

# COGNITA

## Fire Risk Management Policy

Sept 2021

UK



Cognita requires that all Cognita UK Schools policies and procedures are in place to manage fire safety in all our premises; that fire risk assessments are carried out for each workplace, school, establishment, etc; and that mutual arrangements are made with those in joint occupancy;

### **Key points**

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to all non-domestic premises and requires the Responsible Person (employers in workplaces) to carry out a fire risk assessment of their premises.

Cognita, being the employer and owner in respect of Cognita Schools, is the Responsible Person as defined by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

**Fire Risk Assessments must be reviewed at least every two years by the approved Fire Consultant or when there is any building alteration/change of occupation and use of the premises, or following a fire incident/emergency, etc. The School's Internal Fire Audit programme supplements this external FRA process to provide a suitably robust fire management system.**

**Emergency Plans must be drawn up for each premises, which reflect the outcome of the fire risk assessments.**

**Responsibilities in relation to this Policy fall on The Responsible Person and designated duty holders such as Head Teachers (Principal Dutyholder), Safety Assistants (nominated to support local fire safety management duties), Managers, Personnel, Fire Wardens, external Fire Safety Advisor and persons who otherwise have control of premises and employees.**

**Detailed information and guidance is given in the attached Appendices.**

### Fire Safety Management Corporate Policy

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy describes the arrangements for effectively managing fire safety so as to prevent fire occurring and, in the event of fire, to protect people and property.
- 1.2 Compliance with the Policy is crucial in the context of business continuity planning and risk management generally, and to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which became effective on 1st October 2006.
- 1.3 The responsibility for complying with the Order rests with the 'responsible person'. This is the employer in respect of workplaces. Any duty imposed on the responsible person in respect of premises shall also be imposed on every person, other than the responsible person who has, to any extent, control of those premises (Head Teacher, Business Manager, teaching staff and other employees) so far as the requirements relate to matters within his/her control.
- 1.4 The guidance contained in the Appendices 1 and 2 includes more detailed information on specific matters referred to in this policy.

#### Responsibilities

#### 2 Head Teachers (Principal Dutyholders) will:

- 2.1 Ensure that this Policy and/or any departmental fire safety policies/codes of practice that complement this Policy are in place, properly implemented and reviewed.
- 2.2 Ensure that a competent person (Safety Assistant) is appointed for all of their premises to oversee and implement fire safety arrangements, and ensure that they are competent and appropriately trained to undertake their duties;
- 2.3 Ensure that arrangements are in place for the completion of Fire Risk Assessments, including, where appropriate, technical surveys in respect of fire protection;
- 2.4 Ensure, in conjunction with the outcome of the fire risk assessment that the recommendations of the fire risk assessment are implemented and that all necessary fire precautionary measures and procedures, fire safety systems and equipment are provided and maintained as required.
- 2.5 Ensure that fire, security, and health and safety arrangements at each premise are complementary.
- 2.6 Ensure that staff are appropriately trained in fire safety procedures to reflect the requirements of the fire risk assessment;
- 2.7 Arrange for the Emergency Plan to be issued to their employees, visitors, etc. to inform them what to do in the event of fire, particularly safe evacuation;
- 2.8 Liaise with the local Trade Union Safety Representative, where appointed, on all aspects of the above arrangements.

### **3 Nominated Safety Assistants with responsibility for premises or parts of premises will:**

- 3.1 Ensure that Fire Alarm and Detection Systems, Emergency Lighting and Fire Extinguishers are appropriately located and properly maintained;
- 3.2 Ensure that a robust and effective Emergency Plan is in place at each location to safely evacuate all persons, whether employees, visitors or service users. This Emergency Plan must take into account people with mobility, some sensory and some learning impairments, including those with temporary impairments, which will affect their ability to use stairs or otherwise evacuate premises promptly. The plan must be internally deliverable and not reliant on the Fire and Rescue Service to complete the evacuation;
- 3.3 Ensure that a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is developed for all relevant persons e.g. employees, service users, in accordance with the guidance on PEEPs, which is contained in Section 6 of the Fire Management File. When necessary, further advice may be sought from the Fire Safety Advisor.
- 3.4 Ensure that if there is any doubt about the provision of new or replacement fire safety equipment or alteration to existing layouts, advice is sought from the Fire Safety Advisor;
- 3.5 Ensure that a copy of the current fire risk assessment for their premises is readily accessible, its provisions complied with;
- 3.6 Ensure that fire risk assessments are reviewed at every two years or whenever there is any building alteration, change of occupation or use of the premises or following an incident involving fire.
- 3.7 Ensure that internal fire safety audits are carried out at the designated frequencies. A model audit form is provided in Section 10 of this Fire Management File.
- 3.8 Ensure that effective arrangements are in place for contacting the emergency services;
- 3.9 Ensure that the Fire and Rescue Service are aware of any significant hazards associated with the premises e.g. oxygen cylinders, storage of petrol, chemicals, etc;
- 3.10 Arrange and review Fire Evacuation Drills at the beginning of each Term;
- 3.11 Ensure that Fire Action Notices (displayed as a minimum at Fire Alarm Call Points) and Fire Signage are appropriate and kept up to date;
- 3.12 Ensure all escape routes are kept clear of obstructions and that access to Fire Extinguishers and Fire Alarm Call Points are not impeded; and
- 3.13 Ensure that the annual testing of portable electrical equipment and periodic testing (5 yearly) of the fixed electrical installations has been carried out.

### **4 Sources of Help and Advice**

- 4.1 Cognita Facilities Team and the Fire Safety Advisor will provide additional advice and guidance, on request, to assist with the implementation of this Policy, and ensure it is kept up to date in accordance with any changes in legislation and reflects current best practice;
- 4.2 Cognita will provide additional advice and guidance in respect of fire risk assessments and where applicable, specialist advice in respect of physical building structure from a fire safety perspective;

### **5 Fire Wardens will**

- 5.1 Pro-actively monitor any fire protection measures and equipment present;
- 5.2 Competently react to emergency situations, in accordance with training;
- 5.3 Know how to raise the alarm and call the emergency services, along with being familiar with the means of escape in the area in which they are responsible;
- 5.4 Ensure that evacuations are carried out in an orderly manner; and
- 5.5 Support roll call to ensure that everyone has been accounted for.

### **6 Employees must**

- 6.1 Ensure they are familiar with the Emergency Plan for their workplace and co-operate by participating in Fire Evacuation Drills and by observing practical fire safety arrangements;
- 6.2 Know, and co-operate with the Responsible Person's requirements and policies relating to fire safety for their workplace;
- 6.3 Report to their manager or supervisor any concerns about fire safety;
- 6.4 Be familiar with all escape routes;
- 6.5 Not wedge fire doors open, nor block or obstruct them nor abuse or interfere with any fire safety equipment or procedures or tolerate such actions by others.
- 6.6 Be aware of the action to be taken on discovering a fire, hearing a fire alarm, for raising the alarm (including the location of Fire Alarm Call Points) and calling the Fire and Rescue Service;
- 6.7 Promptly evacuate the premises, in accordance with the Emergency Plan, to a place of safety without putting themselves and others at risk, and NOT attempt to extinguish a fire unless they have been specifically trained; and
- 6.8 Comply with law relating to smoking and the employer's no smoking policy.  
N.B. Failure by an employee to cooperate with the employer's fire safety arrangements is an offence under article 23 of the Regulatory reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

### APPENDIX 1: Guidance to the Policy for Fire Safety Management

#### **Useful reference documents which should be used to support your fire safety risk assessments and development of fire precautions.**

The Fire Safety Risk Assessment Guides published by [Home office](#). These are referred to in Section 13 of the Fire Management File.

#### **Practical Fire Safety Arrangements**

As part of a holistic fire safety management system, in addition to the management action outlined below, considerations of passive and active fire precautions are essential.

Passive Fire Precautions are concerned with the physical conditions at workplaces which are designed to facilitate containment of fire by design, construction and layout, effective communication and safe evacuation. In particular the:

- materials specification, design, construction and inspection of buildings, fire doors and escape routes taking into account the needs of pupils, service users, people with disabilities, contractors, members of the public, etc;
- appropriate safe and secure location of building services e.g. gas;
- provision of clear fire safety signage for escape routes and final exits, in
- conformity with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 and The Equality Act 2010.
- provision of prominently located Fire Action Notices (e.g. by Fire Alarm Call Points) to inform people of the action to be taken in the event of fire;
- education and training of staff in fire safety arrangements, in particular
- evacuation procedures and drills.

Active Fire Precautions are those features of the fire safety management system that detect and operate in the event of a fire, including fire alarm system emergency lighting systems and fire fighting equipment. In particular:

- the installation, maintenance, inspection and weekly testing of fire alarms;
- the appropriate design, location, operation, monthly inspection and annual testing of adequate (emergency) lighting systems for fire escape routes;
- the provision, use, appropriate type and location, and annual maintenance of portable fire extinguishers.

Fire safety inspections of the premises must be carried out at the frequency specified in the Fire Safety Inspections of the Premises section (Appendix A, section A1) of the Fire Safety Guides, which can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-law-and-guidance-documents-for-business>

#### **Fire Risk Assessments**

Fire risk assessments are a requirement of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and are a structured approach to determining the risk of fire occurring in a workplace or from a work activity, and identifying the precautions necessary to eliminate, reduce or manage the risk. The outcome of the risk assessment must form the basis of the Emergency Plan.

Risk assessments must take into account those who could be affected, e.g. numbers involved, their location, physical and mental capabilities and employees of organisations with whom a workplace is shared. Where appropriate, an individual PEEP must be developed for staff, pupils or service users who have known disabilities that will impact on their ability to evacuate the particular premises.

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Particular care should be taken when giving consideration to the use of Refuges as part of a PEEP. Placing people with mobility impairments, who cannot manage stairs without significant support, into a temporary Refuge is only acceptable if the Emergency Plan contains a robust and effective plan to enable them to be removed from the Refuge, to an external place of safety. Such plans must not rely on the Fire and Rescue Service to affect the rescue. Where an effective plan to quickly remove persons in a Refuge to an external place of safety cannot be put into place, then alternatives to a Refuge must be considered. A guidance note on PEEPs has been developed and is contained in Section 6 of the Fire Management Folder. When necessary, further advice may be sought from the Fire Safety Advisor.

Keeping sources of fuel such as combustible materials, flammable substances and waste; separated from sources of ignition including work equipment, lighting, hot surfaces, hot working processes, carelessness by contractors, etc on site, and arson must also be taken into account.

The risk evaluation and appropriate control measures to be taken into account will include those practical fire safety arrangements outlined above.

### **Fire Safety Audits**

Fire Safety Audits may be carried out at any Cognita School by the Fire and Rescue Service who are the enforcing authority for this legislation and are likely to include a request to inspect the following documentation;

- Fire Safety Risk Assessment
- Fire Safety Policy
- Premises Specific Fire Safety Handbook or File, containing:
  - o Fire Safety Maintenance Records
  - o Fire Safety Log Book
  - o Written Fire Evacuation Plan
  - o Records of Staff Fire Safety Training

### **Historic Buildings**

Cognita Schools occupy a number of historic and/or listed buildings. These buildings may present particular difficulties in achieving acceptable standards of fire safety and emergency evacuation commensurate with the character, structure, fabric and contents of the buildings.

An holistic approach to these situations will be required based on the premises specific fire risk assessment; which should take into account appropriate levels of supervision and surveillance, as well as practical security arrangements, e.g. engineered solutions, anti-arson mailbox, CCTV etc. and the statutory need to provide an effective and robust Emergency Plan.

### **Further Guidance**

Specific guidance, where appropriate, is listed in Section 13 of the Fire Management File.

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| Related documentation        | H&S Policy<br>H&S Handbook for Employees |