



FIRE SAFETY
for schools within the
Excalibur Academies Trust

| Revision | Status | Date | Title of Reviewer | Purpose/Outcome |
|----------|----------|------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Release | 01.09.2018 | D Nicholls – SBM (H&S) | |
| 2 | Reviewed | 30.07.2019 | Davina Nicholls | |
| 3 | Reviewed | Feb 2022 | Davina Nicholls | Updated logo |
| | Reviewed | Sept 2024 | Beck Stubbs (Principal) | |
| 5 | Reviewed | Sept 2025 | Beck Stubbs (Principal) | |

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I. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The following Policy ensures West Berkshire Council managers and responsible persons, including those at Schools (i.e. Principals), have suitable and sufficient arrangements for fire safety management across all associated properties.
- 1.2. As an overarching policy this document covers key arrangements and guidance on related roles and responsibilities necessary for the safety of clients, visitors, residents, staff and property.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1. The Excalibur Academies Trust shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that fire management arrangements comply with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, and other appropriate regulations.
- 2.2. The Trust is committed to effective management of fire risk, and the prevention of any associated injury or ill-health to: staff, visitors, contractors, and any persons affected by the premise including Fire and Rescue Service personnel.

3. APPLICATION

- 3.1 The following guidance applies to all Excalibur Academies Trust places of work.
- 3.2 The suite of related guidance comprises:
 - Fire Safety Logbook;
 - Fire Warden Manual, if applicable
 - Arson Prevention Policy;

4. THE FIRE SAFETY ORDER

- 4.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into effect on 1st October 2006, and is enforced by (locally), the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS), Royal Berkshire (F&RS) and Avon Fire and Rescue (AFR).
- 4.2 This Order replaces all previous fire legislation, and gives Fire and Rescue Services powers to visit and inspect fire safety within any Excalibur Academies Trust property as part of normal routine, or where there is believed to be just cause, i.e. via a formal complaint or unsafe act.
- 4.3 The key issues are:
 - A 'Fire Risk Assessments' is required for each place of work, with an action plan to manage any deficiencies identified by the assessment, undertaken by 'competent' Fire Risk Assessor.
 - The appointed Fire Risk Assessment contractor/consultant should have their competency assessed against relevant standards, such as the Competency Criteria for Fire Risk Assessors (FRA Competency Council 2012). Or third party accreditation to BAFE SP205, *Life Safety Fire Risk Assessment*;

- A 'Responsible Persons' for each site must be nominated/held accountable;
- Fire Awareness training is required for all staff;
- Firefighting equipment and systems must be tested and maintained;
- An Emergency Plan / Emergency Pack for each site must be in place;
- In house Fire Safety 'Self Inspections' must be completed quarterly (for Corporate and Service buildings);
- Risk Assessments are revised when significant operational changes occur;
- All visits by Fire and Rescue Services personnel should be reported to the Principal, and where appropriate recorded.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The Chief Executive, Directors, Governors, Responsible Persons and Principals shall ensure this policy is implemented and managed effectively in accordance with the relevant Health, Safety and Welfare Policy.
- 5.2 The Health and Safety team shall continue to develop and monitor Fire Policy implementation.
- 5.3 Heads of Service, Department Heads, Responsible Persons and Managers shall ensure that this policy is known and acted upon by staff directly under their control.
- 5.4 All staff shall ensure that they are aware of and follow recognised procedures for fire safety. They shall inform their manager or team leader of any concerns regarding fire safety, and participate in fire safety training as agreed with their manager / team leader.

6. THE ROLE OF 'RESPONSIBLE PERSON' AND 'COMPETENT PERSON'

- 6.1 The identified 'Responsible Person' per premise / site is either:
- The employer in control of the workplace;
 - The person with overall management responsibilities;
 - The occupier of the premises; or
 - The lead officer for the owner of the premises (e.g. an empty building).
- 6.2 Effectively, the 'Responsible Person' (RP), is the most senior person present. Examples are: Corporate Director, Head of Service, Principal, Site Manager, etc. An RP can delegate specific duties to a 'competent person', Council Service or Contractor, but this does not transfer an RP's overall duty of care for the premise or site.
- 6.3 A 'competent person' is responsible for undertaking routine Fire Safety checks within & around their building, although this can be achieved by delegation to team members. The Competent Person must attend a specific Fire Awareness training course. This can be arranged through WBC.

7. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The RP shall review the assessment on an annual basis, or whenever there are any significant changes, or if there is any reason to suspect that it is no longer valid.
- 7.2 The annual review of the fire risk assessment will in most cases just require a simple assessment of the changes that have occurred to the building, and how the building is used as a workplace. If there have been no building changes, and the staffing working patterns and type of use has not changed then the FRA will remain fit for purpose. The West Berkshire Council Health and Safety Team can provide advice if needed.
- 7.3 A site specific Fire Risk Assessment must be held for each Excalibur Academies Trust building, which has been undertaken by a competent Fire Risk Assessor.
- 7.4 Any works / improvements detailed within the linked action plan must be implemented by the Responsible Person or justification for non-compliance with the action plan must be submitted to the Health and Safety Team.

8. FIRE SAFETY LOG

- 8.1 To assist the RP with ensuring premises under their control comply with the Fire Safety Order, the 'Fire Safety Logbook' has been produced. Within Excalibur the Health and Safety Procedure document has replaced the fire log.
- 8.2 The Logbook contains a series of generic processes and templates which should be adapted to render it 'site specific', including creation of a 'Local Fire Policy Statement, using the template provided. Those sections of the logbook to be completed will depend upon the size, complexity and use of the building, and those employees and nonemployees who will use the building.
- 8.3 An RP does not have to use the Logbook, but any documents that are used must be equal or better than the Logbook to ensure full compliance with the Fire Order.
- 8.4 Once complete, the RP must keep the Logbook readily available for inspection by any authorised officer (such as the Fire and Rescue Services), School Business Manager (focusing on H&S) or member of the WBC Health and Safety Team.

9. EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS

- 9.1 Prompt and appropriate action by staff enables safe evacuation, and assists with bringing an emergency quickly under control.
- 9.2 Clear procedures are therefore required, with staff made familiar through instruction and regular evacuation drills.
- 9.3 As a minimum, an emergency evacuation procedure shall address:
 - Actions taken upon discovering a fire;
 - Actions upon hearing the alarm;
 - Actions by competent persons, e.g. Fire Wardens;
 - Evacuation of persons with special needs/ reduced mobility;
 - Collection of the Emergency Evacuation Folder/ pack.

- 9.4 The range of the Excalibur Academies Trust schools means a single Evacuation Plan cannot fit all sites, however, the Fire Safety Logbook provides a versatile template.
- 9.5 With the assistance of the Health and Safety Team, each RP shall ensure the Emergency Evacuation Plan is adapted to their local environment and implemented.
- 9.6 If an evacuation of an Excalibur Trust building occurs between 9.00 am & 9.00 pm, the Responsible Person / Incident Control Officer / Duty Fire Warden / Site Manager must phone the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service to CONFIRM the existence of a fire, otherwise they will not attend. This is relevant for all buildings, including those which are designated as special premises by the WDFRS, and which get a response at any time of day.
- 9.7 The Responsible Person / Incident Control Officer / Duty Fire Warden / Site Manager must therefore;
- a) Identify the fire zone affected by fire, from the Fire Control Panel (if installed);
 - b) Make a brief visual search of the affected zone to verify a fire by smelling or viewing evidence of smoke;
 - c) Ensure that the search is carried out by 2 persons, so that Lone Working is avoided;
 - d) Ensure that the search should not put anyone at risk;
 - e) Ensure that those searching for fire evidence only attempt to actually fight a SMALL fire, if one or both have received Fire Extinguisher training, and purely at their discretion.

10. PERSONAL EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS

- 10.1 A 'Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan', (PEEP), ensures any person unable to leave a building unaided has the necessary information and assistance to reach a place of safety quickly and without unnecessary risk. PEEP's should be kept in a location easily accessible to all staff, all staff to be made aware of this location.
- 10.2 Line management shall identify any PEEP required for new and existing staff, and thus formally assure assistance is available in the event of an emergency.
- 10.3 Likewise, safe evacuation of a visitor or member of the public is the direct responsibility of the host, where a written PEEP will usually not be required, or practical.
- 10.4 Further guidance on the relevant responsibilities and completion of a PEEP may be found in the Fire Safety Logbook.
- 10.5 Where Evacuation Chairs are provided, they must be suitable for the size of stairwell present (so should be used & tested during routine evacuation exercises).

11. TRAINING

- 11.1 The Fire Safety (Regulatory Reform) Order 2005 requires that all persons at work undergo appropriate information and instruction on local fire safety precautions. Attendance to such training shall be documented, with a copy retained in the Fire Logbook, or a reference made in the Logbook to where the training records can be found.

- I 1.2 As part of their induction process, new starters shall receive on their first day the emergency evacuation instructions for their workplace by their line manager.
- I 1.3 Line managers shall also ensure that new staff complete the mandatory Fire Awareness training.
- I 1.4 Corporately, a new starter 'Induction Checklist' for use by line managers is available from the Human Resources intranet pages. Schools should follow a similar, local procedure.
- I 1.5 Nominated Fire Wardens (if required) should undertake initial training in the role, with 3 yearly, refresher training. Each Academy/Principal will decide its requirements.
- I 1.6 All other staff shall receive basic Fire Awareness training, followed by refresher training 3 yearly. It is the responsibility of individual line manager to ensure that staff attend or undertake the above, and that this is recorded as part of their 1 to 1 process.
- I 1.7 Where Evacuation chairs are present within a building with a passenger lift(s), a suitable number of staff must be trained in its use.

12. ARSON PREVENTION AND SELF INSPECTION

- 12.1 A local Arson Prevention Policy must be created, as an integral part of the local Fire Policy, required by item 8.2
- 12.2 WBC guidance upon creating such a policy is available as a linked document and should be followed.
- 12.3 Routine 'in-house' Fire Safety Self Inspections must be undertaken quarterly

13. AUDIT

- 13.1 All Schools must be able to demonstrate compliance with this Policy, particularly documents noted in section 3.
- 13.2 The Health and Safety Team shall audit compliance to these standards.
- 13.3 The Responsible Person / Competent Person shall be invited to attend such audits, and shall receive a copy of these for their local Fire Safety Log Book.
- 13.4 If non-compliance issues are raised, the reporting process is as follows:
 - 1) Draft copy of the report is issued to the building RP, the relevant Head of Service and the Risk and safety Manager.
 - 2) Draft copy and recommendations / action plan agreed between RP and the Auditing Officer (usually the Senior Health and Safety Advisor).
 - 3) Final version of report issued to the RP, the relevant Head of Service and the Risk and safety Manager.
 - 4) RP takes ownership of the action plan and ensures that it is followed.

- 5) At an agreed date the Auditing Officer may re-audit the building, site or School.
- 6) If, after the agreed date, there are still outstanding concerns then these will be reported to the relevant Corporate Director.

14. REVIEW OF POLICY

14.1 As a minimum, the Corporate Health and Safety team will review this policy every two years or whenever there are changes to current legislation.

15. Useful Documents

Principal



Academy: **Easton Royal Academy**

Date: September 2025