

Arson Prevention Policy Huntspill Federation



Date of last review:

Next review date: 12th December, 2018

Approved:

Signature.....*James Peate*..... Date: 12th December, 2016

Position held: Headteacher

Introduction:

How serious is the problem?

Arson accounts for 21% of fires in premises nationally. The incidence of arson in all types of premises is increasing and is recognised as a major cause of fire. This policy is addressed primarily at the person who has overall responsibility for premises. It aims to alert those responsible and working in the premises to the possible dangers of arson attacks and suggests means by which such a potential can be reduced.

Premises Vulnerability:

Premises may be vulnerable to arson attacks due to:

- The ease of access to sites
- Vandalism
- Poor housekeeping

Reduction in the incidence of arson will benefit everyone by:

- Providing a safer environment for staff and visitors
- Ensuring that buildings and facilities are not lost due to the effects of fire
- The damage done by fire can be very costly, taking financial resources away from the provision of other needs
- Not all arson is preventable but where possible its effects will be minimalised.

Responsibilities of all staff

Staff are obliged to adhere to this policy. The Premises Manager is responsible for ensuring that the staff for whom they are responsible are aware of and adhere to this Policy.

The Premises Manager is also responsible for ensuring that staff are updated in regard to any changes in this Policy.

The Premises Manager will recognise the cause and effects of arson and will encourage measures recommended to combat arson and will promote good practice.

Staff are aware of the possibility of arson and will politely challenge strangers and report anyone of whom they have suspicions.

Combustible materials will be stored securely and waste not allowed to accumulate.

The Headteacher will ensure that this Policy is accessible and up-to-date.

Staff will ensure that a high level of security is maintained to prevent unauthorised access and that legitimate visitors can be identified and access controlled.

Procedures to prevent the possibility of arson are to be implemented and regularly reviewed. (See Appendix 1 Arson Prevention Checklist)

Staff are to investigate any outbreak of fire and if there is any suspicion that arson could be the cause, any material evidence should be safeguarded for the attention of the Police/Fire Service.

Fire Safety Advisor will make recommendations to the staff regarding arson prevention measures. Fire risk assessment of premises will take into account the risk from arson and the measures to minimise the risk.

Fire safety training will include arson awareness and prevention.

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

Guidance developing an Action Plan against Arson

Once the arson risk has been assessed, the next priority is to address the weaknesses identified. These may not all require significant financial resources but may involve housekeeping or training issues.

The Premises Manager is the person with overall responsibility for initiatives against the threat of arson. The arson prevention strategy is to be incorporated in the Premises' Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Log Book and supported and endorsed.

Action Plan Process:

The prevention of arson attacks falls into a logical process:

1. Deter unauthorised entry onto the site:

- Discourage unauthorised entry onto the site by the use of signs and by delineating where practicable the boundary of the premises by use of a robust fence and/or shrubs
- Ensure the premises is adequately lit externally during the hours of darkness
- Remove any graffiti that appears on the premises without delay. If left to accumulate, vandals and arsonists will begin to view the site as being a legitimate target of little or no value
- Schools foster good relationships with neighbours, who are able to observe unlawful activity at the premises when closed. Neighbours are asked to contact the Police if they witness such activity.

Alternatively contact

Crime stoppers on Tel: 0800 555 111,
Calls are free (except for some mobiles)
And the caller will remain anonymous.

- Consider getting involved in local neighbourhood watch schemes. Vandals are less likely to attack a school if there are strong ties with the local community.
- Where sustained vandalism or deliberate fire setting occurs at a premise, the installation of a monitored CCTV system should be considered.
- It is common practice for car thieves to deposit stolen vehicles on playing fields before setting fire to them.

2. Prevent unauthorised entry into the building:

- The weakest points of entry into the premises are the windows and doors. Their vulnerability needs to be regularly reviewed and replaced as considered necessary
- Ensure all external doors are fitted with approved locks and secured immediately the building is vacated
- Ensure door frame construction is sound and of good quality

- Consider letterboxes being fitted with metal enclosures on the inside to prevent damage arising from the introduction of burning materials
- Check all external glazing for damage both on security and safety grounds
- With the premises being used out of normal hours and opening to a wider public, it is imperative that access to the other parts of the premises is limited
- Make regular checks of areas where there are flat roofs to ensure there are no breaches of security in particular skylights.
- Consider the installation of an intruder alarm system

3. Reduce the opportunity for an offender to start a fire:

- Take every opportunity to eliminate combustible material on the outside of the building
- Refuse/ recycling bins to be placed in a secure compound or alternatively secured by padlock and chain *no less than 6 metres* (where possible) from the premises building to prevent them being moved against the building. Ensure regular collections of such materials
- Sheds and other external buildings to be locked and sited *at least 8 metres* away from the Premises
- Ensure that any waste bins are not fixed to walls or under roofs constructed of combustible materials, but secured to the ground away from the premises building
- Avoid placing combustible materials on window sills as a common method of attack is to break a window and set fire too combustibles within reach
- Check that shrubs and undergrowth is not allowed to encroach against buildings as they are when dry a source of ignition

Remember! Rubbish is an ideal fuel for an 'Arsonist'

4. Reduce the scope for potential fire damage:

- Nominated person to ensure that all external doors and windows have been locked once the premises has been vacated at the end of the day
- Ensure that contractors working on site have limited access to the whole building wherever possible
- Consider the preparation of a disaster recovery plan

5. Reduce subsequent losses and disruption resulting from a fire by preparing a disaster recovery plan (Crisis Management Plan).

- Well maintained fencing can be considered use less if trees are allowed to grow next to it as these will assist in gaining access over the fencing
- Ensure perimeter fencing is maintained in good order to deter unauthorised access to your site.

Using Prickly Plants as a Defence

The range of plants listed below are an attractive means of protecting your property, and are readily available from garden centres and nurseries. Consider planting a selection of these specially chosen plants as an alternative or addition to fencing.

Prickly planting is a visual deterrent and a physical barrier intended to complement and not replace traditional crime prevention measures such as locks, alarms and lighting.

Home-grown security can be adopted to protect all perimeters of your property and form a barrier around drainpipes and ground floor windows, making forced entry more difficult.

Good hedging plants:

- *Berberis x ottawensis* - Medium-sized deciduous shrub. Up to 6ft high. Red berries in autumn.
- *Berberis x stenophylla* - Medium-sized evergreen shrub. Up to 6ft high. Golden-yellow flowers in spring; black berries in autumn.
- *Crataegus monogyna* (Common Hawthorn) Used extensively throughout UK as hedging. White flowers in spring; red 'haws' in autumn. Plant as an impenetrable hedge.
- *Ilex x aquifolium* (Common Holly) Excellent hedging plant, usually grown as tree or bush. Up to 50ft high.
- *Prunus spinosa* (Blackthorn or Sloe) Large dense shrub, good for hedging. White flowers in spring; blue-black fruits in autumn.
- *Rosa rugosa* (Rubra) Dense shrub, good for hedging. Up to 6ft high. Perpetual flowering wine crimson flowers; red 'heps' or berries.

Plants to be trained up a wall:

- *Chaenomeles x superba* (Pink Lady) Small to medium sized deciduous shrub. Up to 6ft high. Grow trained against a wall. Rose pink flowers in spring; yellow quinces in autumn.
- *Pyracantha* (Orange Glow – Firethorn) Evergreen Shrub. Up to 16ft high when trained up wall. White flowers in spring; orange – red berries in autumn/winter.
- *Pyracantha* (Golden Charmer – Firethorn) Evergreen Shrub. Up to 16ft high when trained up wall. White flowers in spring, orange – yellow berries in autumn.

Shrubs:

- *Mahonia x media* (Winter Sun) Tall evergreen shrub. Up to 10ft high. Yellow flowers in autumn; blue-black berries in winter.
- *Hippophae rhamnoides* (Sea Buckthorn) Tall deciduous shrub. Up to 10ft high. Grows on any soil, providing a good windbreak. Silver, willow-like leaves in summer; orange berries in autumn.
- *Ulex europaeus* (Common Gorse) Dense, evergreen, spiny shrub, Up to 5ft high. Golden yellow flowers. Good on poor soil.

Policy produced using extracts from the Arson Prevention Bureau's publication 'How to Combat Arson in Premises'

Appendix 1**ARSON PREVENTION CHECKLIST**

The questions in the checklist are addressed primarily to those responsible for day-to-day management of premises, e.g. Headteachers, Premises Managers, Bursars, Site Managers/Supervisors and Caretakers. Whilst the checklist will address the majority of issues for consideration, not all questions will be relevant for all premises and it may need to be adapted for specific locations or situations.



MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES	Yes	No	N/A	Comments / Action
Is there any history or evidence of fires being started deliberately on the premises?		✓		No evidence of fires being started deliberately on the premises.
Are you in contact with the County Councils Fire Officer, Fire Service Fire Protection Officer and the police Crime Prevention Officer? Is their advice sought and implemented as far as possible?	✓			Advice from the Senior Safety Officer and Fire Advisor has been sought with regard to the Arson policy.
Have you discussed any problems you can foresee in implementing their advice with the officers?		✓		We do not foresee any problems in implementing their advice.
Are all employees aware of fire and security problems, the protective strategies which are adopted to counter them and the contributions which they can make?	✓			All employees are made aware of the protective strategies which are adopted by the school.
Do you have a procedure to ensure that all fires are reported, investigated and recorded?	✓			Premises are checked daily by the Caretaker and recorded.
Do you know what hazardous materials are kept on the premises and do you keep them only in reasonable quantities?	✓			Hazardous materials are kept to a minimum and are kept in a locked outdoor cupboard.
Are chemicals (including gases) and highly flammable materials, kept locked away in properly designed secure stores?	✓			All gas cylinders are kept in locked properly designed secure areas.
Is the store kept locked at all times and the keys held by a responsible person?	✓			Store is kept locked at all times and the key is held by Caretaker.
Are there arrangements to limit waste paper and other combustible materials in which a fire can be started?	✓			Waste paper and other combustible materials are removed from the school classrooms and offices on a daily basis

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST HAZARDS	Yes	No	N/A	Comments / Action
Outside the building:				
Is combustible waste placed in a secure bin store away from the building?	✓			All combustible waste is placed in a secure bin. All waste is stored away from the building.
Is the space under raised huts/mobile classrooms protected against accumulation of litter / dry vegetation?	✓			Spaces under raised classrooms are protected against accumulation of litter/dry vegetation.
Are advance arrangements made for reception of stores deliveries and for goods to be put into store without delay?	✓			All deliveries to reception are stored as soon as the caretaker comes in.
Are there any openings through which burning materials could be put?		✓		There are no openings through which burning materials could be put
Are any windows, doors of buildings vulnerable to external fire?		✓		There are no windows or doors vulnerable to external fire.
Are windows (even those protected by bars) kept closed in unoccupied parts of the building?	✓			All windows in unoccupied buildings are kept closed and locked.
Are windows kept in good repair and are breakages quickly dealt with?	✓			Windows are kept in good repair.
Are letterboxes protected on the inside with sheet metal boxes?			✓	There are no letterboxes on the premises.
Are doors in good repair and without gaps through which burning paper could be pushed?	✓			All doors are kept in good repair without gaps.
Are fuel tanks kept in secure enclosures with locked valves?	✓			The school only houses gas which is kept in locked cages.
Is there easy access onto roofs via drainpipes, walls / fences, outbuildings etc?		✓		There is no easy access to roofs via drainpipes etc.
If present, are perimeter fences / gates secured and provide an adequate deterrence?	✓			Gates are locked at night.
Are outbuildings secured?	✓			All outbuildings are locked at night except for our outdoor classroom which is an open area.
Is the site easily accessible by the public and trespass a problem?	✓			The site is easily accessible by the public. Trespassing is not a problem as gates are locked at night.

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST HAZARDS	Yes	No	N/A	Comments / Action
Inside the building:				
Is there an automatic fire detection or sprinkler system?	√			All areas of the school have fire detectors and an automatic alarm is raised in an emergency.
If so, is it linked to the Fire Service?		√		No, the Fire Alarm is not linked to the Fire Service.
Does the fire alarm sound at a point from which action can be safely taken?	√			The Fire Alarm is heard all over the school.
Do employees, particularly the caretaker / site supervisor, know what action to take if the fire alarm sounds?	√			All staff and students receive fire practice once a term.
Are the necessary arrangements made to ensure that the fire alarm system is quickly reset after operation?	√			Arrangements are in place for the fire alarm system to be quickly reset after operation.
Is the fire alarm system properly maintained and tested?	√			The fire alarm system is maintained and tested annually.
Is there an intruder alarm with a monitored link to an alarm receiving station?		√		There is no monitored link to an alarm receiving station.
PRECAUTIONS AGAINST HAZARDS				
End of the working day / closing the building:				
Do employees ensure that work / classroom materials are put away tidily?	√			Employees ensure work/classroom materials are put away tidily.
Is valuable equipment and cash secured?	√			Valuable equipment is locked away and any cash is secured in a locked cupboard.
Are electrical appliances and equipment including that in craft rooms, workshops, kitchens and offices disconnected from the supply?	√			As many electrical appliances as possible are disconnected after use.
Are windows and doors closed and locked to deter intruders and restrict the spread of fire within the building?	√			Windows and doors are locked to deter intruders and restrict the spread of fire.
Are all rooms, including toilets, checked for intruders?				

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST HAZARDS	Yes	No	N/A	Comments / Action
End of the working day / closing the building:				
Are heating, lighting and ventilation services etc. shut down as far as practicable? (Note that some lighting may be needed for security reasons).	√			Heating, lighting are shut down as far as practicable.
Is rubbish collected and removed to a safe place at the end of each day?	√			The caretaker removes all rubbish from the classrooms at the end of each day.
If present, are the fire and/or intruder alarms set?	√			The Intruder alarms are set when the school is closed.
If present, is external lighting and / or CCTV working?	√			Automatic external lighting when it becomes dark.
Are the gates to the premises locked shut?	√			The gates to the premises are locked each evening.
PRECAUTIONS AGAINST HAZARDS				
Outside normal operational hours:				
Is the building open to the local community outside of normal operational hours?		√		The building is not open to the local community outside of normal operational hours.
Is there a problem of unauthorised / forced entry to the site?		√		There is not a problem of unauthorised entry to the site.
Is there a telephone readily available to authorised users of the premises outside normal operational hours?	√			There is a telephone readily available to authorised users of the premises outside normal operation hours.
Are people using the premises briefed about fire precautions and locking up the building when they leave?	√			All people using the premises are briefed about fire precautions and locking up the building.
Without blocking escape routes, are people locked out of parts of the building they have no need to enter?	√			There are secure areas of the school where there is no need for the public to enter.
Do caretakers / cleaners understand the fire risks of rubbish and of cleaning materials?	√			The caretaker/cleaner understands the fire risks of rubbish and of cleaning materials

