



**THIS POLICY COVERS ALL ACADEMIES/SCHOOLS WITHIN
ARDEN MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST**

Name of Policy	Arson Prevention Policy	
Lead	Martin Murphy, CEO	
Governor Committee	Business & Personnel Committee	
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	MPM reviewed on 10 th July 2019 A Smith reviewed May 2020 to reflect new H&S provider (Southalls)	



Introduction

How serious is the problem?

This policy is addressed to the trustees/governors, and all staff working at the Trust. It aims to alert those responsible and working in Trust schools to the possible dangers of arson attacks and suggests means by which such a potential can be reduced.

The problem in schools and communities throughout the UK is a serious one with many fires being attributed to arson. Arson is the cause of 50% of commercial property fires in the UK. Many such fires result in consequential loss, such as the destruction of school/academy records, teaching notes, course work and in some instances the need to find alternative accommodation.

Who are the Arsonists?

Arson is committed for a variety of "reasons" and there are many kinds of arsonists. Arsonists may not be strangers to the school/academy but children and adolescents feature prominently. Fires in most schools/academies are most likely to be started by pupils, ex-pupils or their friends, or others with knowledge of the school/academy.

The Arson Bureau's research shows that the great majority of malicious fires take place outside school/academy hours with a peak at around 11.00pm. Of the individuals prosecuted or found guilty each year for offences, almost half are aged 10-16. Girls as well as boys may be involved.

1. Arden Multi-Academy Trust vulnerability

Assessing the Trust's vulnerability to arson attack

Fires started deliberately can be particularly dangerous because they behave unpredictably. Waste products kept outside the building can be a potential target for arsonists (NB: bins and other combustible storage areas should be kept at least 6 meters away from the building and 10 meters from escape routes or in a secure holding to prevent unwanted access). Storage facilities such as outbuildings are also a target for arsonists. Vegetation allowed to overgrow onto buildings can thus heighten the risk of fire spread.

2. Action plan

Action plan against arson:

- Continued vigilance by the site management team to ensure access to the site only by authorised persons.
- Ensure that waste containment bins are not fixed to walls or under roofs constructed of combustible materials, but where possible stored away from Trust buildings or within a lockable containment area.
- Ensure all external user collection bins are emptied daily and the containment bins have operational lids.
- Ensure intruder alarm systems are in place with monitoring stations and police response.

The Associate Headteacher has overall responsibility for initiatives against the threat of arson.

Action plan for the prevention of arson attacks:

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 Trust buildings by use of a robust fence and/or fence.
- Ensure Trust buildings are adequately lit externally during the hours of darkness.
- Remove any graffiti that appears on Trust 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.

Prevent unauthorised entry into the building.

- The weakest points of entry into Trust sites, like all schools throughout the UK, are the windows and doors. Site team check closing procedures nightly to ensure all doors and windows are secured.
- Ensure all external doors are fitted with approved locks and secured immediately after the building is vacated (part of Site Staff 'Lock Down and Open Up systems).
- Ensure door frame construction is sound and of good quality.
- With Trust buildings being used out of normal hours and opening the premises to a wider public community, it is imperative that access to areas not authorised for their use are controlled by the site team.
- Site team make checks of flat roofs to ensure there are no breaches of security, where practicable.
- Site team regularly check intruder alarm system (weekly) and intruder alarm provider services annually.

Reduce the opportunity for an offender to start a fire.

(Part of site management team day-to-day working practices.)

- Take every opportunity to eliminate combustible material on the outside of the building.
- Remove waste from every local bin on site and place into the containment bins before the end of every day greatly reducing the combustible material available.
- Refuse/recycling bins to be placed in a secure compound or alternatively secured by padlock and chain (recommended distance is *no less than 8 metres* from the buildings) to prevent them being moved against the building. Ensure regular collections of such materials, particularly during holiday periods.
- Sheds and other external buildings to be locked and sited, where possible, *at least 8 metres* away from buildings.
- Ensure that any waste bins are not fixed to walls or under roofs constructed of combustible materials, but secured to the ground away from buildings.
- Avoid placing combustible materials on internal 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 a source of ignition when dry.

Reduce the scope for potential fire damage.

- Ensure that children do not bring cigarette lighters, e-cigarettes and matches into school.
- Ensure teachers are aware of the danger of children being unsupervised in cloakrooms and corridors (part of Teachers H & S training).
- Keep all candles and matches when not in use securely out of the reach of the children and opportunist vandals.
- All staff have a duty for good housekeeping to ensure their work areas have reduced fire loading materials accessible or poorly managed resources.
- Nominated person to ensure that all external doors and windows have been locked once buildings have been vacated at the end of the day.
- Ensure that contractors working on site have limited access to the whole building wherever possible (part of Contractors Working on Site agreement).

3. Remedial action plan

- Arden Multi-Academy Trust is covered by the Health and Safety Policy produced by Southall's Health and Safety consultants.
- Mandatory Staff training on Southall's Safety Cloud includes Fire Safety Awareness e-learning module which covers arson and how to spot potential hazards.
- Southall's audit each premises within the Trust once per annum for fire and twice per year for health and safety; actions are assigned to departments which can include housekeeping/fire loading.

4. Conclusions

Good 'housekeeping' is the key to reducing the risk of arson with items that need action being implemented upon the completion of each review in a time frame that will minimise the risk of an arson attack on Trust buildings.