

# Date Valley School

Company number: 06845508 Registered Charity number: 1136298  
Mitcham Court, Cricket Green, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 4LB  
Telephone: 0208 648 4647 · Tel: 07980299717 Email: [managingdirector@dvst.org.uk](mailto:managingdirector@dvst.org.uk)



## Arson Prevention Policy

### **Definition and Introduction:**

Arson, as defined by the Criminal Damage Act 1973, is “the unlawful damage by fire of property belonging to another”.

School fires, accidental as well as malicious, are all too common. In 1996 local authority Fire Brigades attended 2,003 school fires, of which 70% were thought to have been started deliberately. Evidence from research carried out by the Arson Prevention Bureau suggests that this is not the full picture as fire brigades are not always called to fires, particularly if they self-extinguish or are put out by staff.

### **Aims and Objectives:**

At Date Valley School we will aim to minimise the risk of arson, both during and after school hours, which may result in personal injury and damage to school property.

### **Five Point Action Plan:**

The prevention of arson attacks falls into a logical process:

- Deter unauthorised entry onto the site
- Prevent unauthorised entry into the building
- Reduce the opportunity for an offender to start a fire
- Reduce the scope for potential fire damage
- Reduce subsequent losses and disruption

#### **1. Deter unauthorised entry onto the site:**

- Perimeter floodlights cover outside grounds and parking spaces
- Use signs to make it clear to would-be intruders that they are on private property and for neighbours to see clearly that people are within the site boundaries
- Patrols by either commercial or local authority security teams can be effective. Such patrols should be random in order to avoid a recognised pattern. If such a service is used, close liaison should take place with the Police
- Any graffiti that appears on the school premises will be removed immediately. (If left to accumulate, vandals and arsonists may begin to view the site as being a legitimate target of little or no value)

#### **2. Prevent unauthorised entry into the building:**

- Ensure intruder alarm system (Red Alert) is maintained and fully functional, and connected to a call monitoring centre. Any problems with setting the alarm should be brought to the attention of management immediately
- Letterbox should be permanently sealed, and an external mailbox/petrol proof mail box should be fitted
- Low level windows/glass should be toughened or film added to strengthen them
- Last person to leave the building should make sure all windows are shut, blinds and doors are shut
- Look into the installation of CCTV cameras if need be

- Foster good relationships with neighbours, as they are able to observe unlawful activity at premises when closed. Neighbours should be asked to contact Police or call Crimestoppers free and anonymously on 0800 555 111 or Cricket Green Safer Neighbourhood Team on 020 8649 3576
- School to be involved in neighbourhood watch schemes

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

- Keep outside areas clean and visible at all times
- Remove any potential fire hazards like rubbish and debris immediately
- Trim shrubs and vines to reduce areas of concealment
- Wheeled bins to be secured and clear of the building, by at least 8 metres
- Where possible, bin lids to be secured outside of school hours
- Regular collections to avoid accumulation of combustible material
- Office to be informed immediately if no collection made on the allocated day so that a call can be made to Commercial Waste (020 8545 4012)
- External litterbins not to be fixed to the building, but secured to the ground away from the building, and ideally be of metal
- Avoid placing combustible items on windowsills. A common method of attack is to break a window and set fire to combustibles within reach
- Shrubs and undergrowth should not be allowed to encroach against buildings. In the summer, vegetation often becomes tinder dry and will burn vigorously
- Prickly planting can be a visual deterrent and a physical barrier intended to complement but not replace crime prevention measures

### **4. Reduce the scope for potential fire damage:**

- Equipment of high material value, such as laptops should ideally be located in a secure, separate room where it will be out of sight and better protected in a fire
- Spray sheds close to the building with Fire Retardant spray
- Ensure Fire Detection System is fully functional
- Fire doors are present in the building to limit fire damage and so must always remain closed
- Fire extinguishers are located throughout the building
- Extinguishers are checked annually by approved contractors (CF Fire Protection)
- Termly fire drills are held with clear routes for exit and meeting points identified
- Door guards are used on doors that are generally open during the day, and shut automatically upon the fire alarm being activated
- Last person to leave the building to ensure all doors leading outside are locked
- Look into Sprinkler System if required

### **5. Reduce subsequent losses and disruption from a fire:**

- Members of staff are adequately trained in fire procedures, which are outlined in the Fire Evacuation Plan given at the beginning of each academic year to all staff and during the induction for new staff, students and volunteers

This policy has been read and approved for Date Valley School, by the School Principal and the Date Valley Trust Policy Committee.

Date: June 2013