



Cranbrook Education Campus

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) Policy and Guidance

Plan / Scheme Details	
Plan Written by	Alex Binks
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Introduction

The aim of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is to provide people with any form of disability, who cannot be adequately protected by the standard fire safety provisions within our campus, with a similar level of safety from the effects of fire as all other occupants.

Responsibilities

The Head of Campus, The Head of Secondary and the Head of Primary are responsible for ensuring that a suitable system is in place for identifying children, students and staff who may need additional help in evacuating from the school in the event of an emergency and ensure they are able to offer suitable practical assistance.

The aim is to facilitate independent escape wherever possible.

For children, students and staff, and regular visitors, once it has been identified that a person would require assistance in the event of a fire, the Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan Questionnaire contained in **Appendix 1** will be completed, and the individual's needs determined from the information supplied i.e. the number of assistants (including deputies) and methods used. Specialist training may be required, which will be organised where the need arises, for instance in the safe use of the evacuation chairs.

A simple strategy for providing appropriate assistance will be determined and recorded on the Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan Questionnaire section 4 in **Appendix 1**.

The responsible person preparing the plan should not make assumptions about the abilities of the disabled person. They are likely to know what they can achieve. It is also important though that the disabled person does not feel pressured to do more physically than they would generally be able to achieve. Some negotiation skills, sensitivity and level of discernment are required by the person carrying out the PEEP.

For occasional visitors, contractors, events such as open evenings or school plays etc. a range of standard PEEPs will be used to ensure the safe evacuation of disabled people. **See Appendix 2.**

Supporting Information Pupils

When a child is enrolled Campus the school, their escape plan will be developed as part of the admission process. Care will be taken that all disabled children are provided with a plan if they need one, whether they have been provided with a statement or not.

Children with learning difficulties may need to practice their routes for escape more regularly than termly. If so, this will be written into their PEEP.

All people involved in the escape plans for PEEPs involving pupils will need to practice. However, to avoid unnecessary distress or risk to some pupils, simulated escape will be used where it is more appropriate.

Supporting Information Staff

The Head of Primary and Head of Secondary will undertake a review of existing staff and will complete the PEEP in consultation with the staff member, where the need is identified or when there is a change in a person's ability to make their way out of the building (temporary or permanent).

For all new staff this will form part of the induction process by the Premises Manager. This will be in confidence and it will be made clear that if they need help, it will be provided.

Some people may have difficulty in evacuation situations that they would not normally have e.g. people who have asthma may be affected in smoky conditions caused by fire, or people may be affected by the stress of an emergency situation.

Where a disabled person has elected to make an exceptional effort to get out unaided, it may not be practical for them to practice during drills. However, timing a short section of the escape will assist in establishing how long a full escape might take (see time needed to escape later).

Co-ordinated information

Once each PEEP is written these should be held by the Premises Manager who is responsible for the co-ordination of the evacuation plan. This will ensure that the plans for occupants can be co-ordinated. This is especially important where there is potentially a high number of pupils and staff to evacuate to ensure there is no conflict. The proposals for PEEPs should be shown to any competent person carrying out the schools fire risk assessment as their assistance may be needed in identifying escape routes and refuge points.

Occasional visitors/contractors

The HM Gov publication 'Means of Escape for Disabled People', which is endorsed by the Disability Rights Commission, details escape measures for ten disability groupings:

- Electric wheelchair user
- Wheelchair user
- Mobility impaired person
- Asthma and other breathing / health issues
- Visually impaired person
- Hearing impaired person
- Dyslexic/orientation disorders
- Learning difficulty / autism
- Mental health problems
- Dexterity problems

These groupings have been collated to produce four standard PEEPs for use which are available in Appendix 2.

A prominent notice will be erected at reception, inviting persons entering the premises to declare if they require assistance.



The PEEPs will be held at reception and offered to people as part of the procedures for visitors as an extension to the signing in process.

If a visitor asks for assistance they should be offered an evacuation strategy as follows:

- A** – Mobility / dexterity problems
- B** – Visual impairment
- C** – Hearing impairment
- D** – Cognitive / learning / mental / orientation difficulties

The receptionist will contact the Premises Manager to come to reception in order for the disabled person to choose the escape option to suit them. The Premises Manager will provide suitable instructions and ensure any follow up co-ordination is actioned.

It is the responsibility of the disabled person to identify themselves when they are informed of the availability of a choice of evacuation plan and to cooperate with the campus by giving any information necessary for the safe execution of the plan.

All reception staff will be trained in disabled etiquette. In the main however, visitors to the campus are unlikely to spend time alone. All staff are responsible for ensuring visitors leave the building safely, whether or not they have a disability and should point out the escape routes.

It should not be assumed that because a person has a disability that they will need or ask for a PEEP. Some will be confident that they can get out of the Campus building unaided. Conversely there should be an opportunity for other people who may not be considered as having a disability to request an escape plan e.g. epilepsy, asthma, heart disease or emotional problems.

School plays, performance, public events & open days etc.

In the event of a school play, performance, public event or open day etc. unknown visitors may enter the school and it may be more difficult to gather the information prior to the need to escape. In addition, it may be impossible to know how many disabled people are present at any one time or their level of disability.

In these instances, a system of standard PEEPs will be used and advertised. It is suggested that when letters are sent out regarding events, a similar phrase to the one posted in reception is sent out to give advanced notice of anyone who may need assistance.

Time needed to escape

The appropriate time required to make the disabled person's escape will be identified. Disabled people should not automatically be required to wait for the main flow of escape, but if they are likely to cause obstruction for other people, or there might be a risk of injury to themselves or others, it will be safer for everyone if they follow the main flow of people.

Where a person can make their escape unaided, it may take them longer than the three minutes generally accepted as the time taken for non-disabled people to make their escape in case of fire. They should be given the opportunity to take the safest route, which offers them the longest period of safety, for example through to an adjacent fire compartment, which has a one hour fire-resisting rating, and then down the escape stair, which has a 30- minute fire-resisting rating.

It is important therefore that all school users keep fire doors shut and observe good housekeeping practices to ensure this maximum time is available to them.

General

The provision of suitable assistance is by nature a very practical issue, which calls for a degree of pragmatism. The fact that the school can call on the assistance of physically fit, trained, and capable staff means that it is unlikely that any special measures will be needed to assist with any persons evacuation, other than the provision available from those staff. However, the aim should be to facilitate disabled people's independent escape as far as possible, also this reduces the chances of confusion and the chance of a plan breaking down. In this instances the person may rest along the way in refuges (see below).

It should be made clear to the disabled person that the circumstances of escape are considered to be exceptional e.g. allowing escape by going down the stairs on their bottom would not be appropriate in most circumstances and support or assistance usually given at other times will still be available.

Evacuation in an Emergency

Any staff assisting in the evacuation of the disabled will need to have an understanding of the technical building information, including; the fire safety systems, building layout and fire protection, safe routes and equipment etc. to enable them to fully understand the options open to them and places where they will be safe during the evacuation.

Temporary Refuges

A refuge is a designated temporary safe space where people can wait for assistance. A refuge area must be clearly signed and should be of sufficient size to accommodate both people using it as a refuge and any people passing through on their way out of the building. A refuge may be equipped with a suitable means of communication. Most refuges will only accommodate one wheelchair, but in the event that there is more than one wheelchair user, provided there is a suitable evacuation strategy in place this should not be a problem – as one person progresses on their journey, the next person will take their place in the refuge.

Refuges should only be defined after consultation with a fire surveyor as the requirements for fire separation and structure are very specific and the inclusion of a refuge in the building may also require alteration to your school's Fire Risk Assessment.

A refuge can only be defined if there is also a specific procedure implemented to ensure that users are able to evacuate from the refuge under safe and controlled conditions.

Where the refuges are defined as part of the PEEP any volunteers for disabled who require assistance in escaping need to have a pre-arranged meeting place. If the disabled person is likely to move around the school, a means of communication will be necessary between the escape volunteers and the disabled person. They can then arrange to meet at a particular refuge point during the escape.

In some cases a disabled person may not be able to get to the refuge without assistance, and in this case the volunteer needs to go straight to the disabled person location at the beginning of the evacuation procedure. The assistant could be someone that works closely alongside the disabled person (buddy system) and they can set off on their escape journey together. This is likely to be the case for pupils.

People should never be left in a refuge point to wait for the fire and rescue service, it is the responsibility of the Head of Campus to ensure that all users of the school building are evacuated and not dependent on the assistance of the Fire & Rescue Service.

Lifts

The lifts **cannot** be used in an emergency.

Safe Routes

A PEEP should contain details of the escape route(s) the disabled person will be expected to use.

Communication is also essential and may include the use of telephones, and hand held portable radios etc.

Mobility impaired people

There is a vast range of people who fit into this category, and it may be relevant for people who have heart disease, asthma or heart conditions.

Within this group, many people will be able to manage stairs, and to walk longer distances, especially if short test periods are built into the escape procedure. Consider the provision of suitable handrails e.g. one may be needed to the left or the right side of the stairs depending on the individual, and step edge markings (these would be considered reasonable adjustments and reduce the need for assistance).

Where people will be slower down the stairs or they need to shuffle down the stairs on their bottom, they will need to wait until the main flow of people have been evacuated for their own safety and the safety of others. Wherever possible they should be monitored to ensure that there is no problem with their progress.

As escape within 2 to 3 minutes may not be possible, it is important to explain which escape routes have a degree of fire and smoke resistance and the level of fire protection available.

The Fire Warden should report to the Fire Officer controller that a disabled person is slowly making their way out of the building. This information can then be passed onto the fire and rescue service on their arrival, if necessary.

Carry-down procedures

This may be by:

☐☐ Using an Evac chair or similar

☐☐ Carry down in the person's own wheelchair (carry down by 2-4 people holding the wheelchair at one of the fixed points situated in each corner of the wheelchair)

?? Carry-down using an office chair (a stable chair, preferably one with arm rests carried in the same way as a wheelchair)

?? Carry down using wheelies (tilting the wheelchair on its axis so that it is virtually weightless – some wheelchair users are able to do this unaided). This method is only practical on a short flight of stairs.

None of the above techniques should be attempted without appropriate training. All types of carry-down escape techniques require a risk assessment and professional moving and handling training for the operators.

An important issue to consider when planning means of escape for people who require carry-down by four people is that the width of the stair will need to be sufficient for all of the team to move freely and safely.

Some wheelchair users are strong enough to tip their chair onto its axis and go down the stairs in this way. Others can do this with assistance. Where this method is considered, expert training will be required and the technique should be practiced regularly. Again, the escape should take place after the main flow of people leaves the building. It is only acceptable for short flights of stairs.

Electrically powered chairs

This group is likely to require more assistance, though don't assume this. It may be impractical to expect this group to take their chair with them, due to its size and weight, unless horizontal escape is possible. The use of an Evac chair may be an option here.

Deaf and Hearing Impaired persons

Deaf people working alongside hearing colleagues/pupils may not require special equipment and a buddy system may be the most appropriate method for alerting them of the operation of a fire alarm. This must not be done on a casual basis in case everyone assumes that someone else has given the warning.

Providing they have been made aware of what to do in the event of a fire, they will be able to see and understand the behaviour of those around them.

However, deaf or hearing impaired persons working alone or outside normal school hours may need an alternative method of being alerted to an emergency. For example many alarm systems have visual indicators in the form of a flashing light, or vibrating pager systems can be used.

Sound enhancement systems for alarms/PA systems may also be provided in the school to transmit the message through that system e.g. via a hearing loop or radio paging receiver. Flashing beacons or paging systems are the preferred option (ensure other lighting does not conflict with flashing beacons). Pager systems may also tell them in which direction to travel.

It is advised that flashing beacons are also placed in toilet facilities where a person with hearing impairment may be alone, and may have removed their hearing aid in the toilets in order to clean it.

It is important to consider the deaf and hard of hearing in any sweep of a building by fire marshals. Fire Marshals should not expect a vocal call to be sufficient and should be trained to physically check all areas for which they have responsibility, provided it is safe for them to do so.

A person in this case may become obvious as they do not react in a logical manner during the escape as they may not have heard the alarm. Shouting is unlikely to help. It may be necessary to walk right up to the person and explain what is happening with signs or even a written note or pre-prepared short written instruction.

Blind and Visually impaired people

Staff, Visitors and pupils should be accompanied by designated staff to assist with evacuation and orientation training may also be necessary. People who are visually impaired are helped to escape by the provision of good signage and other orientation clues.

Most visually impaired people have some sight and will be able to use this during the escape in order to make their own way out of the school as part of the crowd. Where the physical circumstances are appropriate, they will have no problems leaving the building.

Consider the use of specialist orientation information e.g. tactile information and audio signals. Other building design features on escape routes or stairs that may assist them are: good colour contrasts, handrails, step edge markings, contrasting nosing on stairs, colour contrasted or different textured floor coverings or way finding information or signs. Visually impaired people will need to be informed of these features as part of the PEEP and information provided in advance of the person starting at the school. Where there is a lack of orientation information staff assistance will be necessary to provide guidance out of the building.

Other than occasional visitors, school plays etc. good familiarisation should take place so that the visually impaired have good orientation information available to them and are aware of alternative routes to leave the building.

Instructions available in Braille, large print or audio tape will assist in providing fire instructions. It can also be useful to provide a tactile map of the escape routes and to provide orientation training to visually impaired staff, pupils or regular visitors.

When school furniture is re-arranged and escape routes are affected, it is important that these changes are documented and made known to visually impaired people in the school.

Assistance for the person and their dog

Where a person uses a guide dog, they may prefer the dog to assist and only need escape routes pointed out to them. Others may request a human assistant so a buddy needs to be allocated. It may also be necessary to provide a person to look after the dog. This may be provided in a formal or informal manner.

Assistance with opening doors

Some people may need assistance with opening doors e.g. upper limb disorders. A formal or informal arrangement can be made here, but the potential for lone working must be considered here.

People with cognitive disabilities

People with cognitive disabilities, including dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism often have problems comprehending what is happening in escape conditions, or may not have the same perceptions of risk as non-disabled people.

Provision of good orientation facilities and measures within the building is essential. There may be a reluctance by some to take an unknown route from the school building. The PEEP should be used to give them an opportunity to understand the possible need for choice and change of direction during an escape.

Orientation information and colour coding of escape routes can also provide a useful tool. Practice of route options can dramatically reduce the requirement for staff assistance. Practice is essential for this group of people, especially in school situations where one person is responsible for a number of pupils. Use of escape routes for general circulation is an advantage as they will be familiar.

This group may need fire instructions read to them or a DVD or video may help. A photographic explanation of the route can also be useful.

It is important to ask the group what they understand and to develop the plan based on how they will find the escape routes.

Sometimes people with cognitive disabilities may move slower than the main flow and there may be a need for a fast and slow lane in an escape stair.

Members of the public who come to school events may have cognitive difficulties and it cannot always be assumed that they will have a carer or helper with them, so efforts should always be made to enable the disabled person to leave the building rather than assume a carer or helper will undertake this role.

It may not be possible to tell that a person has an impairment that affects their ability to orient themselves around the building, and staff should be made aware of such possible situations and to be tactful when assisting a person who may seem lost or unsure of what to do during an escape.



Appendix 1

Personal Evacuation Emergency Plan

Questionnaire (PEEPS)

Section 1. General Information					
Name of person being assessed:			Date:		
Name of assessor:			Position:		
Can you see visual alarm signals?	Yes ☐	No ☐	Can you hear audible alarm signals?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Can you safely use the stairs in an emergency?	Yes ☐	No ☐	Would you use the stairs with assistance?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Please describe your disability or the condition/illness, which means you would require assistance during an emergency evacuation					
Section 2. Visually Impaired Persons					
Do you use any aids or 'assistive' technologies (cane, guide dog, etc) to help you access the building? If yes, please give details.			Yes ☐		No ☐
Can you follow exit signage and leave the building without assistance?			Yes ☐		No ☐
The following questions need only be answered by visually impaired persons with some visual capacity					
Are all escape routes clearly signposted to meet your requirements? If not, please describe what you would require			Yes ☐		No ☐
Where applicable, are escape staircases fitted with adequate colour contrasts?			Yes ☐		No ☐
Section 3. Mobility Impaired Persons					
Do you use a wheelchair and/or other devices to aid your mobility? If yes, please describe.			Yes ☐		No ☐
If you are a wheelchair user, or unable to leave the building unaided, please answer the following questions, otherwise go to Section 4					
Do you use your wheelchair at all times while you are at School?	Yes ☐	No ☐	Do you have a manual chair, or an electric chair?	Manual ☐	Electric ☐
What is the approximate width and height of your wheelchair?					
Would a buddy system be helpful in providing assistance during an evacuation?			Yes ☐		No ☐



Appendix 2

Four Types of (PEEPS)

Emergency Evacuation Strategy – Mobility/ Dexterity Problems

There are upper floors accessible by lifts. As the lift automatically goes to the ground floor and opens when the fire alarm sounds, evacuation necessitates use of stairs.

Our Fire alarm at the Campus is a continuous sounding bell. The activity organiser or the nominated person you are here to visit will brief you on routes for evacuation on each level.

The activity organiser or nominated person you are here to visit will nominate someone to assist or accompany you in the event of evacuation if necessary.

If you have difficulty opening the fire doors assistance will also be provided by the activity organiser or nominated person you are here to visit.

If you are in the building and the normal evacuation route is not available you will need to use the alternate exit. If you cannot negotiate the stairs unaided, you should make your way to the stairwell refuge area (this will be shown to you by activity organiser or nominated person you are here to visit) and assistance will be provided to help you. You can also choose to:

- Make your way down the stairs slowly
- Walk down the stairs using handrails
- Move down the steps on your bottom
- Be carried down the stairs in an evacuation chair

Please advise your host which of the above options you would prefer.

Emergency Evacuation Strategy – Visual Impairment (This may need to be read out)

There are upper floors accessible by lifts. As the lift automatically goes to the ground floor and opens when the fire alarm sounds, evacuation necessitates use of stairs.

Our Fire alarm at the Campus is a continuous sounding bell. The activity organiser or the nominated person you are here to visit will brief you on routes for evacuation on each level.

The activity organiser or nominated person will assist with your orientation and brief you on normal and alternative emergency exit routes and any visual or tactile aids provided.

The activity organiser or nominated person will nominate someone to assist or accompany you in the event of evacuation if necessary.

If you have difficulty opening the fire doors assistance will also be provided by the activity organiser or nominated person you are here to visit.

If you are in the building and the normal evacuation route is not available you will need to use the alternate exit. If you cannot negotiate the stairs unaided, you should make your way to the stairwell refuge area (this will be shown to you by activity organiser or nominated person you are here to visit) and assistance will be provided to help you. You can also choose to:

- Walk down the stairs using handrails
- Move down the steps on your bottom
- Be carried down the stairs in an evacuation chair

Please advise your host which of the above options you would prefer.

Emergency Evacuation Strategy – Hearing Impairment (this may need to be given to the visitor)

The activity organiser or nominated person will assist with your orientation and brief you on normal and alternative emergency exit routes and any visual or tactile aids provided.

The activity organiser or nominated person will nominate someone to assist or accompany you in the event of evacuation if necessary.

Our normal fire alarm is a continuously sounding bell.

Fire wardens and site staff will be advised of your presence and check to ensure that you have evacuated the building in an emergency.

Emergency Evacuation Strategy – Cognitive, Learning, mental, orientation difficulties (This may need to be read out and given to the visitor)

There are upper floors accessible by lifts. As the lift automatically goes to the ground floor and opens when the fire alarm sounds, evacuation necessitates use of stairs.

Our Fire alarm at the Campus is a continuous sounding bell. The activity organiser or the nominated person you are here to visit will brief you on routes for evacuation on each level.

The activity organiser or nominated person will assist with your orientation and brief you on normal and alternative emergency exit routes.

The activity organiser or nominated person will nominate someone to assist or accompany you in the event of evacuation if necessary.

If you have difficulty opening the fire doors assistance will also be provided by the activity organiser or nominated person you are here to visit.

If you are in the building and the normal evacuation route is not available you will need to use the alternate exit. If you cannot negotiate the stairs unaided, you should make your way to the stairwell refuge area (this will be shown to you by activity organiser or nominated person you are here to visit) and assistance will be provided to help you. You can also choose to:

- Walk down the stairs using handrails
- Move down the steps on your bottom
- Be carried down the stairs in an evacuation chair

Please advise your host which of the above options you would prefer.