

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Durham High School *for* Girls will ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that all staff, pupils, contractors and visitors are protected from the risks of fire whilst on the premises.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (commonly referred to as the RRO) came into effect on 1st October 2006 and replaces all previous fire safety legislation eg The Fire Precautions Act 1971, the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 etc.

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 Policy explains how the school complies with the **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** to ensure that, where possible, fire is prevented and that any fire risks are adequately controlled.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The School Fire Safety Policy forms part of the School's Health and Safety Policy and in common with that policy extends through the whole school, with specific responsibilities as below:

- Governors ensure that an appropriate policy is in place in the school and that arrangements are made for its effective implementation;
- The Headmistress has ultimate responsibility for the implementation and management of this policy and will support the Bursar in this respect;
- The Bursar is responsible for the effective implementation of this Policy and its role within the School's Health and Safety Policy;
- The RRO places duties on the 'responsible person' who is someone who has control of premises or anyone who has a degree of control over certain areas or systems. In the school's case this is the Assistant Bursar;
- All employees 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.

POLICY 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.

MANAGING FIRE SAFETY

The school has delegated day to day responsibility for managing fire safety to the responsible person i.e. the Assistant Bursar.

The Assistant Bursar will:

- 1) ensure that all means of escape are properly maintained, kept free from obstruction and available for safe and effective use at all times; and that the means of escape have adequate emergency lighting;
- 2) provide and maintain in working order all fire fighting appliances and devices including:
 - a) fire detection and alarm systems;
 - b) emergency lighting systems;
 - c) fire fighting equipment;
 - d) notices and signage relating to fire procedures;
 - e) means of escape, taking into account the needs of any disabled users.
- 3) carry out a fire safety risk assessment on each of the school buildings to ensure that the school's facilities are compliant; and reduce the risk of fire incidences by carrying out appropriate task risk assessments;
- 4) provide appropriate instruction and training for all school staff on the action to be taken to protect people and property including regular fire evacuation practices for all the school;
- 5) ensure that all staff, students, contractors, visitors and third-party hirers are made aware of and comply with the school's fire procedures;
- 6) identify any special risks, eg the storage of hazardous materials, and put in place appropriate procedures to minimise the risks;

- 7) liaise with third parties including Safeguard, the school's Health and Safety advisors; the emergency services, and the school's insurers to ensure that best practice for fire prevention and procedures is in place;
- 8) monitor and review this policy on a regular basis so as to ensure that any new risk or alteration to regulations is addressed.

MONITORING

The school utilises the services of various outside personnel to carry out effective monitoring of its duties.

- The school fire detection and alarm system is maintained and checked by ADT Fire and Security quarterly. The fire alarm sounders are tested on a weekly basis;
- The school emergency lighting is checked annually by the school electrician;
- Notices and Signage are updated as and when required and checked annually by Durham Fire and Protection;
- Fire fighting equipment is checked weekly by caretaking staff and extinguishers are replenished or replaced annually by Durham Fire and Protection;
- The school Health and Safety Advisers, Safeguard, are consulted on a regular basis to carry out a review of school fire safety procedures;
- A Fire Log Book which contains records of fire safety issues is maintained by the Assistant Bursar. These issues include:
 - fire drills;
 - hot work permits, etc;
 - the storing of hazardous materials;
 - the inspection and testing of:
 - fire detection and alarm systems;
 - emergency lighting systems;
 - fire fighting equipment;
 - staff training records.

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

The school has carried out a comprehensive fire risk assessment for each of its buildings. These assessments are kept with the Fire Log Book.

The fire risk assessments identify 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.

The fire risk assessment will be reviewed and amended on a six month cycle if it is either no longer valid or if any changes are planned, such as:

- Any structural changes (alterations to the layout of the premises, erection of partitions, refurbishment etc) which may affect the spread of fire;
- Any change to the use of the premises which may affect the risk rating;
- Any change to work processes or work equipment which may introduce new fire hazards;
- Any change to the numbers of people using the premises to ensure that escape routes can accommodate the numbers safely.

FIRE SAFETY TRAINING

- All staff receive basic fire safety induction training and attend refresher sessions when required.
- Key staff in the individual school buildings receive more detailed instruction including the use of fire fighting equipment.
- Pupils are given instruction by their form tutors during the first week of the Autumn term on their actions to be taken in the event of a fire.
- Fire drills are planned each term to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's evacuation procedures. The findings of the drill are reported to staff through the Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meetings. Any conclusions and remedial actions are recorded and implemented.

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The evacuation procedures which are to be followed in the event of a fire alarm are annexed to this Policy. This document details the responsibilities of staff and individuals during an evacuation and subsequent roll call.

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

EVACUATION PROCEDURE

THE FIRE ALARM

PERSON DISCOVERING FIRE should break glass of nearest alarm

HEADMISTRESS' SECRETARY rings (9)999 on hearing alarm.

If fire is in the kitchen CATERING MANAGER rings (9)999 and immediately sends someone to break glass of alarm and tell HEADMISTRESS' SECRETARY that Fire Brigade has been notified.

On hearing the fire alarm

ALL PERSONS PROCEED TO ASSEMBLY POINT

- Where appropriate, ensure Master switches for gas and electricity are off and windows closed. NB In the event of a gas leak, when evacuation is likely to be as a result of verbal instructions rather than a fire alarm sounding, no electrical switches should be used.
- In classrooms, girls nearest windows should be told to close them. Staff assemble pupils **IN SILENCE** and instruct them to proceed to the Assembly Point (Junior Playground) **IN SILENCE**, walking rapidly NOT running. The classroom door should be closed behind the last person to leave.
- 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 pupils should be instructed to leave the building by the nearest safe fire exit and proceed to the Assembly Point. Staff should assist this process where possible without putting themselves at risk. Under no circumstances should staff or pupils return to their form rooms. All double doors should be opened by those who are first to reach them and closed by the last person to pass through them.
- STAFF IN MAIN OFFICE will take the Visitors' sign, loudspeaker and evacuation check lists to Assembly Point. Hand loudspeaker to Headmistress or Deputy and check lists to appropriate staff as detailed below. Hold up the sign indicating 'Assembly Point for Visitors'.
- RECEPTIONIST should collect registers, pupil and staff signing in/out books, visitors' book and off-site lists from PE staff before proceeding to the Assembly Point. *NB After 2.45pm the Receptionist should collect sick children from sick bay and escort them to the Assembly Point.* The registers will be collected by FORM TEACHERS and students' signing in/out book and PE absence lists will be handed to ARW. Staff signing in/out book to be handed to IW. Visitors' book to be handed to the Headmistress' Secretary.
- CATERING MANAGER should collect sick children and proceed to Assembly Point (until 2.45pm after which Receptionist will assume this responsibility - see above)
- The ASSISTANT BURSAR will make radio contact with the caretaking staff to establish their whereabouts and to direct them to specific tasks as necessary and will attempt to identify the source of the fire from external visual observation. Where safe to do so, the zone triggered by the alarm will be noted.

- The ASSISTANT BURSAR will report the safety and whereabouts of the caretaking staff to the BURSAR and will maintain contact throughout the procedure. The Senior Caretaker on duty will open the gates for the Fire Brigade and await their arrival and will prevent any casual visitor from entering the premises.

Anyone who has a named responsibility should ensure that they have a deputy to take over if they are absent and that the deputy is aware of their role in the event of an emergency evacuation.

PROCEDURE FOR ASSEMBLY AND ROLL CALL

(refer also to plan at Appendix A)

Pupils' Reporting Procedure:

Forms line up in alphabetical order at Assembly Point.

FORM TEACHERS collect registers from Receptionist and supervise roll call.

If the FORM TEACHER or TUTOR does not arrive

- **Senior House** - ARW will nominate a member of staff to cover.
- **Junior House** - GS will nominate alternative cover

Once roll call is completed, report absences to ARW (Senior House) GS (Junior House) and return register to Receptionist. Absences to be checked against the pupil signing in/out book held by ARW, absences identified and appropriate action taken.

Staff/Visitors Reporting Procedure: (see flow diagram)

The following:

Senior House Staff without forms and Part-time Staff
 Senior House Staff with forms - Middle School
 Senior House Staff with forms - Upper School
 Senior House Staff with forms - Sixth Form
 Junior House Staff with forms
 Reception, Nursery and visiting JH Staff
 Administrative, Auxiliary and Caretaking Staff
 Kitchen and Cleaning Staff
 Peripatetic Staff
 Visitors

Report to:

IW *
 ARW *
 ARW *
 AF *
 Head of JH
 Mrs Anderson (or deputy)
 Bursar
 Catering Manager
 Director of Music
 Headmistress' Secretary

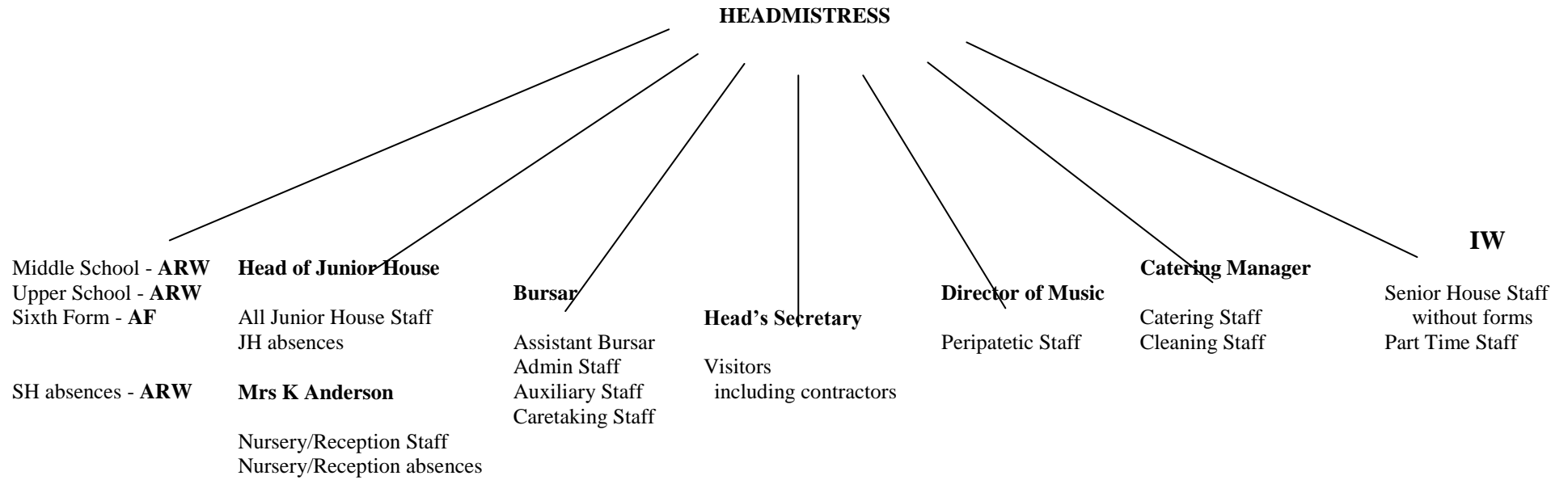
who in turn report to the Headmistress once forms are completed

* In the event of absence LI will deputise

The ASSISTANT BURSAR will check with the HEADMISTRESS that all persons are accounted for, will await the arrival of fire brigade and respond to and relay fire officer's instructions

No-one may leave the Assembly Point until instructed to do so by the Headmistress

EMERGENCY EVACUATION REPORTING PROCEDURE



Guidance on the Evacuation of Disabled Persons from the School Buildings

Students with a disability should already have been identified and information held in the Main School Office and Reception. In conjunction with the Special Needs Co-ordinator, the Assistant Head (IW) will undertake a risk assessment for each individual and arrange for appropriate action as required, according to the nature of the disability. Having considered the risks, the Assistant Head (IW) will propose specific procedures for assisting in the evacuation of persons with a known disability. A 'buddy' will be appointed for any student 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.

Disabled staff must have identified themselves to the Assistant Head (IW) and any specific requirements addressed as soon as they are known.

Specific Evacuation Requirements

Wheelchair users/Persons with Mobility Difficulty

Wheelchair users or any person with difficulty walking (eg anyone temporarily using crutches) should wait until everyone else has left the room before making their way to the exit, assisted by their 'buddy' or other third party if required.

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.

Wherever possible (i.e. when on ground floors) all persons, including wheelchair users, should make their own way out of the building by utilising the fire escape routes. Whenever the route is blocked or the person is above ground floor, wheelchair users must be either assisted by their 'buddy' or other third party. When evacuating the upper floors of the buildings, anyone unable to leave without assistance should wait for assistance in the refuge¹ areas at the top of the stairs or at the top of the outside fire escape.

Lifts must not be used during an emergency evacuation

Reviewed and updated September 2011

¹ 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.