

# ISP Group Fire Safety Policy

**Policy Owner:** Group Head of Operational Risk

**Revised:** May 2024

## RATIONALE

The Company will conduct yearly audits to identify: potential sources of ignition, sources of fuel, the adequacy of fire detection and warning, the adequacy of means of escape, the adequacy of fire-fighting equipment, and the adequacy of premise construction to prevent fire/smoke/toxic gas spread.

## POLICY SCOPE

The audit will focus on:

- Identifying potential fire hazards
- Identifying who could be at risk in the event of a fire.
- Evaluating the level of risk from the fire hazards and deciding how effective are the existing controls to eliminate, control or avoid the fire hazards (control measures include: fire safety emergency plan, fire detection and warning systems, means of escape, means of fighting fire, fire safety training and fire prevention measures).
- What needs to be done to mitigate the risk
- Recording and communicating information to persons at risk.

Confirming that an appropriate process is in place to review and monitor the control measures e.g.

1. Fire/emergency plan
2. fire detection and warning systems
3. means of escape
4. means of fighting fire
5. fire safety training, and
6. fire prevention measures

The Company will also ensure that:

- All fire call points (break glass call points) are identified and weekly call point tests (different call point every week) are undertaken and recorded.
- The fire detection and alarm systems are subject to periodic inspection, test and service by a competent engineer.
- Any emergency lighting is subject to monthly functional test and periodic duration tests.
- Adequate and suitable fire extinguishing appliances are provided and maintained.
- Suitable means of fire detection and signalling of the presence of fire is provided and maintained.

- Adequate means of escape are provided and maintained.
- Suitable signs designating fire-fighting equipment and means of escape are provided and maintained.
- Evacuation points are displayed in all classrooms.
- A fire logbook is provided and maintained.
- Fire training is provided to employees and recorded.
- Evacuation drills are undertaken at least twice a year in offices, 4 times a year for day schools and every other month for boarding schools with at least one per term being at night with all results being recorded on 360 (see section on Evacuation Drills and Training)
- Suitable fire procedures are published in respect of:
  - o Action to be taken on discovering a fire.
  - o Action to be taken on hearing the alarm.
  - o Responsibility of key personnel in the event of a fire.

The Company will liaise with local Fire Enforcement Authorities regarding any changes likely to affect the means of escape at the planning stage.

## PROCESS

### EMERGENCY EVACUATION

To assist with this procedure a Register of personnel on site is kept and all staff will sign in upon arrival and sign out when leaving the premises. To save life and prevent injury in the event of fire or other similar emergency, all employees and pupils must know, understand and follow the fire evacuation procedure.

Staff should familiarise themselves with the following procedure so that they are aware of what to do in the event of an emergency.

### RAISING THE ALARM

It is the responsibility of the Departmental Managers to ensure that all employees know where the manual "break glass" fire alarm call points are located and how to operate them. These points are usually sited beside most external fire doors, tops of staircases and along evacuation routes.

If a fire is discovered, the nearest "break glass" fire alarm point must be activated immediately. This should automatically sound the fire alarm throughout the entire building. On some alarm systems, the fire alarm will automatically alert the Fire Service.

Fire detection systems, e.g. smoke detectors, may be installed in the buildings. These will "sense" fire and raise the alarm automatically, but not necessarily immediately. A "break glass" point must always be activated unless the alarm is already sounding.

### ACTION ON DISCOVERING A FIRE

Immediately raise the alarm by shouting and breaking the glass on the nearest call point. Any attempt to fight the fire should only be done by a person who has been trained in the

use of fire-fighting devices and it is not putting themselves or those around them at risk. The priority must be to evacuate the building and ensure those in their direct care are safe.

Make sure that you use the correct type of fire-fighting device, if you are unsure which to use then evacuate the building immediately.

Switch off and unplug all electrical equipment if possible.

Make your way out of the building in an orderly manner by the nearest exit and head for the assembly point.

Close windows and doors behind you when leaving the building.

If implemented, use the room clear procedure.

## EVACUATION

When the alarm is sounded all employees, pupils and visitors must immediately leave the building by the nearest fire exit and report to their assembly point. Managers must ensure that all employees are familiar with the main and alternative escape routes from their departments.

When leaving remember to use the most direct route following the fire exit signs. If the main route is blocked take the alternative route.

Close all doors behind you. This will delay fire/smoke spreading.

Do not delay when leaving, and do not return to your department/room for personal belongings.

Switch off machinery and equipment if it is safe to do so.

Switch off gas and electricity in Science Laboratories by using the emergency stop buttons when leaving the room.

### **Do not run.**

Do not use lifts unless they have previously been assessed by the authorities as being safe to use.

Assemble at the designated assembly point.

No one will remain inside the building during an evacuation.

Remain at your assembly point until instructed otherwise.

It is the responsibility of Fire marshals to direct people out of the building to the appropriate assembly point, and to ensure a thorough search is made of the vacated building.

Registers should be brought to the assembly point by the secretary, or a person designated by the H&S Coordinator/Head of School.

Disabled Persons: In the event of an evacuation, the Fire marshal or teacher will guide the disabled person to the assembly point or other place of safety to await rescue. **Refer to Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans.**

The School will adopt either a one out all-out evacuation policy or a phased evacuation policy. If a phased evacuation policy is implemented this must be agreed with the Group Head of Operational Risk and clearly documented in the schools Local Health and Safety

Management Plan. Consequently, all employees and visitors must evacuate the building on the sounding of the alarms.

There should be no exceptions to this and failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary procedures

### POST EVACUATION ASSEMBLY

Employees must remain at the fire assembly point until the Incident Controller authorises a return to the building(s). If, due to a severe fire, the building is not considered safe for reoccupation, the Disaster Recovery Procedure must be followed.

### INSTRUCTION AND INFORMATION

The Company will organise regular training to all Fire marshals, and maintain an up-to-date list of names. Refer to the Local Health and Safety Management Plan.

### EVACUATION DRILLS AND TRAINING

All employees will receive training so that they will know how they can contribute in preventing a fire, what to do if they discover a fire, how they can raise the alarm, and the evacuation procedures for their building.

To ensure all employees and pupils are familiar with the evacuation procedure, fire evacuation drills will be held on a regular basis. These drills may receive some prior notification, although for the systems and procedures to be fully tested some element of surprise is warranted.

Evacuation drills will be carried out a minimum of 4 times per academic year. The first drill should be carried out during the first week of school in any academic year. The second drill by the end of term 1 or term 2 of Semester 1, the third drill by the end of term 2 or term 3 of semester 2 and the final drill by the end of the academic year.

It is Company policy that all boarding schools will carry out drills during boarding house hours as follows in addition to the whole school day time drills above.

- Term1, 3 drills
- Term 2, 2 drills
- Term 3, 2 drills

It is important to vary the times of drills; a whole school day can be broken down into 9 components and during a school year as many should be used as possible

- Early Morning Breakfast (Boarding Only)
- Drop Off
- Morning
- Lunchtime
- Afternoon
- Pick Up
- After School
- Evening (Boarding Only)
- Sleeping (Boarding Only)

For guidance only the school or office should aim to have everyone out of the building and moving towards the assembly point within 3 minutes. During a practice evacuation the

time should be taken when the last Fire Marshall leaves the building and the second time once the full registers complete, the aim is to complete the registers within 5 minutes of the fire alarm sounding.

Local regulations may determine a different schedule, if these are greater than the Company minimum these will supersede Company policy.

It is extremely important for employees to report any problems encountered to their Fire marshal immediately after a fire evacuation or drill, e.g. the alarm not being heard or congestion of escape routes.

## FALSE ALARMS

Despite every precaution being taken and strict maintenance schedules being carried out to all equipment an alarm maybe activated accidentally. The procedure will be the same as for a real emergency and will be treated as such.

## VISITORS AND CONTRACTORS

In the event of an evacuation, visitors are to be escorted off the premises by their host and must remain with them until all personnel are accounted for. For contractors, the person responsible for them will brief them on the action to take on hearing the alarm and the location of the fire assembly point.

## FIRE MARSHALS RESPONSIBILITIES

A Fire marshal will be appointed for each department or area of the workplace. The Fire marshal is responsible for:

- Knowing who works in their allotted area;
- Ensuring that all employees and pupils in their area are familiar with their assembly points, and nearest escape routes;
- Ensuring that the hi-visibility jacket is kept on hand at all times.
- At no time must a Fire marshal or any other employee risk his or her own safety.
- When the alarm has been raised ensure that all employees immediately evacuate the area.
- Check the area and all rooms (including toilets) to ensure that everyone is out, closing all doors on the way.
- Collect the staff register relevant to their area if applicable.
- Wear the hi-visibility jacket and proceed to the assembly point, if applicable taking the register with them.
- The Fire marshal must inform the Incident Controller immediately the result of the search.
- The Fire marshal must conduct a sweep of their allotted area to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that no one is left in the area. Once complete inform the Incident Controller and or attending Fire Officer. Ensure that all employees remain at their assembly point, and do not leave. Upon authorisation to re-enter, the Fire marshal must ensure that the return is controlled.

## REGISTERS

The registers taken should be using a roll call and marked on a register, not using a head count method.

These should encompass all students, visitors.

## INCIDENT CONTROLLER

The Incident Controller should be identified in every situation by the wearing of a hi-visibility tabard / vest different to that of a Fire marshal's.

On the sounding of the alarm the Incident Controller will stand a safe distance from the entrance of the building.

The Incident Controller will hold a log of departments and tick these off when confirmed clear by the Fire marshal.

The Incident Controller will meet the Fire and Rescue Service and provide the Fire and Rescue Officer with the details of the evacuation.

Immediately after the evacuation the Incident Controller should complete a Fire Drill Record on the Companies online Health and Safety System, recording comments and any other findings that may have been reported.

## FIRE PREVENTION

Switch off and unplug all electrical equipment when not in use.

Ensure all cooking appliances are switched off and unplugged when not in use.

Ensure all naked flames etc. are extinguished.

Ensure all doors are closed to prevent the spread of fire.

Do not prop open fire doors.

Regularly empty rubbish bins.

Report any defective equipment, including damaged cables and plugs, loose connections etc.

## PERSONAL EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS (PEEP'S)

### DEVISING A PEEP

If a new pupil or member of staff who may have a disability joins the Company/School, the learning support assistant and / or pastoral tutor (for pupils), or line managers (for staff) shall hold an initial discussion with the person. This discussion should be followed by a tour of the work / school. It may be necessary to request the involvement of other staff.

Some questions are provided below, to ensure that the relevant topics are discussed and observations made when undertaking a tour of the school / workplace. This should not preclude individuals from raising any other relevant issues.

Any arrangements or equipment requested to assist the person in the event of an emergency evacuation should be summarised on the PEEP form.

The requests made on the form must then be discussed with the relevant Managers, e.g. provision of Deaf Alert; availability of Evacuation Chair / assistance.

When the requests made on the form are agreed and implemented, a copy of the form should be kept within the building or the Human Resources Department as appropriate and issued to the person concerned.

The following questions should be discussed to form the basis of the PEEP for all people with hearing, visual or mobility impairments, these impairments should not exclude short term impairments e.g. broken leg, where the impairment will slow their evacuation in an emergency.

## APPENDIX

### HEARING IMPAIRMENT

- Can you hear the fire alarm in normal circumstances?
- Are you aware of any special or purpose designed hearing system or device that is available and would assist you in hearing the fire alarm more clearly?
- What measures do you feel would assist you to exit the building safely in the event of an emergency?
- if you have difficulty in hearing the fire alarm, a visual indicator or vibrating pager
- written emergency egress procedures
- Are there any other concerns that you wish to raise?

### VISUAL IMPAIRMENT:

- Do you have a visual impairment, which could inhibit you being able to leave the building safely in the event of an emergency?
- Do you require help to move around the building for example: a cane, guide dog or other equipment?
- How long does it take you to leave the building in normal circumstances unaided?
- What measures do you feel would assist you to exit the building safely in the event of an emergency?
- Emergency procedures to be issued to you in Braille / on tape / in large print.
- Different signs to mark emergency routes and exits; tactile signage or floor surface; coloured tape on the floor surface.
- Are there any other concerns that you wish to raise?

### MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT

- Can you leave the building unassisted?
- Do you need or use a wheelchair?
- Is your wheelchair required for all circumstances?
- Is your wheelchair a standard size or an electrically powered type with wider dimensions?
- Would an evacuation chair help - and could/would you use it?
- Would you find it acceptable to use a Fire Refuge, if required?
- Would a member of staff, assigned to assist you be a help?
- What measures do you feel would assist you to exit the building safely in the event of an emergency?
- Are there any other concerns that you wish to raise?

Some examples of helpful measures for consideration when discussing needs with mobility impaired people:



- locating a team, which include disabled people with mobility impairments as near to ground floor level, and close to fire exits as possible.
- the provision of evacuation chairs to enable mobility impaired people unable to negotiate stairs to be safely helped out of the building. Both the disabled person using the chair and those operating it should be properly trained in the use of the equipment in order to avoid accidents and to maintain adequate safety for other users of the stairs. This will require sufficient numbers of staff to be trained in the use of, handling and lifting into the chair and available to respond in the event of an emergency.
- clear designation and instructions for use of 'Fire Safe Havens / Fire Refuges' - for use while waiting for help to move from the refuge to safety.

### TOUR OF THE BUILDING/WORK ENVIRONMENT THAT YOU WORK IN/GENERALLY REQUIRE ACCESS TO?

Initial discussions with the disabled person should be followed by a tour of the building, including any exit routes. The following questions are provided as prompts for relevant observations relating to the building and work environment. These issues must be discussed during the tour - and recorded to form part of the PEEP/assessment.

- Is the directional and instructional signage adequate and relevant?
- (If you have a hearing impairment) - does the deaf alert work?
- (If you have a partial mobility or sight impairment) - do you routinely negotiate staircases or do you use the lifts?
- If you use the staircase, are steps adequately identified?
- If you use a lift, is there easy access / egress and is it easy to operate the lift?
- If you use a lift, is there an emergency telephone installed or an emergency button clearly marked for you to use?
- Are there fire doors with self-closing devices on your exit routes - would that hinder you if you had to leave the building in an emergency?
- Are there any internal or external steps that are difficult to negotiate?