

THROUGH THEIR EYES

Arson

TEACHERS' NOTES



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THROUGH THEIR EYES

SLIDE 4

Fires

This session is about fire: the impact it has on those directly affected by the fire; on those responsible for causing the fire: the people who know them; the risks for the Fire Service; and what we can all do to avoid or minimise risks in the event of a fire.

Ask the group if anyone has had an experience of a fire and whether they can talk about it. This tells you as a teacher if there are pupils who may be affected by the content of this session. If they can be given, first-hand accounts contribute a reality to the discussion.

The most serious and devastating consequence of fire is the loss of life: Most people, who die in fires, die from the toxic gases, thick smoke, and lack of oxygen. In a fire, breathing even small amounts of these toxic elements can be disorienting, causing some people to pass out. In the year 2020-2021, 249 people died in fire in the UK.

In addition, many people sustain serious, sometimes life changing injuries in fires: Certain groups of people are more at-risk of being affected by a fire than others. The most vulnerable groups of people include adults 65 years or older, children under the age of 5 years, and people with disabilities. In the same year, 6,387 people were injured in fires.

Fire is also life changing in terms of:

Families devastated, by the death or injury caused to loved ones.

Death or injury of pets, animals will be as affected by inhaling the smoke and toxic gases, as their owners.

Loss of home/workplace, whole buildings can be damaged beyond repair.

Damage to property, furniture, furnishings, and the content of homes, may be ruined by the fire or by the use of water to quench the fire.

Personal effects, can be lost in the fire, such as important documents like birth certificates/passports, treasured photographs, devices, books.

Financial costs, may be covered by insurance, if the building owner has this. Additional costs will include the cost of finding somewhere else to live or the loss of one's livelihood if the fire has affected a business.

Shock and trauma caused by a fire may affect people for years to come, in terms of their well-being and mental health.

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SLIDE 5

Accidental fires

While fires can be caused accidentally, an awareness of common causes of accidental fires can reduce the number of fires and their damaging consequences. Ask the group to name common causes of accidental fires.

The most common causes of accidental fires are:

Careless smoking, examples such as: smoking in bedrooms; smoking at times when the smoker is drowsy or unwell or confused and may forget to extinguish the cigarettes properly; using shallow ashtrays where cigarettes butts might be knocked over on furniture or floors, they can smoulder for hours.

Cooking equipment, examples such as: when a pan overheats and splashes grease, it can take seconds to cause a fire; using oil at high temperatures; leaving combustibles, such as cloths or tea towels, close to the heat; leaving cooking unattended.

Heaters, examples such as leaving portable heaters near curtains or furnishings; drying clothes on heaters.

Electrical equipment, examples such as: overloading plugs into a socket; wires which are worn or damaged. In older houses, the wiring can become brittle and cause an electrical fire.

Candles, examples such as: candles left near curtains or furniture; within reach of children or pets; or left in rooms unattended.

Flammable liquids, examples such as: paint; fuel; solvents; cleaning agents; all give off vapours, which can travel some distance and can ignite at high temperature or with a spark.

Christmas decorations, examples such as: trees near heat sources which dry out and burn more easily; frayed wires on Christmas lights; candles near decorations.

Barbecues, examples such as: poorly cleaned/maintained gas barbecues; barbecues near tree branches, tablecloths; barbecues in garages or on dried countryside.

Batteries, examples such as: batteries which can start fires if left in pockets with keys/metal objects which cause a short circuit; batteries can overheat in devices left plugged in and unattended, and cause fires if they are on combustible surfaces, a sofa or a bed.

Tumble dryers, examples such as: a build up of fluff blocking the filter can cause the dryer to over-heat and start a fire.

Aerosol cans, examples such as: if these are left in the sun on window sills or on the ground, they have the potential to explode and start a fire.

Children playing with fire, examples such as: playing with matches or a lighter; or when they are upset or angry and seek to be destructive.

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SLIDE 6

Fires which are caused deliberately.

Arson is the illegal burning of a building or other property

Fire setting is a complex pattern of behavior, in which a child or adolescent starts fires, either accidentally or intentionally. Young people who smoke cigarettes or vape are more likely to be carrying matches, lighters, or sources of ignition of a fire. The fact that they are not allowed to smoke cigarettes and/or vape, can contribute to them doing so in more concealed places away from the adult view. This may then be a fire risk.

Children and young people start to play with fire for various reasons, ranging from natural curiosity in toddlers, to older children using fire setting to express feelings of anger or emotional distress. Young people may be less aware of the common causes of fire, and of the extent and speed with which fire spreads. This may be a factor in them being less mindful of the risk of fire.

The most common reason given, is fire play and the majority of people cautioned or found guilty of committing arson are male and aged under 18 years. When a fire is set deliberately, this is a crime, which can endanger life and buildings.

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SLIDE 9

The law with regard to selling cigarettes and vapes

It is against the law to sell tobacco products, cigarettes and loose tobacco, and vapes, to young people under 18 years.

The owner of a shop and the member of staff that made the sale can be held responsible.



SLIDE 10

"You have been in the shop before, haven't you? I remember you. I told you last time, and I'm telling you again, that you're too young to buy tobacco or cigarettes you are under age. So clear off and don't come back again."

The shopkeeper is right to refuse to sell cigarettes to Tyler.

Why is there a law limiting the sale of cigarettes and vapes?

- Cigarette smoking is the main cause of preventable deaths, approximately 1 in 5 deaths.
- People who smoke are more likely to develop heart disease, stroke, and lung cancer. It increases risk likelihood by: heart disease 2-4 times; stroke 2-4 times; lung cancer 25 times.
- Smoking affects a person's overall health: it can affect a baby's health before and after birth; affect teeth and gums leading to tooth loss; can cause diabetes type 2 and make it harder to control; increase the risk of cataracts, clouding the lens of the eye; causes general inflammation of the body and decreases immunity; and is a cause of rheumatoid arthritis.
- Most e-cigarettes, known as vapes, contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and harms adolescent brain development. Each time a new memory or new skill is developed stronger connections (synapses) are built between brain cells. Young people build synapses faster than adults. Nicotine changes the way synapses are formed and can increase the risk of future addiction to drugs. Brains are developing up to age 25 years.
- They also contain other substances which are harmful for example, nickel.
- Young people, who use vapes, are more likely to smoke cigarettes in the future.
- Vapes can be used to deliver marijuana and other drugs, taking young people nearer to regular drug use.
- Young people may turn to cigarettes or vaping in times of stress or anxiety, and this can create a nicotine dependency. Stopping using nicotine leads to temporary symptoms of nicotine withdrawal such as irritability, restlessness, anxiety, depression, trouble sleeping/concentrating, and cravings for nicotine.

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SLIDE 11

The fire in the bin area behind the shop gets out of control, the building is on fire.

What are the possible consequences? It would be helpful to the group to give them prompts to think about the wider consequences of the fire, such as: buildings, people, risks from the fire, time needed, costs, witnesses, future of the area, individual guilt/shame, shock and stress of those involved.

People who work in the shop or live in flats above the shops, may die or be injured

Their homes may be destroyed

The shop will be destroyed

The shopkeeper is traumatised

The shopkeeper has lost his livelihood

The smoke/toxins in the air will affect the health of people with asthma or lung disease

The firemen take risks to put out the fire

The time dealing with a preventable fire, takes the fire service away from other emergencies

Nearby buildings and cars may have been damaged by flames, smoke or falling debris

The damage has to be cleared up and the area made safe which will take time

There will be a cost to the whole community for the clear-up of the damage

The shops may not be replaced, which will be a loss to the community

The shopkeeper will remember Tyler, and identify him and Ella as possible suspects

Leo may be a much-needed witness with regard to who might have caused the fire

Ella will experience shame and guilt for her part in the cause of the fire

Tyler has caused a preventable damaging fire

He may be identified and may be charged and get a criminal record

His family will be ashamed of him

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SLIDE 14 - 19

Leo is shocked and anxious

Leo is torn between.....

Interest in a local fire

"How could this have happened?"

Thoughts that he was seen there before the fire

"Someone is bound to have seen me and Tyler and Ellie."

Doing nothing

"I didn't see anything, so I could just leave it."

Doing something

"I could ring up and say I was there and there was no fire then."

Telling a lie, if asked if he was with anyone

"Then they might say it was me."

Telling the truth about his suspicion it was Tyler

"Tyler had a lighter, he was well angry with the shopkeeper, it could be him."

He asks "Now what should I do.....? What do you think he should do?"

Ask the group their views about:

What Leo should do and why?

What should Ella do?

What should Tyler do?

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SLIDE 22

The things about fire that people don't always know.....

It spreads faster than you think

It disrupts everything. We have to evacuate the buildings.....stop traffic.... and fight the fire

It burns materials and buildings, the way things burn cause more problems,like molten plastic dripping.....aerosols and canisters that explode....and smoke which cuts off your oxygen and kills you, often before the flames reach you

It kills people and causes painful life changing injuries

The firemen are in danger too

If there is a fire, all you can do is.....

Listen and follow the instructions in fire drills

Know your fire exits and always keep them clear

Always be mindful of the risk of fire, it can start anywhere...in the shops as you have seen.... in your school... in the countryside....in your home

When there is a fire..... get out...stay out... and report it.

Fires can be hugely dangerous. Have a discussion with the class about Fire drills in school.

How often do they have one?

Can they name the school Fire Safety Officer?

Where is their assembly point?

What things could they do to contribute to fire prevention in school?

Ideas such as:

- Look at the Fire safety signs in school
- Know where the fire exits are in relation to the rooms on their timetable
- Never putting furniture, boxes, bags or coats, in front of exits
- Putting waste paper in the bin
- Take fire drills seriously and listen to staff
- Never bringing flammable liquids, matches/lighters, vapes into school
- Being prepared to report risky behaviour by others?

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SLIDE 23

What can be done to prevent/react to fire in the home

After this session, suggest that the group have discussions with their family
.about these tips with regards to fire

1. Working smoke alarms reduce the chances of dying in a fire by nearly 50 percent. They are a critical first step for staying safe.
2. Consider installing a smoke alarm that has a 10-year battery.
3. Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn, and always blow them out when you leave the room or before you go to sleep. Never use candles in bedrooms, unless supervised by an adult.
4. Use common sense in the kitchen. Limit distractions when cooking and don't leave a hot oven or pans cooking unattended.
5. Have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen in case of emergency, and make sure you know how it works.
6. Know how to respond to the sound of a smoke alarm. It is always best to make sure that everyone know that when you hear it, get low (smoke rises) and get out.
7. Practice feeling the door, doorknob and cracks around the door with the back of your hand, if there is a fire, this is the way to see if they are too hot.
8. Have a family plan and practice with two ways out of your house in case of a fire. It is important to have an alternate exit, in case one is blocked by fire.
9. Choose a place to meet outside, that is a safe distance away from your home.
10. If you cannot safely escape your home or apartment, keep smoke out of the room by covering vents and cracks around the door and call 999 as quickly as possible. Then know to signal for help at the window with a light-coloured cloth or a flashlight.

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