

**Schools Fire Safety advice for Lancashire Education Authorities and those managing these types of premises during the Covid 19 period.**



**FAO: Head Teachers, Chair of Governors, Persons responsible for Fire Safety, Estates and Facilities Managers and their Teams:**

As the UK follows Government guidance to respond to the Coronavirus Pandemic, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), as the enforcing authority for fire safety, would like to take this opportunity to offer you support and guidance around your ongoing duties under the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order (RRO) to continue to ensure your staff and premises remain safe from fire.

Fire safety should remain at the forefront of any business continuity planning arrangements during this period. Detailed guidance for fire safety in educational premises can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-in-new-and-existing-school-buildings/fire-safety-in-new-and-existing-school-buildings>

Across Lancashire we are unfortunately seeing deliberate fires and break-ins during the isolation period. We are also seeing malicious fires which are spreading quickly from stored waste or other materials into adjacent buildings (significantly exacerbated by the dry and windy weather). Some of these fires have occurred at educational sites, and have involved outdoor facilities as well as buildings themselves.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that whilst your building/s are unoccupied, or being used in a reduced capacity, it is vital that security and the associated risk of Arson is consciously considered.

We are advising all education providers to ensure security and arson risk are considered within the fire risk assessment review process. We would ask you to re-evaluate your fire risk assessment and emergency procedures and to record any significant findings; with a specific focus on things that have changed recently which might now make your premises more at risk from an arson event and moreover to take action to reduce that risk .

In addition to the review of the fire risk assessment, the following questions may provide some assistance when considering fire prevention and protection of the building from factors such as the risk of arson, risk from electrical fire etc. whilst partially or fully closed.

## **SECURITY MEASURES**

- Is there an intruder alarm installed?
- Is alarm remotely monitored?
- Is there a staffed security presence?
- Is there external security lighting?
- Is interior lighting in place?

## **PHYSICAL SECURITY IF CLOSING**

- Have any potentially vulnerable access points been suitably protected?
- Are all perimeter barriers in good repair?
- Are all existing doors and door hardware in good repair?
- Are all existing windows in good repair?

## **ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERATIONS**

- Is there a plan for controlling the shutdown?
- Have the building's insurers been notified?
- Are routine inspections planned?
- Have keyholders been nominated?

## **HOUSEKEEPING and HEALTH & SAFETY**

- Has a risk assessment been done?
- Has the health and safety of security staff been addressed?
- Has all refuse been removed from the interior of the building?
- Has all refuse been removed from the external site areas?
- Have any skips been removed from the site?
- Have all non-essential services been disconnected or isolated?
- Has electrical safety been assessed? (Overloaded electrical sockets / appropriate use of extension leads etc.)

Interim measures addressing fire safety management will be of a temporary nature in response to the current Covid-19 situation. Once business as usual commences the fire safety measures should again be reviewed, and normal procedures implemented, if deemed appropriate or revised to ensure they are suitable and sufficient for the establishment.

Further advice and guidance can be found on our website where there are a number of free resources available for your use. If you would like to get in contact with one of our Business Safety Advisors who may be able to advise further, email [BSA@lancsfire.org.uk](mailto:BSA@lancsfire.org.uk) or contact your local police station.

A simple Arson Vulnerability Assessment template is available at: <https://www.lancsfire.org.uk/safety/business-safety/business-fire-safety-during-coronavirus-outbreak/>

Further advice and support is at:

<https://www.lancsfire.org.uk/safety/business-safety/>

<https://vault.ecloud.co.uk/lancsfire/2019/10/Arson-Booklet-2019.pdf>

<https://www.lancsfire.org.uk/safety/business-safety/guidelines-for-businesses/arson-prevention/lancashire-police-arson-prevention-guidance/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-educational-premises>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

We fully appreciate the ongoing effort you're giving to your community and please accept our utmost gratitude during these challenging times.

**LANCASHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BUSINESS SAFETY TEAM**