Fire Safety Policy

Policy Compliance details:-

Compliance with Equality Legislation.

PLEASE NOTE: Policies must be equality screened before being submitted to SLT and Trade Unions:-

Equality Screening Date:	09/02/2017
Equality Screening Outcome:	Screened Out with Mitigation
Sector or Local Screening:	Local Screening
Consultation Date (if applicable):	Not Applicable
Equality Impact Assessment	Not Applicable
(EQIA) Date (if applicable):	Not Applicable
EQIA Key Outcomes:	Not Applicable

Document History

Table setting out changes to the document since creation

Version Number	Author	Amendments/Updates	Date
1.0	Estate & FM	Departmental and role titles changed because of organisational structure changes. Template Formatting Changes	March 2019
2.0	Estate & FM	Additional bullet point to 3.10 'Must not prop open fire doors (indicted by a fire door sign) at any time.'	Sept 2020
3.0	Estate & FM	Accessibility checker changes applied. Paragraph 3.2 modified to reflect Directorate restructuring. Paragraph 3.5 bullet point 4 – the following words included:- are undertaken and reviewed at regular intervals with appropriate actions taken; Paragraph 3.11, bullet points 3 and 5 modified to reflect Covid restrictions Paragraph 3.14, inclusion of – 'liaise with FM provider (Titanic and Millfield campuses)'.	July 2021
4.0	Estate & FM	Changes to paragraph 3.2 to reflect new organisational structure.	July 2022
5.0	Estate & FM	Changes to paragraph 3.3 to reflect new organisational structure Corporate Development contact details updated	May 2024

Distribution

This document has been distributed as follows:

Name	Date (where applicable)
Trade Union	N/A
Resources Committee	11 December 2018
Executive Leadership Team	11 October 2018
Senior Leadership Team (revision approvals)	11 October 2018; 15 October 2021
Governing Body	N/A
Published on intranet/website by Corporate Development	September 2019; November 2021; Aug 2023

Table setting out dates for approval and communication of the Policy

Contents

1   Introduction

1.1   Policy Aim

To comply with the statutory duty requirements under The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 and the Health & Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and all subsequent and subordinate legislation to provide a robust fire safety framework which will be implemented to secure the safety and wellbeing of everyone within the College community and to protect the College's assets.

1.2   Objectives

- To establish structures to effectively manage the risks of and from fire on all campuses and to comply with all relevant legislation;

- To develop a positive fire safety culture and promote good practice with regard to approved codes of practice and guidance;

- To ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees, learners, visitors and contractors; and

- To establish a system to review all aspects of Fire Safety management by appropriate training, communication, inspection, monitoring and auditing.

1.3   Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff (including agency staff), Board of Governors, service users (including students), visitors and contractors. Roles and responsibilities are clearly stated within the policy and are supported by robust procedures; and

- All premises and activities falling, to any extent, under the College's control.

2. Statement of Intent

Belfast Met as an employer and service provider, recognises and accepts its responsibilities for complying with the statutory duty requirements under The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 and the Health & Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and subsequent regulations, to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of all employees, learners, visitors. The Governing Body is committed to developing a positive fire safety culture and promoting good practice with regard to approved codes of practice and guidance. It will seek to provide or ensure so far as is reasonably practicable:

- A safe place to work with safe access and egress;

- Suitable and sufficient fire safety management structures and procedures;

- Safe plant and systems of work, without risk to health;

- The potential for fire to occur, spread, disrupt teaching and College business, damage buildings and equipment, harm the environment, is minimised; and

- Compliance with the requirements of legislation relating to fire safety.

3. Responsibilities and Organisation

3.1 Principal and Chief Executive

The Principal and Chief Executive on behalf of the Governing Body has executive responsibility for ensuring the risks from fire are effectively managed. The Principal and Chief Executive recognises that good management of fire safety is essential to ensure that fires are unlikely to occur; that if they do occur they are likely to be controlled or contained quickly, effectively and safely; or that, if a fire does occur and grow, everyone in a Belfast Met campus is able to escape to a place of total safety easily and quickly.

The Principal and Chief Executive will also ensure that those to whom she delegates authority have identified, put in place and applied appropriate measures to manage the risk of fire to staff, learners and to others arising from the undertakings of the Belfast Met.

3.2 Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team are responsible for the practical implementation of this policy in each of their areas of responsibility.

3.3 Head of Human Resources

The Head of Human Resources is responsible for making arrangements to ensure:

■ All staff receive fire safety training at induction and at regular intervals thereafter commensurate with their role and responsibilities;

■ The appropriate requirements of this policy are communicated to all new staff on the first day of their employment, and

■ All fire wardens receive suitable and sufficient training through the Estate & FM Department.

3.4 Heads of Department

The Heads of Department will be responsible for ensuring within their remit:

- Application and support of this policy;

- Compliance with Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003;

- The risk of fire breaking out from their department's activities is minimised;

- That their staff, students and visitors are aware of what action to take in the event of a fire breaking out;

- Staff are nominated to become fire wardens in each area of any campus that their department occupies. The Estate Compliance Officer is advised if any of these nominated staff leave Belfast Met employment or move office;

- The risk of fire occurring is included in risk assessments carried out for their department activities; This must include the risks to people who may not be able to leave a campus quickly e.g. wet room/spa users, people in changing rooms, elderly customers etc.; and

- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (*PEEPs) have been written for their staff/students in accordance with Belfast Met's PEEP Policy.

3.5   Head of Estate and Facilities Management

The Head of Estate and Facilities Management (Estate & FM) is responsible for making arrangements to ensure for all campus buildings that:

- Buildings and services infrastructure are constructed and maintained in such a way as to minimise the risk of a fire breaking out and spreading;
- New buildings and refurbishments will comply with current legislation and best practice of fire protection;
- In the event of a fire breaking out there are systems in place to ensure the safety of staff, students, contractors, visitors and other members of the public;
- Whole campus Fire risk assessments and Fire Safety Management Plans are undertaken and reviewed at regular intervals with appropriate actions taken;
- Ensure initial Fire Risk Assessments are carried out for all new premises as soon as is practicable;
- Means of escape are maintained as required;
- Fire detection and warning systems, emergency lighting, escape lighting and signage, fire-fighting equipment (including fixed installations and specialist systems) and fixed electrical installations are maintained in a safe condition and regularly tested with records kept in accordance with the relevant standard and manufacturer's instructions;
- PAT testing is undertaken for all portable electrical items at regular intervals;
- Fixed Wire testing is completed at regular intervals;
- Any contractor employed by the College is aware of the action to be taken in the event of a fire;
- Estate & FM staff liaise with local Fire Authority and Facilities Management Providers on matters of fire safety;
- The appropriate statutory licences are applied for and renewed where necessary; and
- All Estate & FM staff receive adequate training to maintain competency in relation to their fire safety responsibilities or roles.
- Ensure all fire incidents are investigated as appropriate.

3.6   Estate Manager

Estate Managers are responsible for making arrangements to ensure for all campus buildings that fall under their remit:

- Evacuation drills are conducted at least twice a year;
- Appropriate numbers of emergency evacuation procedures and no-smoking notices are posted;
- Waste and waste storage is proactively monitored ensuring it is stored away from buildings and within designated containers;
- All works undertaken by contractors, relevant to areas of responsibility, are supervised and where "hot works" are to be carried out, that the appropriate approval is completed;

- All new Estate & FM staff are given instruction on Emergency Fire Procedures and all existing Estate &FM staff receive refresher training;

- They adopt the role of Fire Marshal if they are on-campus when the fire alarm sounds.

- A fire Log file is maintained; and

- All daily, weekly, and monthly fire safety tests/checks undertaken by caretakers are completed and recorded.

3.7   Estate Compliance Officer

The Estate Compliance Officer will be responsible for:

- Auditing Estate & FM fire safety management on the retained estate;

- To assist with the monitoring of the College's PFI/PPP providers to execute their duties as per the Project Agreements to ensure full Contract compliance with respect to fire safety management;

- Provide a programme for Fire Warden, Fire Marshal and Estate & FM staff fire safety training;

- Identify numbers of fire wardens with sweep areas required by campus;

- Review all Estate & FM fire safety risk assessments as necessary.

3.8   Lecturers

Lecturers should take reasonable care of their own health and safety and have a duty of care to their students. Lecturers should:

- Ensure that all classroom activities are carried out safely paying particular attention to the risk of fire;

- Ensure risk assessment control measures are implemented; and

- Be familiar with campus evacuation procedures.

3.9   Learners

All learners have a responsibility to comply with this Fire Safety Policy. This will include, but not be limited to:

- Observing all instructions, information and training intended to secure fire safety;

- Co-operating with the College on all matters relevant to fire safety;

- Not interfering with any building fabric or equipment provided in connection with assuring fire safety; and

- Be familiar with campus evacuation procedures.

3.10   All Staff

Staff have a responsibility to comply with this Fire Safety Policy. This will include, but not be limited to:

- Observing all instructions, information and training intended to secure fire safety;

- Co-operating with the College on all matters relevant to fire safety;

- Not interfering with any building fabric or equipment provided in connection with assuring fire safety;

- Reporting any obvious defects or short-comings in College fire safety provision, arrangements or procedures;

- Be familiar with campus evacuation procedures and escape routes;

- Know what to do if they discover a fire including leaving equipment in a safe condition;

- Consider the risk of fire from their activities and control that risk;

- Must not leave any piece of equipment (e.g. welding equipment, toaster, heaters etc.) unattended if it is likely to start a fire or cause the fire alarm to be activated; and

- Must not prop open fire doors (indicted by a fire door sign) at any time.

3.11   All Staff - Actions to take if you discover a fire

- Raise the alarm by activating one of the fire alarm manual call points units (which will lead to the evacuation of the building) and shout 'fire';

- If the fire is small and you are not in immediate danger and have been trained in the use of a fire extinguisher an attempt may be made to fight the fire. Always keep an escape route available;

- Leave the building using the nearest available fire exit route - one way systems do not apply during any emergency evacuation;

- Do not use the lifts or stop to collect belongings;

- Go to the Assembly Point and report to Senior Fire Warden regarding the location and nature of the fire; Social distancing to be adhered to, so far as reasonably practicable, at refuge areas, during an emergency evacuation and at assembly points".

- Remain available to answer any further questions; and

- Do not return to the building unless instructed to do so by the Fire Marshal or NIFRS.

3.12   Fire Warden

The Fire Warden Evacuation system is a simple means for arranging that all parts of a building are checked to ensure that all occupants leave promptly in the event of an emergency. Normally the evacuation team will consist of a Fire Marshal (Estate Manager or nominated deputy), Senior Fire Warden and as many Fire Wardens as necessary.

Each Fire Warden will be allocated a designated area of the building to check. When the fire alarm sounds the Fire Wardens will immediately start to check their designated areas, ensuring that everyone in the area is responding to the alarm and leaving promptly by the nearest safe exit. Having checked that their area is clear, the Fire Wardens leave the building and report to the Senior Fire Warden at the assembly point.

Fire Warden Duties

A Fire Warden has two roles, a day-to-day role and one for when the fire alarm sounds.

Day-to-day role:

- To check the general fire safety of the area, building or floor the Fire Warden has been allocated;

- Check corridors and stairwells to ensure combustible materials are not stored there;

- Monitor escape routes to ensure they are kept free of obstructions;

- Check that fire doors are not tied, propped or wedged open where they should not be;

- Check that final exit doors are not obstructed;

- Check that fire extinguishers are where they should be and no obvious misuse or defect has occurred;

- Check that smoke detectors and manual call points are not covered or obstructed; and

Any issues identified during the above listed checks should be reported to Estate & FM via the Estate FM Helpdesk.

This may seem like a lot of extra work but in reality, it can be done as part of the normal job just by being a little more observant.

When The Fire Alarm Sounds:

- Put on a yellow high-visibility waistcoat;

- Check their allocated area, to ensure that it is clear, and closing doors/windows in passing but not delaying their own escape unduly, while encouraging people to leave via the nearest safe exit. Fire Wardens should normally be the last person off their floor;

- Check all accessible rooms in their area including toilets and offices to make sure people have left;

- Check any refuge areas in their area in case someone is waiting for assistance to evacuate;

- Report to the Senior Fire Warden at the assembly point (or just outside the building) to advise if their area is clear or if anyone can't or won't leave the building;

- Assist the Senior Fire Warden as necessary including ensuring people go to, and remain at, the assembly point; and

- Take part in any post-alarm debriefing to identify any shortcomings in the evacuation procedures.

3.13   Senior Fire Warden

The role of Senior Fire Warden will fall to the Estate & FM Estate Officer or appointed nominee.

The Senior Fire Warden will act as the Fire Marshal's assistant and be the person in charge at the Assembly Point.

Senior Fire Warden Duties

- Immediately go to the Assembly Point;

- Receive all relevant reports for the Fire Wardens;

- Report to the Fire Marshal;

- Liaise with emergency services as necessary; and

- Ensure people stay at the Assembly Point until the Fire Marshal has confirmed that it is safe to re-enter the building.

3.14   Fire Marshal

The role of Fire Marshal will fall to the Estate Manager or appointed nominee.

The Fire Marshal shall assume control of the evacuation, liaise with FM provider (Titanic and Millfield campuses) and be the contact point of all communication with the emergency services.

Fire Marshal Duties

- Immediately go to the Emergency Control Point (normally at main front reception at fire alarm panel) and assume the role of Fire Marshal;

- The Fire Marshal shall assume control of the evacuation and be the contact point of all communication with the emergency services;

- Receive briefing from the caretaker who will outline the location and nature (if known) of the fire;

- Ensure that the 999 call is made, if required;

- Receive all relevant reports from the caretaker, Fire Wardens, the person who raised the alarm, lecturers etc. and note as appropriate;

- Report the following to the Fire Service when they arrive:

  - Location and nature (if known) of the fire;

  - Location and numbers of people at the refuge areas; and

  - Location of areas not declared as being clear of people.

- Ensure that their line manager and Estate & FM HoD are informed as necessary who will advise the Directorate as appropriate;

- Liaise with the emergency services (Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Police Service of Northern Ireland and Ambulance Service) as required;

- When advised it is safe to do so, issue the instruction for people to re-enter the building; and

- Complete an Emergency Evacuation report.

4.   Arrangements

The arrangements of this Fire Safety Policy can be found on the Staff Intranet (Fire Safety Arrangements). The arrangements document gives details of the specific systems and procedures in place to assist in the implementation of this policy.

5.   Monitoring

The following Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this policy:

- Number of fire related incidents;
- Times taken to evacuate a building as per Emergency Evacuation reports;
- Number of alarm activations against cause;
- Annual inspection of premises and action plan progress;
- Review of Fire Risk assessments and actions plan progress; and
- Review of fire management at biannual College Health and Safety meetings.

6.   Review

This policy will be reviewed every year or when there are any significant changes in the organisation including changes to college premises, new equipment/material, new procedures and a significant change in staff numbers.