



# Ashfield Girls' High School



**“Each different. Each talented. All valued.”**

## Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures



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# Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures

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## Executive Summary

This document outlines the essential procedures for ensuring the safety of all pupils, staff, visitors, and contractors in the event of a fire or other emergency requiring evacuation. The primary objective is to protect life, minimize risk, and ensure an orderly and efficient evacuation from the premises.

The fire and emergency evacuation procedures are designed to comply with relevant health and safety regulations and are tailored to the specific risks and layout of Ashfield Girls' High School.

### Key components include:

- **Alarm Activation:** Clear instructions for identifying emergencies and promptly activating the fire alarm system.
- **Evacuation Routes:** Designated evacuation paths and emergency exits are clearly marked and regularly inspected to ensure unobstructed egress.
- **Assembly Points:** Safe external locations have been established where evacuees must gather for roll call and further instructions.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Fire Wardens and Emergency Coordinators are appointed and trained to lead evacuations, assist individuals with mobility issues, and liaise with emergency services.
- **Communication Procedures:** Systems are in place to notify all occupants quickly, provide instructions, and communicate with external responders.
- **Training and Drills:** Regular fire drills and training sessions are conducted to ensure preparedness and reinforce correct responses in emergency situations.
- **Post-Evacuation Procedures:** A headcount and incident assessment will be performed once evacuation is complete, and re-entry will only occur once the area is declared safe.

These procedures aim to foster a culture of safety and preparedness, reduce confusion during emergencies, and ensure compliance with safety standards. Ongoing review of these procedures are integral to maintaining an effective emergency response plan.



## Section A – Aims of the Policy

### Aim

The aim of the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures at Ashfield Girls' High School is to have in place procedures that ensure the safe evacuation of all persons. Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures are an essential component of a school's Health and Safety Policy.

## Section B – Legislative Context, Guidance and Linked

In Northern Ireland, key legislation for fire and emergency evacuation includes The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010. These laws place duties on "appropriate persons," such as employers and premises managers, to conduct fire risk assessments, ensure adequate means of escape, provide fire-fighting equipment, and maintain emergency systems. Specific regulations address emergency lighting, clear routes, and the safe evacuation of all persons, including those with disabilities.

### Key Legislation

- The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006: This Order sets out the fundamental requirements for fire safety, including the duties of employers and other persons responsible for premises to protect people from fire.
- The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010: These regulations provide more specific details on the measures required to ensure fire safety, including the provision and maintenance of emergency routes, exits, and emergency lighting.

The legislation places specific duties on Premises Managers and Employers. Under the legislation, the "appropriate person" (e.g., employer, premises manager) has several key responsibilities:

- Conduct a fire safety risk assessment: to identify potential fire hazards and the necessary safety measures.
- Implement fire safety measures: identified by the assessment, such as providing fire-fighting equipment and maintaining fire detection and alarm systems.
- Ensure clear and unobstructed emergency routes and exits.
- Provide emergency lighting: to adequately illuminate escape routes in the event of a normal power failure.
- Develop and maintain fire safety arrangements: for the ongoing control and review of safety measures.
- Record keeping, of assessments and safety measures.

Both key pieces of legislation have been taken into consideration in relation to the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Policy at Ashfield Girls' High School.



## Section C - Policy and Procedures

### What to do if you find a fire?

- Go to the nearest alarm activation point - 'Break Glass Point'.
- Lift the protector and break the glass to activate the alarm.
- Attempt to exit the building by the nearest emergency exit.
- The fire extinguishers located at 'Break Glass Points' are to be used if the fire impedes your exit out of the building.
- You should not attempt to put out the fire.
- You should report immediately to the Facilities Manager and the Evacuation Coordinator the location of the fire. The Facilities Manager and the Evacuation Coordinator will be located in the centre of the assembly point.

### What to do if you hear the Fire Alarm?

- Stop whatever you are doing safely (turn machines, cookers, bunsen burners off - use central switches if possible).
- All belongings (bags etc.) are to be left in the classroom / room (blazers should be brought in inclement weather).
- Exit the room calmly (closing doors behind you) and follow the emergency evacuation signs (walls in rooms / ceilings in corridors), exiting the building by the nearest emergency exit.
- Teachers are to lead the way for their class (as they will be aware of the nearest emergency exit for their room).
- Walk calmly, keeping to the left-hand side in the corridors and the stairwells.
- At the Assembly Point both staff and pupils go to their form class location. Staff should report to the relevant person to be marked 'accounted for'.
- Pupils line up in alphabetical order while the Form Tutor takes the register (live register).
- 'Unaccounted Persons' in each form class are to be forwarded by the Form Teacher to the appropriate Head of Progress.
- The Head of Progress is to forward a list of 'Unaccounted Persons' for their Year Group to the Administration Team Member and then the Evacuation Co-ordinator.
- A member of the Administration Team will complete the register of teaching staff (to include cover teachers) to ensure that all teaching staff are accounted for.
- A Member of the Administration Team will complete the register of non-teaching staff to ensure that all staff are accounted for.
- The Catering Supervisor and Cleaning Supervisor will complete registers of relevant staff.

- Once the building has been declared safe to re-enter the Evacuation Coordinator will begin re-entry one class at a time. Teachers re-enter the building with their form class. During external exam sessions those pupils who have evacuated from the examination room will re-enter first.
- The re-entry points will be supervised by Heads of Progress, or teachers who do not have a form class.

The Facilities Manager, Office Manager, Cleaning Supervisor and Catering Manager will have in place procedures within their areas of responsibility for the safe evacuation of non-teaching staff and report directly to the Evacuation Coordinator. The Evacuation Coordinator will have prior knowledge of these procedures.

## **The importance of immediate compliance**

No person in the building can assume responsibility for calling a false alarm or silencing the alarm. The Emergency Evacuation Procedure is to be carried out **EVERY TIME THE ALARM IS SOUNDED**. It would be expected that each evacuation (drill) would take approximately 30 minutes.

## **The importance of a Fire Warden Sweep**

The Fire Warden Sweep is part of the safety strategy to ensure the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures minimise risk. Fire Wardens check unsupervised areas, they are not responsible for making people leave the building. It is each individual persons responsibility to leave the building once the alarm is activated. Legislation and Trade Union guidance supports the individual's responsibility to leave the building. To obstruct or slow down this process, in any way, is putting the individuals and other peoples safety at risk. The Fire Wardens also close doors throughout the sweep, where possible. The reason for this is to help compartmentalise any fire. Oxygen will fuel a fire and reducing the volume of 'drafts' will ultimately slow down the spread of any fire. While closing windows further reduces the risk it is not practical or safe for Fire Wardens to go into a room to close windows. Staff may close windows, if possible (not if this involves leaning or climbing on/over benches as this poses a significant health and safety risk in itself), when exiting the room.

## **The importance of the Collective Sweep**

The likelihood of all Fire Wardens being in their designated area to sweep in an evacuation is unrealistic. This likely event could result in large areas of the school not being effectively swept. There is a collective responsibility among all staff to 'sweep' as they exit the building, especially in corridors. When sweeping any part of the building there are a few key points to consider:

- A sweep is when you open a door (classroom, office, resource room, store, toilets, changing block etc.) and glance around and shouting loudly to any persons still in the room that they have to leave the building e.g. pupil working at a computer and listening to headphones who may not have heard the alarm.



- You can only sweep rooms that you pass as you exit the building.
- You should not pass an emergency exit to continue sweeping (you must exit at that point)
- You should report any issues to the Evacuation Coordinator who will be located at the centre of the assembly point.

## Visitors to School

The following groups of persons must sign in at reception:

- Events facilitators / Guests
- Music Instructors
- School Councillor
- Education Welfare Officer
- Parents for any meeting (during large gatherings a Fire Safety message will be communicated to parents)
- Pupils who are not on timetable e.g. study leave, past pupils
- Any other visitors (not employed to be on site as a member of the teaching or non-teaching staff)

## Supporting Vulnerable Persons

To enable the school to implement procedures to discharge its duties under the Fire Precautions Regulations 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 persons (pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff) with mobility issues, hearing or visual impairment (permanent or temporary) will have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) completed and reviewed annually by the Pupil Welfare Auxiliary and the Evacuation Coordinator. This process is required by law to ensure that all persons with mobility and sensory issues are not put at any increased risk or treated less favourably in the event of an emergency situation.

All persons using crutches will have to have a PEEP completed even if the situation is temporary (if they cannot use stairwells independently). If a pupil comes into school on crutches the School Nurse is to be informed so a PEEP can be put in place immediately. All PEEPs will be communicated to the person identified in the PEEP, their carers and teaching staff / non-teaching staff in contact with the pupil.

## Procedures in an External Examination Halls

The Examination Officer has responsibility for the safe evacuation of examination halls and alternative examination rooms. The Examination Officer is responsible for providing the Evacuation Coordinator with a list of 'unaccounted persons' (invigilators and pupils). The Evacuation Coordinator will forward this information to the NI Fire and Rescue Service. This group will re-enter the building first (when the building is safe), to ensure that the examination can proceed as quickly as possible.

## High Risk times for Fire and Evacuation Procedures

The following scenarios have been identified as high risk times for Fire and Evacuation Procedures. The reason for increased risk has been given in each scenario and the steps to be taken to reduce the risk.

### Procedures in the event of an evacuation before 8.50am

As there are no formal evacuation procedures until 8.50am, all staff and pupils are to report to the Assembly Point in form class locations. The most senior member of staff will coordinate with the Facilities Manager (or their deputy) and assume responsibility for the evacuation and re-entry into school. This is a high risk scenario because (depending on how early the alarm) there will not be a full count of staff to undertake their roles. Therefore, a full Fire Warden sweep or the creation of an accurate list of 'unaccounted' persons could not happen. In order to reduce the risk to persons any member of staff should 'sweep' rooms as they exit the building ensuring that the guidance in the "The Importance of the Collective Sweep" is followed.

### Procedures in the event of an evacuation at break or lunch time

These procedures would be the same for an evacuation in the school day. The only difference would be that it is likely that pupils and staff would be concentrated in certain areas e.g. staff room, canteen. All staff and pupils make their way to the assembly point. To reduce the risk all staff, should collectively sweep the route as they exit the building by the nearest emergency exit. This is a high risk scenario because there may not be a full count of staff to undertake their roles (staff may have left school for lunch) and staff and pupils are not evenly distributed. To reduce the risk, available staff may need to take on additional roles.

### Procedures in the event of an evacuation after 3.10pm – 5.30pm

As there are no formal evacuation procedures from 3.10pm, all staff and pupils are to report to the Assembly Points. The most senior member of staff will coordinate with the Facilities Manager (or their deputy) and assume responsibility for the evacuation and re-entry into school. This is a high risk scenario because there will not be a full count of staff to undertake their roles (some staff may have left school). Therefore, a full Fire Warden sweep or the creation of an accurate list of 'unaccounted' persons could not happen. In order to reduce the risk to persons all members of staff should 'sweep' rooms as they exit the building ensuring that the guidance in the "The Importance of the Collective Sweep" is followed (above). Teaching staff who have responsibility for pupils (e.g. hockey / revision classes) in school after 3.10pm must have a register of all pupils in their care. They must continue to hold responsibility for these pupils at the assembly point until the re-entry process begins.



## Procedures in the event of an evacuation after 6.00pm

School organised events will contain a fire safety briefing stating that:-

“There are no plans for an evacuation drill this evening. If the alarm is activated you must evacuate the building (give directions to emergency exits), to reach the assembly point at the front of the school (shale pitches)”.

Community groups who use the building will need to be informed of their responsibility to have a record of all persons using the building. They will also have to be informed about the fire and emergency evacuation procedures. They will also have to account for all persons using the building and any ‘unaccounted persons’ to the NI Fire and Rescue Service.

## Training

The Evacuation Co-ordinator is responsible for coordinating training. They are also responsible for keeping up to date records of all training. Training Courses include:-

- Fire Warden Training
- Evac Chair Training

## Completing an annual Fire and Emergency Evacuation Risk Assessment

The NI Fire and Rescue Service complete an annual Fire Safety Risk Assessment. This is reviewed by the Principal, Facilities Manager and Evacuation Coordinator. The Evacuation Coordinator will complete internal risk assessments following evacuations.

## Section D – Roles and Responsibilities

### Board of Governors

The Board of Governors' role is to ensure that the procedures are compliant and reviewed regularly in line with changes in legislation/guidance.

### Principal

The Principal's role is to ensure that Ashfield Girls' High School operates procedures in line with the Fire Precautions Regulations 2010 to ensure procedures are in place to support the safe evacuation of all persons in the school building in the event of a Fire or Emergency Evacuation.

### Facilities Manager

The Facilities Manager's role is to ensure the maintenance and regular upkeep of the school building in relation to fire safety equipment. The Facilities Manager is responsible for responding accordingly to Fire Risk Assessments completed by the NI Fire and Rescue Service. In the event of the alarm activation, it is the role of the Facilities Manager to identify the location of the alarm activation through the fire panel located at the front entrance. This information will then be communicated to the Principal, Evacuation Coordinator and the NI Fire and Rescue Service, as necessary.

### Evacuation Co-ordinator

The Evacuation Co-ordinator's role is to ensure that there are procedures in place to manage a safe evacuation for all persons in the event of a fire or emergency evacuation. It

is the responsibility of the Evacuation Co-ordinator to:

- Develop and review Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures.
- Communicate the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures to pupils (through form tutors), non-teaching and teaching staff annually.
- Lead the co-ordination of each evacuation, including the re-entry into the school building.
- Liaise with the NI Fire and Rescue Service in relation to the completion of Fire Warden Sweeps and providing a list of 'unaccounted persons'.
- Review the co-ordination of each evacuation and complete a risk assessment.



## Fire Wardens

The Fire Warden's primary role is to 'sweep' the building and to report to the Evacuation Coordinator. During their sweep, Fire Wardens check corridors, classrooms and unsupervised areas e.g. toilets in their designated areas. Following the evacuation the Fire Wardens will report to the Evacuation Coordinator any health and safety issues that occurred during the evacuation procedure. These issues will be forwarded to the Principal.

## Office Manager / Receptionist

The Office Manager will coordinate the completion of the non-teaching staff (Fire Wardens, Classroom Assistants, Study supervisors, School Librarian and Lunchtime Supervisors) register. The Office Manager will also coordinate the completion of the visitors to school register. The Office Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Evacuation Co-ordinator receives a list of 'unaccounted persons' for non-teaching staff and visitors. The Evacuation Coordinator will give this information to the NI Fire and Rescue Service if requested.

The Receptionist will ensure that visitors to the school (accompanied by a member of staff / or unaccompanied) are recorded in a signing in/out log located a front reception. An accompanied visitor is one who will be with a member of staff at all times e.g. Event Host. An unaccompanied visitor is one who will at times will not be with a member of staff e.g. EWO. All visitors will be informed about the Fire and Emergency Evacuation information on the back of the visitor badge and be given a child Protection / Fire and Emergency Evacuation Leaflet upon signing in at the front receptionist. All visitors will be informed about the assembly point and should also be reminded by the front receptionist that they must sign out at front reception when they exit the building.

## Head of Progress and Form Tutor

The Head of Progress is responsible for their Year group at the assembly point and for the re- entry into the school building. Heads of Progress will collect 'live' registers from the Senior Executive Officer, distribute them to the appropriate Form Tutors. Form Tutors are responsible for taking the register, forwarding the register to the Head of Progress and supervising their form class at all times throughout the evacuation. The Form Tutor should only report to the Head of Progress those pupils who are 'unaccounted' for in their form class. An 'unaccounted' pupil is one that the Form Tutor can find no reason why the pupil should not be present at the evacuation. At times in the year, when certain year groups are on study leave the form tutors will still report to their form tutor location.

## Examinations Officer

The Examinations Officer is responsible for the safe evacuation of all persons in examination rooms and alternative examination rooms. They are also responsible for ensuring that Examination Invigilators and pupils undertaking examinations are aware of the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures. The Examinations Officer will give the Evacuation Co-ordinator a list of all 'unaccounted persons' linked to the examination session, when they are occurring.

## Teachers who are responsible for groups of pupils

At times of the year certain groups of pupils are not 'in school' e.g. study leave. Pupils may be present in revision classes or may be working on Controlled Assessments or Assignments. It is the responsibility of the teacher for that particular group of pupils to ensure that all of the group are accounted for at the assembly point.

Teachers who do have pupils in school for revision classes / controlled assessment classes etc. must keep a register of those pupils who they are responsible for and inform the Evacuation Coordinator if any of the pupils are 'unaccounted' for.

## Pupil Welfare Auxiliary (PWA)

The Pupil Welfare Auxiliary will check with each Form Tutor that Pupils with PEEPs are safely evacuated and if assistance is necessary.

## Cleaning Supervisor

The role of the Cleaning Supervisor is to coordinate the completion of the cleaning staff register and provide the Evacuation Co-ordinator with a list of 'unaccounted cleaning staff'. The Evacuation Coordinator will give this information to the NI Fire and Rescue Service upon their arrival at the school site.

## Catering Manager

The role of the Catering Supervisor is to coordinate the completion of the catering staff register and provide the Evacuation Co-ordinator with a list of 'unaccounted catering staff'. The Evacuation Coordinator will give this information to the NI Fire and Rescue Service upon their arrival at the school site.



## Section E – Consultation, Communication, Monitoring & Evaluation of the Policy

### Consultation in developing the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Parties consulted in the creation of this policy / procedures include:-

- Principal
- FM Manager
- Fire Wardens
- Education Authority
- NI Fire and Rescue Service
- Office Manager
- Cleaning Manager
- Catering Manager
- Whole school staff
- Senior Leadership Team
- Board of Governors

### Review of the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Policy and Procedures

The Fire and Emergency Evacuation Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually. It will also be reviewed following each termly fire drill (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> term) and any individual alarm activation.

### Communication of the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Policy and Procedures

The policy and procedures will be on the school website with all other policies. There will be annual training for all staff in relation to the policy and procedures. All pupils will be made aware of the policy and procedures each term in preparation for fire drills.

Laminated fire instructions and a plan of the assembly point will be made available in all classrooms / resource rooms / offices. It is essential that this is located in a highly visible location close to the exit door to ensure that all people using the building are aware of where to go in the event of the alarm being activated.

# ***Challenging girls today; creating women of value in the future***



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