



Fire

Compliance Code

Reviewed: December 2023

Contents Page

1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Responsibilities	3
2.1 Headteachers	3
2.2 Trust Estates Manager	3
2.3 Site Managers/ Caretakers	3
2.4 All Employees and Visitors	3
3.0 Objectives	4
4.0 Mandatory Requirements	4
5.0 Managing Fire Safety	4/5
6.0 Contracted Monitoring	5
7.0 Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)	5
8.0 Fire safety Awareness Training	5
9.0 Fire Wardens	5/6
10.0 Evacuation Procedures	6

Annex A – Template Evacuation Procedure

Annex B – Hot Works Arrangement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

West Norfolk Academies Trust (WNAT) will meet the duties placed upon them by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) order 2005 by ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all students, staff, visitors and contractors are protected from the risk of fire whilst on Trust premises.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (commonly referred to as the FSO) came into force on 1st October 2006. The purpose of the legislation is to place a greater emphasis on fire prevention by ensuring that all persons responsible for premises comply with their statutory duties and implement the general fire precautions which are needed to protect all persons from death or injury in the case of fire.

This Compliance Code explains how the schools comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to ensure that, where possible, fire is prevented and that any fire risks are adequately controlled.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

This Compliance Code forms part of the WNAT Health and Safety Policy and in common with that policy extends through the all schools, with specific responsibilities as below:

2.1 Headteachers

Headteachers hold the ultimate responsibility for all H&S requirements at their respective schools and as such are responsible for the implementation and management of this Compliance Code

2.2 Trust Estates Manager

The Estates Manager is responsible for the monitoring of statutory compliance in regards to fire safety and is to report to the relevant headteacher.

2.3 Site managers/ Caretaker

Within Secondary schools the site manager is responsible for the day to day management of fire safety as delegated by the headteacher.

Within Primary schools the caretaker is responsible for the day to day management of fire safety, support by the Trust Estates Manager, as delegated by the headteacher.

2.4 All Employees and Visitors

All employees and visitors have the responsibility to cooperate and to ensure that the workplace is safe from fire and its effects and must not do anything that will place themselves or other people at risk.

Note- Within the educational setting all students are to be considered as visitors

3. OBJECTIVES

- To safeguard all persons from death or injury in the event of fire by the effective management of fire safety
- To minimise the risk of fire and to limit fire spread
- To minimise the potential for fire to disrupt services, damage buildings and equipment, or harm the environment.

4. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

1. Ensure that a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) is conducted and that all recommendations are planned and implemented as required considering priority, cost and operational impact.
2. Provide appropriate mandatory annual Fire Awareness training for all staff.
3. Ensure that all servicing and inspection requirements are in date through regular compliance inspections/ audits.
4. Ensure that all schools have in place suitable evacuation plans and conduct termly evacuation drills
5. Comply with the HSE, Police or Fire service regarding investigation following any incident involving fire.

5. MANAGING FIRE SAFETY

As per Paragraph 2 the headteacher retains overall responsibility for H&S at the respective school. However, the day to day management of requirements can be delegated to suitable individuals with aspects contracted to experienced contractors as deemed necessary. Within Secondary schools this position is that of Site Manager and within Primary Schools the position of Caretaker is utilised.

The Trust Estates Manager will support those nominated and monitor implementation of management requirements through regular site visits.

Therefore, day to day management requirements are as follows

1. Ensure that all means of escape are properly maintained, kept free from obstruction and available for safe and effective use at all times
2. Maintain, in good working order, all firefighting appliances and devices as follows
 - a) Fire detection – Weekly activation point testing
 - b) Firefighting equipment – Monthly on-site inspection
 - c) Notices and signage relating to fire procedures – Regularly inspect
 - d) Means of escape, considering the needs of any disabled user. Regularly inspect
3. Ensure that contracted monitoring requirements as per paragraph 6 are completed and in date with all findings actioned or mitigated against promptly.
4. Complete actions or implement mitigation for issues identified in the fire risk assessment
5. Arrange and schedule termly evacuation drills and record the findings
6. Within Secondary schools site managers should ensure that all staff, students, contractors, visitors and third-party hirers are made aware of and comply with the school's fire procedures. Within primary schools this remains the responsibility of the headteacher.
7. Identify any special risks, e.g. the storage of hazardous materials, and put in place appropriate procedures to minimise the risks

8. Issue and manage Hot works permit as per the information provided in Annex B to this Compliance Code. It is appreciated that within primary schools this may be the responsibility of the headteacher or Trust Estates Manager

6. CONTRACTED MONITORING

To assist in the management of fire systems WNAT utilises the services of various outside contracts to carry out effective monitoring of its duties.

Monitoring contracts should include and ensure the following

1. Fire detection and alarm system are serviced and maintained quarterly
2. Emergency lighting is checked monthly and an annual full discharge test is carried out
3. Firefighting equipment is serviced annually
4. Annual review of the Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) is carried out

7. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT (FRA)

The FRA identifies who will be at risk if there is a fire, where people may be working and who else may be at risk, either in the premises or nearby, such as members of the public, visiting contractors, etc, and where these people are likely to be located.

FRAs must be reviewed annually or renewed following any alterations to the school site such as building improvements or alterations to the internal layout.

FRAs will be reviewed upon completion with recommendations implement on a priority and risk impact basis. Where a recommendation is made that is of a lower priority an assessment of cost versus impact must be made and the recommendation should be planned for implementation accordingly.

8. FIRE SAFETY AWARENESS TRAINING

All staff irrespective of role within WNAT should receive basic fire safety information as part of their induction process. This information must include the location of the assemble point and an awareness of the school evacuation plan. This should be recorded as part of the individual's induction process (See WNAT Inductions Policy).

All staff irrespective of role must complete mandatory annual fire safety awareness training.

Nominated Fire Wardens are to complete Fire Warden training in addition to, or as opposed to, fire awareness training as dictated by the headteacher.

9. FIRE WARDENS

Along with the Evacuation Plan, Fire Wardens are an important risk control measure to ensure the workplace is prepared should an emergency situation occur. Key Duties of a Fire Warden include:

- to assist the responsible person in implementing and improving effective emergency arrangements within the school

- to assist in preventing emergencies by monitoring the adequacy of the fire risk control measures
- to raise awareness with other staff about the fire hazards that exist within the workplace
- to instruct occupants in the action to be undertaken in response to a fire emergency
- to assist in undertaking simulated Fire Evacuation Drills to evaluate the effectiveness of emergency arrangements - they must be familiar with all fire emergency escape routes and exits from their designated area
- to ensure all people from within the workplace are accounted for during an evacuation
- to assist all people in the workplace should an emergency occur, including assisting people with special needs, e.g. helping someone in a wheelchair to evacuate.

If the fire alarm is sounded, Fire Wardens have a Duty of care to assist in the safe evacuation of all workplace occupants including visitors and to ensure that their designated area has been cleared.

It is standard practice for Fire Wardens to be allocated a designated area to manage in the event of an emergency. Within schools this may not be pragmatic due to the transient nature of staff. Therefore, the headteacher is to consider whether it is potentially more beneficial to nominate Fire Wardens or to treat all staff as Fire Wardens with training conducted accordingly.

Where there is a requirement to potentially assist members of staff or students in the event of an evacuation this should be identified in the individual's Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) and provision should be put in place as identified.

10. EVACUATION PROCEDURES

A full evacuation drill must be conducted at the start of the Autumn term to ensure new students and staff are aware of the process and procedures required. Following this initial evacuation drill, a following two drills must be completed in the remaining terms throughout the academic year.

The key point to note for evacuation is *life before materials* and as such all students, staff, visitors and contractors are to leave at the NEAREST exit point.

Evacuation plans and procedures should be clearly identified to all staff, students, visitors and contractors. Therefore, the plan should be displayed in suitable locations such as reception where the assemble point must be clearly indicated.

Additionally, fire alarm testing schedules should be displayed in reception to ensure visitors and contractors are made aware.

An evacuation plan example is available at Annex A to this Compliance Code and should be adapted to suit each school site accordingly.

The document also includes specific Guidance on the Evacuation of Disabled Persons from the School Buildings.

Annex A to WNAT Fire Compliance Code

Template Evacuation Procedure

Note: This is an example of an evacuation procedure and should be adapted to suit each school site

EVACUATION PROCEDURE

UPON DISCOVERING A FIRE,

Break the glass of the nearest activation point and shout 'FIRE' to raise awareness in the immediate area

UPON HEARING THE ALARM

Reception staff to ring 999 as soon as possible, and if safe to do so. The evacuation lead is to be informed that the fire service has been notified.

ALL PERSONS PROCEED TO ASSEMBLY POINT VIA THE NEAREST EXIT

Where appropriate and if safe to do so; •

- Ensure Master switches for gas and electricity are switched off.
- Ensure windows and doors are closed
- Staff are to guide students and any visitors to the Assembly Point via the most direct route away from the fire
- All persons should walk rapidly and NOT run.
- Use the directed route - the quickest fire escape route is displayed in each room - unless a blockage makes this impossible. Be prepared to find an alternative route if necessary.
- Should the alarm ring during Break or Lunchtime all persons are to make their way to the Assembly Point. Staff should manage this process where possible without putting themselves at risk.

Under no circumstances should staff or pupils return to their form rooms.

- Site managers/ caretakers should attempt to identify the source of the fire from external visual observation and the zone triggered by the alarm should be noted from the fire control panel
- Site managers/ Caretakers are to meet the fire service at the main gate and control entry to the site. The fire service must be directed to the required area.
- Access to school grounds should be restricted to prevent additional persons entering the site.

Note - In the event of an actual fire the emergency services will respond rapidly. Therefore, it is possible that first response will arrive before a full roll call can be completed. In this case the fire service must be informed that the school CANNOT confirm if all persons are accounted for.

- Conduct a roll call to account for Students and Staff
- Account for all visitors and contractors. (WNAT schools utilize an electronic sign in procedure for all visitors and contractors. This system should be utilized)

Guidance on the Evacuation of Disabled Persons from the School Buildings

Students and employees with a disability (including temporary injuries that limit mobility) should have been identified and information held in their respective Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). It is important that this information is shared with individuals nominated to assist in the event of an evacuation and that the plan is tested at regular intervals.

It is the responsibility of the SENCO to ensure the additional needs of those holding a PEEP are included in the evacuation plan although assistance by the site manager may be beneficial in facilitating some provisions.

A “buddy” may be appointed for any student or employee requiring assistance in an emergency evacuation.

Where teachers have a student with a known disability, they must ensure that that student is aware that the alarm has been triggered and that they follow the evacuation procedure accordingly.

Visitors with disabilities:

On arrival, disabled visitors to the School should be asked to identify any special requirements in the case of an emergency evacuation. The person hosting the visitor should ensure the visitor’s safety in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Refuge Points

When evacuating the upper floors of the buildings, anyone unable to leave without assistance should wait for assistance in the refuge areas which should be identified with suitable signage.

The use of the term “Refuge” is intended to mean a place where people can safely wait for a period of time whilst the evacuation process is being undertaken. It is not a place to leave people for the duration of the alarm, but it has been selected for its additional protection from fire, meaning that it will remain a safe place to wait.

Lifts must not be used during an emergency evacuation

Annex B to WNAT Fire Compliance Code

Hot works arrangement

Introduction

This annex sets out the procedures and guidance for the management of hot working activities undertaken by those who work on the West Norfolk Academies Trust estate.

For the purposes of this annex hot working means any activity or process that generates flame, heat or spark and introduces (or presents) a foreseeable risk of fire or explosion through a source of ignition by means of tools or equipment either:

- intentionally arising from working methods (with or without the use of a naked flame) such as welding, flame-cutting, soldering, brazing; or
- the unintentional generation of heat or sparks, by the use of power/hand tools e.g. grinding and the use of disc-cutters.

Over the years hot working has resulted in many major fires and explosions which have caused a number of fatalities and serious injuries as well as property/asset losses. Where reasonably practicable the need for hot working should be eliminated by the use of other processes that do not involve the application or generation of heat or sparks. Flammable liquids and vapours such as petrol, diesel, fuel oil, paints, solvents, glue, dusts etc. are found in many places of work and under certain conditions (i.e. hot working) can explode violently. Just a teaspoon of petrol in a drum can be enough to cause an explosion, when heated and turned into a vapour.

Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Head

It is the responsibility of the Executive Head to ensure that suitable systems are in place and that adequate resources are made available for hot work to be conducted in accordance with appropriate safe systems of work that may include the use of a Permit to Work.

Headteacher/Managers

The Headteacher/Manager (owner of the task) is responsible for ensuring that for any activity undertaken by WNAT staff involving hot working, that a risk assessment is conducted by a competent person having sufficient experience and training in all associated risks. The risk assessment should consider:

- isolating/shielding plant/equipment from the effects of heat;
- the transference of heat to the surrounding work environment;
- the environment in which the activity is to be carried out (including what is above, below and in the immediate vicinity) and the possibility of explosive atmospheres;
- all other task related hazards (non-heat related).

A written safe system of work should be developed and maintained for all hot working activities unless the risk assessment has identified that it is not necessary.

When developing a safe system of work for hot working, the following should be considered (this list is not exhaustive):

- work equipment selected is suitable for the activity, is properly maintained and where appropriate, adequately secured;
- ensure equipment is visually inspected and is safe to use before commencing the work;
- all fixed services that may be affected by the activity (oil, gas, electricity, etc.) are located and protected (isolated, locked, vented, etc.);
- the need for all combustible/flammable material to be removed/protected;
- actions required to minimise the possibility of explosive atmospheres;
- area secured (access control, etc.);
- the need for appropriate fire prevention measures and firefighting equipment;
- monitoring the work area to ensure that a fire does not start after the activity is complete;
- area adequately ventilated and/or personal and respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE) issued/used;
- precautions have been taken to minimise the release of sparks, hazardous emissions, etc;
- there is no doubt as to who has overall control of the work.

Where the risk assessment has identified a significant risk a Permit To Work (PTW) should be raised and communicated to all relevant staff. The manager should ensure that all control measures have been implemented prior to commencement of the work.

The information that should be contained in a PTW for hot working will depend on each activity but will normally include:

- the location and nature of the work;
- the proposed time and duration of the work;
- the limits of time for which the PTW is valid;
- the precautions to be taken before the work starts, during the work (if deemed necessary appointing of a competent and trained firewatcher), and on completion of the work (this may need to be monitored for several hours after the work is completed);
- the requirement for authorisation, acceptance, completion and cancellation signatures;
- the person in direct control of the work.

The line manager is responsible for ensuring hot working is only carried out by competent persons. They should monitor the hot work activity to ensure the work is carried out in line with the safe system of work and on completion of the work the area has been left in a safe condition.

Steps to ensure that an area is left safe following a hot working activity may include:

- the use of fire watchers (monitoring an area for a defined period of time for signs of smouldering materials or the onset of fire);
- accelerated cooling/damping down of the area/equipment;
- all safety systems reinstated (smoke detector covers removed etc);
- area is cleared of equipment/debris.

All Staff

All WNAT staff engaged in hot working must comply with the required controls defined in the safe system of work/permit to work and cooperate with management by undertaking appropriate instruction and training.