FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

Next Gen Support Services

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INTRODUCTION

The Fire Risk Assessment will help to ensure that the provisions 's fire safety procedures, fire prevention measures and fire precautions are all in place and working properly. The Fire Risk Assessment should identify any issues that need attention.

The Fire Risk Assessment is an organised and methodical look at the Next Gen Support Services premises, the activities carried on there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises.

The Fire Risk Assessment shall be carried out by the appointed responsible person. Omar Salahuddin will be the responsible person for fire risk assessments. The responsible person is able to delegate some of the responsibilities to others but overall responsibility shall remain with the Responsible Person.

There are five main steps in the Fire Risk Assessment process.

STEP 1 – IDENTIFY FIRE HAZARDS:

Identify potential sources of ignition, fuel and oxygen. If any one of these is missing a fire cannot start.

Ignition - identify ignition sources in the premises by looking for possible heat sources, such as electrical or gas heaters, cooking equipment, naked flames, poor electrical installations, faulty or misused electrical equipment, chemical agents, smokers' materials matches/lighters, stage lighting and electrics, boilers.

Fuel – look for things that will burn relatively easily and are in enough quantity to provide fuel for a fire or cause it to spread to another fuel source. For example, flammable liquids / chemicals in Food Tech or Science, flammable gases, wall displays of Young people/adults work, paper, books, clothing, scenery in drama, soft furnishings, waste and litter products, gym mats.

Oxygen – the main source is in the air all around. Within a building this is provided for by ventilation either natural through open doors and windows or mechanical by ductwork and air conditioning systems.

STEP 2 – IDENTIFY PEOPLE AT RISK:

Identify those at risk if there is a fire, how they will be warned and how they will escape. To do this you need to identify where you have staff or students working wherever they are in the premises. Consideration should also be given to who else may be at risk such as members of the public (parents), contractors and where these people are likely to be found.

Particular attention should be given to people who may be especially at risk such as students in unsupervised areas, students with English not as their first language, staff working alone in isolated areas, people who are unfamiliar with the premises (visitors), people with disabilities.

In evaluating the risk to people with disabilities you may need to discuss their individual needs with them and if necessary ensure a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is in place.

STEP 3 – EVALUATE, REMOVE, REDUCE AND PROTECT FROM RISK OCCURRENCE:

Generally, a fire starts in one of three ways: accidentally, by act or omission or deliberately. Look critically at the premises and try to identify any accidents waiting to happen and any acts or omissions which might allow a fire to start. Areas such as science labs and design technology rooms

are areas that may be classed as 'high risk' due to the processes carried out and/or the dangerous substances stored or used there.

As arson is a major problem to all Next Gen Support Servicess you should look for any situation that may present an opportunity for an arsonist.

PEOPLE

Evaluate the risk to people. It is essential that means of escape and other fire precautions are adequate to ensure that everyone can make their escape to a place of total safety before the fire and its effects can trap them in the building.

In evaluating this risk to people, you will need to consider:

- Fire starting on a lower floor affecting the only escape route for people on upper floors or for people with disabilities.
- Fire developing in an unoccupied space which people have to pass in order to escape.
- Fire or smoke spreading through the building affecting people away from the initial fire source.
- Fire or smoke spreading through the building due to poor installation / maintenance of fire precautions such as fire doors.
- Fire or smoke spreading through the building due to mistreated fire precautions such as fire doors being wedged open.
- Fire starting in a room where hazardous materials are stored.

REMOVE, REDUCE THE HAZARD

Having identified the hazards, you now need to remove them if it is reasonably practicable to do so. If you cannot remove or reduce the hazards, you need to take reasonable steps to reduce them if you can. This is an essential part of the Fire Risk assessment and as a priority this must take place before any other actions.

Ensure that any actions that you take to remove or reduce fire hazards or risks are not substituted by other hazards or risks.

To remove the hazard the three elements of fire need to be considered in turn.

To remove or reduce the sources of ignition:

- Control hot works undertaken by students in laboratories and control hot works by contractors by operating permit to work schemes.
- Take precautions to avoid arson.
- Ensure electrical, mechanical and gas equipment is installed and maintained and protected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Ensure all portable electrical appliances are PAT tested regularly.

To remove the source of fuel:

- Reduce stocks of flammable materials in public areas to a minimum.
- Ensure stocks of flammable materials are stored correctly in a locked room.
- Ensure that all display materials in corridors and circulations areas are fire retardant or have been treated with a proprietary fire-retardant treatment to enhance their fire performance.
- Ensure that all upholstered furniture, curtains, drapes and other soft furnishings are fire retardant or have been treated with a proprietary fire-retardant treatment to enhance their fire performance.
- Ensure that areas where flammable substances are stored are adequately protected from vandalism and arson.

- Ensure that waste materials and rubbish are not allowed to build up but are carefully stored until properly disposed of.
- Ensure there is no excessive storage of combustible materials for excessive periods of time in escape routes and corridors.

To remove the source of oxygen:

- Closing all doors, windows and other openings not required for ventilation, particularly out of hours.
- Not storing oxidising materials near or within any heat source or flammable materials.

REMOVE OR REDUCE THE RISK TO PEOPLE

After removing preventative measures, you now need to reduce any remaining fire risk to people to as low as reasonably practicable by ensuring that adequate fire precautions are in place to warn people in the event of a fire and allow them to escape safely.

The level of fire protection should be proportional to the risk posed to the safety of people in the premises. The higher the risk of fire and risk to life, the higher the standards of fire protection will need to be.

Ensure that the alarm given from any single point can be heard throughout the premises by way of suitable repeater sounders. If sounders are used for both a class-changing system and the fire alarm system ensure that the respective sounds are distinct from one another and known to Young people/adults, staff etc. If after major refurbishment works or re-modelling it may be necessary to add additional sounders or detectors.

Consideration should be given to automatic sounders/detectors in remote or isolated areas where if a fire starts it could affect escape routes before the fire is noticed.

False alarms from electrical fire warning systems are a major problem and result in many unwanted calls to the fire and rescue service every year. To help reduce the number of false alarms, the design and location of activation devices should be reviewed against the way the premises are currently used. It is desirable to have an alarm repeater panel at the building entrance and a means of briefing the fire service when they arrive.

FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT

Firefighting equipment can reduce the risk of a small fire developing into a larger one. The purpose of the fire safety strategy should be to primarily ensure the safety of Young people/adults/students, staff and visitors. In case of fire, the first priority should be to raise the alarm to ensure that all Young people/adults/students, staff and visitors are evacuated safely. If teachers are in any doubt, they should concentrate on evacuation rather than firefighting.

People with no training should not be expected to attempt to extinguish a fire. However, all staff should be familiar with the location and basic operating procedures for the equipment provided, in case they need to use it. If Fire Marshalls are expected to take a more active role then they should be provided with more comprehensive training. This may include staff who are designated to use specialist extinguishers such as those in science or design technology areas.

Extinguishers should be located in areas where they can be easily accessed by trained members of staff, but not in areas where equipment is open to misuse or vandalism.

Whatever firefighting equipment is used it is essential that it must be maintained. Keep all records of the maintenance carried out in the Premises Register.

ESCAPE ROUTES

Once a fire has started, been detected and a warning given everyone in the premises should be able to escape to a place of total safety unaided and without help of the fire and rescue service. Some students or staff with disabilities will require help of teachers and staff who will need to be designated for the purpose.

Any person confronted by a fire anywhere in the building should be able to turn away from it and escape to a place of reasonable safety e.g. a protected corridor or staircase. From there they will be able to go directly to a place of total safety away from the building.

All escape routes should have the correct signage indicating the direction to a place of total safety. It may be necessary over a period of time to upgrade the construction of escape routes where the original construction materials are now not sufficient. This would also include fire doors and their operation by way of door closers and smoke seals.

Exit doors on escape routes and final exit doors should normally open in the direction of travel and be quickly and easily openable without the need for a key. Checks should be made to ensure the final exit doors are wide enough to accommodate the number of people who may use the escape routes they serve.

All escape routes should be kept clear.

EMERGENCY ESCAPE LIGHTING

People using the premises must be able to find their way to a total place of safety if there is a fire by using escape routes that enough lighting. Where any escape routes are internal and without windows, or where the premises are used during periods of darkness, including early darkness on winter days, then some form of back-up to the normal escape route lighting (emergency escape lighting) is likely to be required.

SIGNS

Signs must be used to help people identify escape routes, find firefighting equipment. These are required under the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 and must comply with the provisions of those regulations.

All signs should take in to account the age and ability of young people and adults referred by the LA.

All signs and notices should be positioned so that they can be easily seen and understood.

INSTALLATION, TESTING AND MAINTENANCE

All new fire precautions should be installed by a competent person.

All existing equipment, devices or facilities that are provided in the premises for the safety of people, such as fire alarms, fire extinguishers, lighting, signs, fire exits and doors must be kept in effective working order and maintain separating elements designed to prevent fire and smoke entering escape routes.

Regular checks, periodic servicing and maintenance should be carried out and any defects put right as quickly as possible.

The Next Gen Support Services can carry out certain checks and routine maintenance work. Further maintenance may need to be carried out by a competent service engineer. Where contractors are

used, third party certification is one method where a reasonable assurance of quality of work and competence can be achieved.

The following are examples of checks and tests that should be carried out. The appropriate period for these checks should be determined from the fire risk assessments:

- Daily checks:
  - Remove bolts, padlocks and any other security devices from fire exits. Ensure that doors on escape routes swing freely and close fully and check escape routes to ensure that they are clear from obstructions and combustible materials and in a good state of repair.
  - Open all fire exit doors to their full extent and walk the external escape route. o Check the fire alarm panel to ensure the system is active and fully operational.
  - Visually check emergency lights are in a good state of repair and working and all safety signs and notices are legible.
- Weekly tests and checks – test fire detection and warning systems and manually operated warning devices. Ensure that fire extinguishers are correctly located and in working order.
- Monthly tests and checks – test all emergency lighting systems. Check that all fire doors are in good working order and closing correctly and that the frames and seals are intact.
- Six month tests and checks – A competent person should test and maintain the fire detection and warning system.
- Annual tests and checks – All emergency lighting and all firefighting equipment and fire alarms should be tested and maintained by a competent person.

STEP 4 – RECORD, PLAN, INFORM, INSTRUCT AND TRAIN

Record the significant findings and action taken. All significant findings and any action taken MUST be recorded in the Premises Register. Significant findings can be:

- Fire hazards identified (excluding trivial minor items).
- Actions taken or will take to remove or reduce the chance of a fire occurring.
- Persons who may be at risk particularly those who are especially at risk.
- Actions taken to reduce the risk to people from the spread of fire and smoke.
- Actions people need to take in case of a fire, including details of any person nominated to carry out a particular function.
- Information, instruction and training that has been identified as being required or that has been given.

Even where it is not a legal requirement to record the findings and actions, it is good practice to do so.

Next Gen Support Services must be able to satisfy the enforcing authority, if called upon to do so, that you have carried out a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment. Keeping records will help you to do this and will also form the basis of any subsequent review. If records are kept it is not necessary to record all the details, only those that are significant and the action been taken.

EMERGENCY PLAN

An Emergency Plan is required for dealing with any fire situation. The Emergency Plan will tell people in the Next Gen Support Services what to do if there is a fire and that the premises can be safely evacuated. Details of the Emergency Plan should be kept in the Premises Register.

The Emergency Plan should be based on the outcome of the fire risk assessment and be available for all employees, their representatives (where appointed) and the enforcing authority.

INFORM, INSTRUCT, COOPERATE AND COORDINATE

All information given to staff and contractors working at the Next Gen Support Services must be clear and relevant about what they should do if there is a fire.

All staff must be given information and instruction soon after they are employed by the Next Gen Support Services and regularly after that. Make sure staff who work outside normal hours are included such as cleaners. It is also good practice to include appropriate information to students. Any information should take into account those with disabilities, learning difficulties and those who do not have English as their first language.

Information and instructions given should be based on the Emergency Plan and must include:

- The significant findings of the fire risk assessment.
- The measures put in place to reduce the risk.
- What staff should do if there is a fire?
- The identity of people nominated with responsibilities for fire safety.
- Any special arrangements for serious and imminent danger to persons from fire.
- Ensure that written instructions are given to people who have been nominated to carry out a designated safety task, such as calling the fire and rescue service or checking that exit doors are available for use at the start of each working day.

By having a clear and co-ordinated Emergency Plan with all the occupiers of the premises shall ensure that if there is a fire, the actions of the Next Gen Support Services and working practices do not place people at risk and operatives effectively.

Staff also have a responsibility to co-operate with the Next Gen Support Services so far as it is necessary to help the Next Gen Support Services comply with any legal duty.

FIRE SAFETY TRAINING

Adequate fire safety training must be provided for staff. The type of training should be based on the particular features of the Next Gen Support Services premises and should:

- Take account of the findings of the fire risk assessment.
- Explain the Emergency Procedures.
- Take account of the work activity and explain the duties and responsibilities of the staff.
- Be repeated periodically when necessary.
- Be easily understandable by all staff and others who may be present
- Be tested by fire drills.

Young people/adults should also be involved in some aspect of fire safety training, particularly with respect to fire drills.

Training should include the following:

- What to do on discovering a fire.
- How to raise the alarm and what happens then.
- What to do upon hearing the alarm.
- The procedures for alerting students, Young people/adults, members of the public and visitors including, where appropriate, directing them to exits.
- The arrangements for calling the fire and rescue service.
- The evacuation procedures for everyone in the premises to reach an assembly point at a place of total safety.
- The location and the safe use of firefighting equipment.

- The location of escape routes especially those not in regular use.
- How to open all emergency exit doors.
- The importance of keeping fire doors closed to prevent the spread of fire, heat and smoke.
- Where appropriate how to stop machines and isolate power supplies in the event of a fire.
- The importance of general fire safety which includes good housekeeping.
- The use of premises by outside organisations.

All staff identified in the Emergency Plan who have a supervisory role if there is a fire should be given details of the fire risk assessment and receive additional training.

STEP 5 – REVIEW

Constantly monitor what we are doing to implement the fire risk assessment, to assess how effectively the risk is being controlled.

If there is any doubt to suspect that the fire risk assessment is no longer valid or there has been a significant change to the premises that has affected the fire precautions, the assessment will need to be reviewed and if necessary be revised.

Reasons for review could include:

- Changes to works activities or the introduction of new equipment
- Change of use to part of the premises
- Alterations to the premises including the internal layout
- Substantial changes to furniture and fixtures
- The change of use or increase in the storage of hazardous substances
- The failure of fire precautions
- The presence of people with some form of disability

Ideally the potential risk of any significant change should be minimised before it is introduced. It is not necessary to amend the fire risk assessment for every trivial change but if a change introduces new hazards these should be considered and, if significant, do whatever is necessary to keep the risks under control.

Records of testing, maintenance and training etc. are useful aids in a review process. Copies should be kept in the Premises Register.

CONCLUSION

The fire safety policy of the Next Gen Support Services should be flexible enough to allow modification. It should be recognised that fire safety operates at all levels and therefore those responsible for fire safety should be able to develop, where necessary, a local plan for the premises.

The plan of action should bring together all the features that have been evaluated and noted from the fire risk assessment so that we can plan logically what needs to be done. It should not be confused with the Emergency Plan, which is a statement of what you will do if there is a fire.

The plan of action should include what you intend to do to reduce the hazards and risks you have identified and to implement the necessary protection measures.

These actions need to be prioritised to ensure that any findings which identify people in immediate danger are dealt with straight away. In other cases where people are not in immediate danger but action is still necessary it may be acceptable to plan this over a period of time.

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will usually be reviewed annually but can be revised as needed from time-to-time. It will be reviewed by the headteacher.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links with our policies on:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessments