

## **Fire Safety Policy**

### **Policy Overview**

This policy describes how the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) meets its responsibility for fire safety in schools including fire prevention and emergency preparedness.

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### **Policy and Procedures History**

- Policy B.004 Fire Drills Policy approved: pre 2004
- Policy B.004 Fire Safety Policy – revised: October, 2004
- Policy B.004 Fire Safety Procedures – revised: October, 2004
- Policy Renumbered to F.006 Fire Safety – approved: January 2013
- Policy F.006 Fire Safety revised – June 3, 2015

### **1.0 Legislative Context**

The Fire Safety Policy will align and comply with the following:

- 1.1 *Nova Scotia Education Act and Regulations;*
- 1.2 *Nova Scotia Fire Safety Act; and*
- 1.3 *National Fire Code of Canada, 2010*

### **2.0 Principles**

- 2.1 The HRSB is committed to the safety of students and staff.
- 2.2 The HRSB adheres to all fire safety procedures, policies, regulations and legislation.

**3.0 Authorization**

3.1 The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement procedures in support of this policy.

**4.0 Policy Review**

4.1 This policy will be reviewed every five (5) years, or on an as needed basis.

## **Fire Safety Procedures**

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#### **1.0 Duties and Responsibilities of Superintendent**

- 1.1 The Superintendent shall ensure that all schools comply with the requirements to establish a Fire Safety Plan in accordance with national, provincial and municipal fire safety regulations.

#### **2.0 Duties and Responsibilities of Board Departments**

- 2.1 It is the joint responsibility of the Operations, School Administration and Board Services Departments to provide information and training, as required, to principals regarding the most up-to-date Fire Safety Plan requirements for schools.

#### **3.0 Fire Safety Planning – The Roles and Responsibilities of Principals**

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the principal in each school to ensure compliance with all Fire Prevention regulations.
- 3.2 Principals are required to implement steps required for Emergency Preparedness as prescribed in the Principal's Guide for Fire Safety Planning in Schools.

- 3.2.1 Principals and their designate(s) are also responsible for ongoing communication with the fire department regarding any changes to the Fire Safety Plan specific to their schools.
- 3.3 It is the responsibility of the principal in each school to establish Fire Emergency Procedures as prescribed in the Principals Guide for Fire Safety Planning in Schools.
- 3.4 Principals are responsible for providing information and training to all staff regarding their roles and responsibilities for implementation of fire prevention, emergency preparedness and fire emergency procedures.
- 3.5 Principals are responsible for ensuring that all documents related to fire safety planning are maintained up-to-date and stored in the school's main office. These documents include:
  - 3.5.1 Principal's Guide for Fire Safety Planning in Schools,
  - 3.5.2 Fire Safety Maintenance Information Binder,
  - 3.5.3 Fire Safety Systems Maintenance Log,
  - 3.5.4 Five Year Records Log,
  - 3.5.5 Life Safety Systems test and inspection reports.

#### **4.0 Fire Safety Planning – The Roles and Responsibilities of Principals**

- 4.1 Operations Services must ensure compliance with requirements of the Fire Safety Act for inspection and maintenance of life safety systems in schools.
- 4.2 The HRSB Manager - Regulatory Compliance must complete a fire safety inspection at every school at least once every three years.
- 4.3 Caretakers are responsible to perform daily, weekly and monthly maintenance tasks to life safety systems in the school buildings and record status in the Fire Safety Systems Maintenance Log.
- 4.4 Maintenance Services is responsible to ensure completion of inspections to life safety systems (fire detection, notification and extinguishing systems) in schools and record status in the Fire Safety Systems Maintenance Log.

**5.0 Supporting Documents**

- 5.1 *Nova Scotia Department of Education (2013) Principal's Guide for Fire Safety Planning in Schools;*
- 5.2 *Nova Scotia Department of Education (2009), Fire Safety Maintenance Information; and*
- 5.3 *Nova Scotia Department of Education (2012), Fire Safety Systems Maintenance Log.*

## Appendix A

### Fire Drill Procedures for Evacuation in the Event of a Fire Emergency

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- 1.0 Scheduling Fire Drills
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#### 1.0 Scheduling Fire Drills

- 1.1 The National Fire Code of Canada, 2010 section 2.8.3.2.1 b) requires that full evacuation fire drills be held at least three times during each of the fall and spring school terms.
- 1.2 The first fire drill shall be held within the first week of school in September, followed by two more drills evenly distributed between this time and the end of the November. The same sequence shall occur following the start of April to the end of June.
- 1.3 If problems occur in any drill, a subsequent drill should be conducted shortly after. It is important that there are six successful fire drills.

#### 2.0 Fire Drill Procedures

- 2.1 A fire escape plan shall be posted in a conspicuous location, in every classroom and assembly area near the corridor door(s). These plans shall identify exit routes out of the facility, the locations of refuge areas within a facility, as well as the locations of safe areas to assemble.
- 2.2 Before initiating a fire drill, the principal or designate must contact the fire alarm monitoring company at 1-800-561-5433 and the Fire Department Central Dispatch at 902-490-5020 to advise of the fire drill schedule and prevent a 'false alarm' Fire Department response.
- 2.3 The principal or their designate is required to conduct full evacuation drills by initiating a fire alarm. This is accomplished by **using manual fire alarm pull stations** and not the fire drill button on the fire alarm panel. A different pull station should be used for each drill.

- 2.4 During all fire drills, principals or their designate shall wear a safety vest and carry the information that would be necessary in a fire emergency situation. This would include:
  - 2.4.1 Contact information for contingency plans for moving students to an alternate location;
  - 2.4.2 A means of communicating to the school board or other agencies, once outside of the school without the need for re-entry, i.e. a cell phone that is available to the principal or their designate;
  - 2.4.3 All materials in emergency fire kit.
- 2.5 School personnel will instruct all students and people (with the exception of students or staff described in Procedure section 5.0 below) in the area to exit the building. A sweep of the area must be conducted.
- 2.6 All teachers will take the register or class list with them to assist with accounting for all students.
- 2.7 All persons evacuated must proceed to a predetermined point of safety and remain there until a check is made to account for everyone in the building.
- 2.8 No person will return to the school until directed to do so by a verbal command from the principal or principal's designate.
- 2.9 Persons with special needs that impact their evacuation will be assisted during the fire drill (see Procedure section 3.0 below).
- 2.10 A record is to be kept for each drill, indicating:
  - 2.10.1 Time the drill started;
  - 2.10.2 Time to evacuate and account for all occupants;
  - 2.10.3 Type of fire drill and whether the drill is for the school, daycare or both if applicable (see Procedure section 5.1 below).
- 2.11 All fire drills must be recorded in the maintenance log. Fire drill records must be made available for review by the Fire Department and/or Deputy Fire Marshal.
- 2.12 An assessment of each drill shall be made to determine the success of the drill and possible improvement.

- 2.13 Once the drill is complete, the fire alarm manual pull station shall be reset and the fire alarm control panel acknowledged and reset.
- 2.14 Upon completion of the drill, the principal or designate will contact the alarm monitoring company and the Fire Department Central Dispatch to advise each that the fire drill has been completed.

### **3.0 Persons with Special Needs**

- 3.1 Procedures for ensuring the safety of persons with special needs during a fire drill or emergency situation must be established for every facility.
- 3.2 The principal shall clearly identify in the Fire Safety Plan the persons requiring assistance and the information that will impact their movement. This will define the method for moving such individuals and the resources that are needed.
- 3.3 A person with a special need is not to be left unattended during a fire drill or emergency situation.

### **4.0 Schools with Portable Classrooms**

- 4.1 Schools with portable classrooms that are **not** attached to the main building will:
  - 4.1.1 Develop procedures for notifying staff in portables about fire drills and fire emergencies;
  - 4.1.2 Ensure that evacuation of portable classrooms is incorporated into the fire drill procedure for the main building.

### **5.0 Procedures for Day Care Centres in Schools**

- 5.1 Fire drills shall be conducted for day care centres located within schools once during every month of operation. Six fire drills can be part of the school fire drill; the additional four fire drills can be “silent” drills and must demonstrate readiness.
- 5.2 Silent drills are fire drills that are carried out as per the normal procedures, except than an alarm is not sounded throughout the facility. The options for “silent” drills shall be determined in discussions with the Office of the Fire Marshal.
- 5.3 Daycare fire drills are to be recorded in the fire safety systems maintenance log located in the administration office.