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St John's College, Oxford
Fire Safety Policy

April 2021

1. General

The College is a responsible corporate body that takes its safety duties seriously. For that reason this policy has been formulated to help the College comply with its legal obligations to staff, Fellows, Junior Members and other associates and visitors under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (The Order). The College is committed to taking all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, Fellows, Lecturers, students and other persons who may be affected by its activities.

This policy addresses the obligations under The Order that require the College to:

- 1 Develop a policy to minimise the risks associated with fire
- 2 Reduce the risk of an outbreak of fire
- 3 Reduce the risk of the spread of fire
- 4 Provide a means of escape
- 5 Demonstrate preventive action
- 6 Maintain documentation and records in respect of fire safety management

This fire safety policy also forms part of the College's general Health and Safety Policy. This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated annually. The Governing Body of St John's College endorses this policy and is fully committed to its implementation.

2. The Responsible Person

The College has appointed a 'responsible person' who is charged with the responsibility of ensuring the safety of College Members and any person who may legally come onto College property and of anyone not on the premises but who may be affected.

The body appointed as the 'responsible person' is: The President and Fellows of St John's College, Oxford.

The responsible body must ensure that all risks are assessed and that competent persons respond appropriately to Fire Safety Risk Assessments (see Section 9, below). The responsibility for health and safety matters relating to College Members and visitors is generally carried by the Principal Bursar, working with and through the Domestic and Establishment Committee.

3. Fire Marshals

The College's Fire Marshals are the Porters.

The Porters:

- 1 Are the first to be alerted in any emergency
- 2 Make contact with the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
- 3 Assist in evacuations
- 4 Provide essential information to the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
- 5 Organise fire-drills and assess the outcome
- 6 Monitor the system of Fire Alarms and respond appropriately

4. Competent Persons

The College will appoint and consult competent persons to carry out the following duties:

- 1 Administer and implement the results of any risk assessments
- 2 Assist Porters
- 3 Assist with fire drills
- 4 Review this policy annually

The competent persons will comprise the Domestic and Establishment Committee and its sub-Committee, which will include the Lodge Management, Senior Dean, Master of Works, Principal Bursar, Domestic Bursar; afforded by additional competent persons as necessary.

A competent person will only be regarded as competent if they have the appropriate level of experience and knowledge. Training and advice will be provided for nominated competent persons as necessary.

5. Documentation & Records

The College documents and keeps records to demonstrate that we have acted responsibly. The following records will be kept in good order, up to date and available for scrutiny at any time in the Works Office [WO], the Domestic Bursar [DB] and the Porters Lodge [PL] as appropriate:

- 1 This fire safety policy (this will also be lodged with all heads of department) [PL, DB, WO]
- 2 Fire evacuation procedures [PL]
- 3 Copies of all fire risk assessments [PL]
- 4 Records of all fire training [DB]

- 5 A record of all fire drills (at least two per year), with a note of evacuation times and any comments [PL]
- 6 Records of weekly tests of fire alarms, final fire exits [PL]
- 7 Record of annual inspection and testing of all fire fighting equipment [WO]
- 8 Records of periodic tests of emergency lighting [WO]
- 9 Records of all scheduled and unscheduled maintenance of fire detection and alarm systems [PL]
- 10 Records of any unwanted alarm activations and action taken by the Lodge Management to maintain a separate list of all activations and pass information on for action where appropriate. [WO and PL and DB]
- 11 Plans of the College Buildings [WO]
- 12 Fire Plan Register detailing emergency services shut-off points [WO and PL]

6. Duties of the Staff, Fellows, Lecturers and Junior Members

All College Members have a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that they do not place themselves or others at risk of harm. They are also expected to co-operate fully in complying with any procedures that the College may introduce as a measure to protect the safety and well-being of all College Members and visitors.

The College will treat any misuse of fire fighting or safety equipment as a serious disciplinary matter, for example, playing with and discharging fire extinguishers, propping open fire doors, disabling fire detection etc.

7. Communication

The College will ensure that all residents and any person it employs (directly or indirectly) are provided with all information related to fire safety, and consult with its members on all matters of fire safety policy and arrangements. It will keep staff informed of any changes that are made to its fire safety procedures and significant outcomes from the fire risk assessments. A fire safety briefing will form part of the induction training for new members of staff.

It will also ensure that all visitors to its premises are briefed in the evacuation procedures and not left alone unless they are aware of, and familiar with, all available escape routes. Information is provided in public spaces and rooms available to College visitors. Information is also provided as part of the general distribution of information to all Junior Members on their arrival.

8. Procedures

The College has introduced the following procedures in order to maintain high standards of fire safety:

- 1 The fire evacuation procedures will be tested by means of a fire drill twice annually.
- 2 All staff and Junior Members of the College will be given a fire safety briefing, as part of the induction process. Employees will receive annual safety briefings. Further training will be supplied where there are any changes that may affect fire safety.
- 3 It is College policy that key employees will be trained in the use of fire extinguishers, whether or not they have been given specific fire fighting duties.
- 4 All escape routes will be established, kept in good working order and free from obstruction and combustible materials at all times. Operation of fire exit doors will be monitored and checked during fire evacuation procedures by the Lodge Porters.
- 5 Fire fighting equipment will be provided. In general this means fire extinguishers but additional provision of fire blankets may be made where deemed appropriate by the findings of a risk assessment.
- 6 All fire related equipment will be regularly serviced and maintained by a competent person or contractor. If any member of the College notices defective or missing equipment, they must report it to a competent person.
- 7 All available technological solutions to fire prevention will be examined by the College and innovative practices and equipment will be adopted as appropriate - advice on available equipment and solutions will be sought at regular intervals from the College's Fire Advisors, external consultants and Architects.
- 8 An appropriate fire detection and alarm system will be provided. The type and extent of the alarm system provided will be based on the findings of the relevant risk assessment. Alarm systems will be tested regularly. Staff will be advised when a test is scheduled.
- 9 Emergency lighting will be provided for escape routes where applicable. The need for, and the extent of, the system will be determined by the findings of the relevant risk assessment.
- 10 The risk of fire spread will be controlled by the provision of fire resisting construction, and/or fire/smoke resisting doors. These provisions will be kept in good order as part of our regular maintenance schedule. All College Members are required to ensure that any fire door provided remains closed at all times.
- 11 Any other safety systems provided will be checked regularly to ensure correct

operation, where necessary e.g. emergency lighting, fire doors etc

- 12 Appropriate signs and notices will be displayed, giving clear instructions to College Members and others in the event of a fire. In addition, signs will be provided to indicate the position of fire extinguishers, fire alarm call points and to indicate the emergency exit routes.
- 13 In the normal course of their work, Lodge Porters, housekeeping and maintenance staff will make it their business to ensure that residents, students, staff, visitors and other users of the College buildings keep exits and lobbies clear of debris, furniture etc, that fire doors are not propped open, fire extinguishers have not been removed from their brackets and fire signs and notices have not been removed.
- 14 This policy will be included as part of the terms and conditions of employment and membership of the College. Failure to co-operate may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

9. Risk Assessments

The Domestic and Establishment Committee (and any competent persons co-opted where necessary) shall make (or cause to be made), record, review and, where applicable, revise Fire Safety Risk Assessments at regular intervals in accordance with The Order. They should also be carried out if there has been any significant change in the physical layout of a building or staircase or a change of use.

The Fire Safety Risk Assessments must take into consideration everyone who may come onto College premises, whether they are employees, visitors or members of the public. Particular attention will be paid to people who may have a disability or anyone with special needs.

Heads of Department have a duty to identify all hazardous substances and other potential or actual hazards and to make this information available to those who carry out the risk assessments.

A 'five step' approach will be taken as follows:

- Step 1 Identify potential fire hazards in the workplace.
- Step 2 Decide who might be in danger, in the event of a fire in the workplace or while trying to escape from it, and note their location.
- Step 3 Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether the existing fire precautions are adequate or whether more should be done to get rid of the hazard or to control the risks (e.g. by improving the fire precautions).
- Step 4 Record findings and details of the action taken as a result.
- Step 5 Keep the assessment under review and revise it when necessary.