential fire hazard to all buildings. Fires often occur in such receptacles and where they are placed in close proximity to a building, the potential for fire spread through radiated and convected heat currents is a realistic possibility.

To ensure this risk is eliminated, all such receptacles must be placed a minimum of 6m from any building. In all cases, no receptacles should be placed directly adjacent to or below any window, door or other openings of a building.

Where, due to operational reasons, a waste skip has to be placed within 6 m of a building, it must be of the enclosed type and sited with the access doors facing away from the building.

