



“I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness.”
John 10:10

Arson Prevention and Fire Safety Policy

Policy reviewed:	<i>22/2/2017</i>
Next review:	<i>Spring 2020</i>
Signed (Headteacher):	<i>R. Kaye</i>
Statutory policy: <i>Yes/No</i> On school website: <i>Yes/No</i>	

ARSON PREVENTION AND FIRE SAFETY POLICY

(Policy produced using extracts from the Arson Prevention Bureau's publication "How to combat Arson in Schools" at www.firesafe.org.uk/how-to-combat-arson-in-schools)

1. Introduction: how serious is the problem?

Arson accounts for 21% of all fires in premises nationally, and for 25% of fires in school buildings. 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.

2. 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 the following:

- 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 – these costs will be reduced.
- Not all arson is preventable but where possible its effects will be minimalised.

3. Responsibilities of all staff

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

The Headteacher is also responsible for ensuring that staff are updated in regard to any changes in this policy.

The Site 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.

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 A: Guidance on developing an Action Plan against arson.)

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.

The 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.

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

4. Fire prevention

Fire safety training

At Christ Church we ensure that all staff are trained in basic fire prevention and premises evacuation procedures. Fire safety training will include arson awareness and prevention.

Fire Marshals

In addition to this, named staff are trained as Fire Marshals:

- 1) Rupert Kaye, Headteacher (trained: 24.1.16)
- 2) Sara Lodge, School Business Manager (trained: 24.1.16)
- 3) Kay Throup, Site Manager (trained: 24.1.16)
- 4) Emma Penney, Nursery Senior (trained: 24.1.16)
- 5) Lucy Hamilton, Nursery Nurse (trained: 24.1.16)

General housekeeping

- The Site Manager will ensure flammable materials are correctly stored.
- The Site Manager will carry out, and record, weekly fire alarm tests.
- The School Business Manager carries out a termly fire drill during the school day.
- All staff are aware that there is to be no smoking at any time on, or close to, the school premises.
- Access/escape routes are clear and unobstructed at all times.
- Fire notices, fire alarm call points, firefighting equipment, emergency exit signs or lights are visible and unobstructed at all times.
- Combustible materials will be stored securely.
- Rubbish and recycling is regularly removed from classes and placed in industrial wheelie bins with lids that are located in a fenced area at least three metres from school buildings.
- Combustible waste be collected regularly and not allowed to accumulate.

Hot work

With regard to hot work (soldering, welding, cutting metal with a grinder, work with hot tar on roofs, etc.), it may only be carried out by the holder of a Hot Work Permit, who has:

- first sought permission on the day from the School Business Manager, Headteacher or Site Manager, and
- in accordance with Health and Safety guidelines and Somerset CC policy.

Displays

With regard to class and corridor displays we follow the guidance set out in the school Display Policy:

- Individual display boards should be no longer than three metres.
- Individual display boards on the same wall should be separated by a gap of at least one metre.
- In corridors, display boards should not be located immediately opposite each other.
- Hanging displays should not cross from one wall to another and must never be suspended from ceilings, light fittings, projectors, heaters or any fire safety equipment such as smoke detectors or sprinkler heads.

5. Review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

APPENDIX A: GUIDANCE ON DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN AGAINST ARSON

1. Start the action planning process

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.

The prevention of arson attacks falls into a logical process as detailed in the following sections.

2. 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 are 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 **Crimestoppers on 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 premises, 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.

3. 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.

4. 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 should be placed in a secure compound or alternatively secured by padlock and chain no less than six 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 eight metres away from the main building.
- 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 to 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!

5. 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.

6. Reduce subsequent losses and disruption resulting from a fire by preparing a Disaster Recovery Plan (Crisis Management Plan)

- Well-maintained fencing can be considered useless 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.

7. Using prickly plants as a defence (see Appendix B)

- The range of plants listed in Appendix B is an attractive means of protecting a 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.

Appendix B: PLANTS AS A DEFENCE

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 a wall. White flowers in spring; orange-red berries in autumn/winter.
- *Pyracantha* (Golden Charmer – Firethorn) – evergreen shrub. Up to 16ft high when trained up a 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 in 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 in poor soil.