

Health and Safety Policy

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1. Introduction

We regard the health and safety of our staff, students and visitors to be of the highest priority. The provision of a healthy and safe environment is considered to be the shared responsibility of all our staff and students, and accordingly, emphasis is placed on the communication and enforcement of health and safety rules and regulations.

This Health and Safety Policy is explained verbally to all staff and students, with each individual also being notified of the location of the policy. Our Health and Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring that staff and students are correctly informed on health and safety matters.

2. Policy aims

The aims of our policy are to:

- Provide adequate control of the health and safety risks that arise within our environment.
- Prevent accidents and causes of ill-health from occurring within our environment.
- Identify legal requirements as a minimum acceptable level of health and safety performance.
- Provide suitable arrangements for communicating with staff and students on matters affecting their health and safety.
- Provide information, instruction and training on health and safety matters to staff and students.
- Keep accurate records by recording events in the accident/incident logs.
- To review the policy and its procedures on a regular basis to ensure compliance with all appropriate legislation and best practice standards.
- To promote the general awareness of health and safety.

3. General fire protection

Smoke detectors, fire alarms and fire extinguishers are installed within all the facilities which our staff and students use, including Dilke House and the teaching rooms and IT laboratories of Birkbeck College. Fire exits are clearly signposted in all facilities.

Fire drills are practised once a semester.

4. Suspected fires

Any individual discovering smoke, a strong smell of burning, or any smell of an unusual nature should immediately inform the designated Fire Warden or the class lecturer (Birkbeck College).

5. Fire procedure

Any individual discovering a fire should immediately shout 'Fire' to give the alert and then activate the nearest fire alarm.

Upon hearing the alarm, staff and students are to immediately evacuate the facility in a calm and orderly manner, making their way directly to the designated emergency assembly point. In no circumstances should the evacuation be hindered by the collection of personal items. The evacuation will be monitored by the designated Fire Warden or the class lecturer (Birkbeck College). They are responsible for ensuring that the areas under their jurisdiction are evacuated quickly, calmly and completely. As each room is successfully evacuated, the Fire Warden or the class lecturer (Birkbeck College) should close the door on exiting the venue themselves.

No person may re-enter the facility until clearance has been given by the Fire Warden or a member of the Birkbeck College security staff.

Staff and students must be aware of the evacuation procedure, and it is strongly recommended that they familiarise themselves with the location of emergency equipment (such as fire extinguishers) and fire escapes. During an emergency, staff and students should be prepared to assist any visitor who may be unaware of the evacuation procedure.

Overall, fire hazards should be avoided by following basic instructions and precautions, such as adhering to guidance on the proper use of electrical equipment. This includes turning off power points and unplugging appliances after use. Furthermore, staff and students may not bring highly flammable, toxic, explosive or otherwise hazardous materials to the premises.

Fire exits must never be blocked, and any obstruction should be reported to the Health and Safety Officer immediately.

Firefighting should always be a secondary consideration to evacuation. Any used fire equipment must be reported to the Fire Warden so that it can be replaced or recharged.

6. Emergency procedure

It may be necessary to evacuate the facility in the event of a non-fire-related emergency. In such a case, the signal to evacuate will be either the activation of the fire alarm or an order from the Fire Warden or the class lecturer (Birkbeck College).

In such a case, staff and students should follow the same evacuation procedure as explained above.

7. Accident prevention

All staff and students have a duty to work towards eliminating the occurrence of accidents by behaving in a sensible and safe manner.

This includes the need to adhere to all legal requirements and safeguards that govern the use of furniture, equipment and facilities.

Inappropriate, reckless and/or careless behaviour that may cause injury or damage must be avoided at all times, and staff and students should carefully consider their actions before carrying them out.

Specifically:

- Special care should be taken when lifting objects, and it is advised that nothing should be lifted without a prior understanding of the weight involved.
- Standing on furniture is strongly discouraged, as is swinging on or tilting chairs while seated.
- No running is allowed within the facility.

- Electrical equipment should not be tampered with. This includes opening PCs and pulling on power cables.

Any accidents that occur must be reported to the Health and Safety Officer at the earliest safe opportunity. If the Health and Safety Officer is unavailable, then a member of Registry should be informed of the incident. This initial oral report of the accident will later be confirmed with a written report, which will be maintained by the Health and Safety Officer. This written report will guide the Health and Safety Officer in establishing the cause of any accident and pinpointing any necessary precautions to prevent the recurrence of such an incident.

We are protected by automatically renewed Employers Liability Insurance.

A member of Registry is qualified to administer first aid. An accessible and fully equipped first aid box is available on each floor. All staff and students should make themselves knowledgeable as to the whereabouts of the first aid box.

Smoking is prohibited in all venues, as is the consumption of alcohol, drugs or other banned substances.

8. Monitoring facilities for safety and fitness for usage

The Health and Safety Officer is principally responsible for ensuring that all locations are safe to use and remain fit for use. The Health and Safety Officer will undertake appropriate site tours at least once a semester and make a report to the Managing Director with his/her findings and any recommendations.

The Health and Safety Officer shall undertake tours within Birkbeck facilities with the appointed Health and Safety Officer from Birkbeck.

The health and safety of all our staff, students and visitors is of paramount importance. As such, we strictly adhere to the standards set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, so as to ensure the well-being of all those entering our premises.