

Fire Setting Policy

Roselyn House School

2026 – 2027



Approved by:	Jack Birkenhead	Date: 07/06/2026
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1.Aims

The LCC Fire and Rescue Service works with children and young people each year who have been identified as being a risk and/or at risk from fire play or deliberate fire setting. This educational intervention can be part of a voluntary agreement with parents or carers (within the Firewise scheme/ Fire Intervention Response Education Scheme (FIRES) or a mandatory intervention as part of a court order for children over the age of 10.

Educational intervention within the Firewise/ FIRES scheme can range from one visit up to as many as 10 visits over many months. The LCC Fire and Rescue Officer seconded to LCC Youth Justice Service is responsible for the delivery of 10 prescribed sessions over a number of months. In total, Firewise/ FIRES and Youth Justice cases can generate between 200 and 300 educational sessions each year.

Young people with fire setting behaviour present a high risk to themselves and other people, but most children raise fires out of curiosity. It has been established that the education of both children and their parents is the most effective way of tackling this issue. Some children start fire setting from the age of 3 with the behaviour peaking at 8 years and another peak at age 13 years. This can be either as part of anti-social behaviour or seeking excitement. The majority of children who set fires are boys, with a ratio of 4 or 5:1 against girls.

If the behaviour is not treated, then it can continue into adulthood.

Fire setting in children is often linked with other factors of social exclusion and persistent fire setting behaviour tends to be linked with less stable homes including factors such as absent fathers, poor supervision, harsh or inconsistent discipline, violence and parental substance misuse. It may be managed in one environment e.g. residential care but may re-emerge if the child returns to their home environment and the underlying behaviour is not addressed.

Some tell-tale signs of fire setting behaviour:

- Small burns in the carpet.
- Charred paper in sinks and bins.
- Matches or lighters hidden in a child's bedroom.
- An unusual fascination with fire.
- Inexplicable fires in or around the home.
-

Motivation for fire setting behaviour is a key issue. It is seen as arising from:

- Curiosity.
- Excitement and attention-seeking behaviour.
- Angry, frustrated or revengeful feelings.
- Being part of a group of delinquent or gang fire setters.
- As a result of mental illness.

A good preventative service may help to deter the behaviour leading to the setting of more serious fires and address child welfare and protection issues. Once the child develops a reputation for fire setting this can have serious implications for their future care and education. It is important that re-assessment takes place to ensure that this is addressed as behaviour improves.

In a specialist SEMH setting, fire-setting behaviour may also be linked to trauma, adverse childhood experiences, emotional dysregulation, attachment needs, neurodevelopmental needs, mental health difficulties, impulsivity or risk-taking behaviour. These factors will be considered when assessing risk and planning support for pupils.

2. School Response to Fire-Setting Incidents

Any fire-setting incident, attempted fire-setting, possession of ignition sources, unexplained burning, or concern regarding a pupil's welfare will be treated as a significant safeguarding and health and safety concern. Staff will take immediate action to make the area safe, remove ignition sources where it is safe to do so, notify a senior leader and ensure pupils, staff and visitors are protected from immediate risk. Parents/carers will be informed where appropriate, unless doing so would increase risk to the pupil or compromise safeguarding procedures.

Where a fire has been started, smoke is present, or there is an immediate risk of fire, staff will follow the school's Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation Procedures. Emergency services will be contacted where required, and all relevant actions will be recorded and reviewed by the senior leadership team.

Staff will take immediate action to make the area safe, remove ignition sources where it is safe to do so, notify a senior leader and ensure pupils, staff and visitors are protected from immediate risk.

3. Initial Referral

If the police, any professional or member of the community becomes aware of any fire setting behaviour by a child or young person they should refer to LCC Fire and Rescue Service. Consideration should be given to completing an Early Help Assessment. Following the outcome of this assessment a referral to Social Care or Police may be required. Where there are clear concerns about significant harm, a referral should be made immediately to Social Care. For any young person over the age of 10 years a referral to LCC Youth Justice Service should be considered.

Any fire-setting concern will also be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.

When the Fire and Rescue Service become aware of a child/young person's fire setting behaviour they will consider whether there are any safeguarding issues for the child and whether there are any immediate hazards. If this is the case, they should refer to Social Care.

Where the motivation for fire setting is seen as a curiosity and there are no other child welfare issues the Fire and Rescue Service will offer an education service and take no further action.

4. Inter-agency Assessment

Where the motivation is seen to be other than curiosity and there are other child welfare issues, the Fire and Rescue Service will refer the child/young person to Social Care for an assessment under S17 or S47 of the Children Act 1989. This should be accompanied by a completed risk assessment using the Fire Setters Motivation Questionnaire. (see appendix 1)

If it deemed appropriate, Social Care will make a referral to CAMHS. This should be accompanied by a copy of the initial or core assessment and the SFRS risk assessment. Parents will be informed that this will be undertaken, and their agreement sought.

Following any confirmed or suspected fire-setting behaviour, the school will complete and regularly review an individual risk assessment. Control measures may include enhanced supervision, environmental checks, removal or restriction of access to ignition sources, behaviour support strategies and multi-agency intervention.

The school will work collaboratively with parents/carers, Fire and Rescue Services, Social Care, CAMHS, Youth Justice Services and other relevant professionals to assess risk, implement support and review progress.

5. Recording, Safeguarding and SEMH Considerations

All fire-setting concerns, possession of ignition sources, attempted fire-setting incidents and related safeguarding concerns will be recorded on CPOMS and reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where fire-setting behaviour appears linked to self-harm, suicidal ideation, emotional distress, trauma or significant mental health concerns, immediate safeguarding and mental health support procedures will be followed.

Any fire-setting incident occurring during a behavioural crisis, positive handling intervention or restrictive physical intervention will be recorded and reviewed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy.

6. Staff Training and Responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will oversee fire-setting concerns, referrals, record keeping and multi-agency liaison. Staff will receive appropriate training and guidance relevant to their role, including safeguarding, fire-setting awareness, trauma-informed

practice, risk assessment, CPOMS recording procedures and positive behaviour support.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

This document will be reviewed every year, but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary. It will be reviewed by **Mr Jack Birkenhead (Headteacher)** in consultation with the wider school community. Monitoring will include an annual review of fire-setting incidents, behavioural trends, safeguarding records, risk assessments and multi-agency outcomes.

8. Linked Policies

This policy is linked to the following policies and documents:

- Behaviour Policy
- Suspensions, Alternative Provision and Placement Review Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Online Safety Policy

Appendix 1

FIRE SETTER (MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE) RISK ASSESSMENT

This assessment is for use by Fire Officers to ascertain the level of concern of young people involved in fire setting.

Many children and young people light fires. If you have lit fires you might like to complete this questionnaire. If you do it will help us to:

- Tell you what it means
 - Help you to stop setting fires to things
 - Get help for you with any other problems you may have
-

Your name:

Your age:

Today's Date:

Gender:

YOU CAN FILL IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE BY SIMPLY PUTTING A RING AROUND YOUR ANSWERS

For example:

OFTEN

SOMETIMES

NEVER

Thank you for your help.

Section 1: WHAT HAVE YOU SET FIRE TO? Please **CIRCLE** your answers

1	Have you ever set a fire?		YES	NO
2	Have you played with matches?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
3	Have you set small fires in your home area?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
4	Do you stay to watch a fire after you have lit it?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
5	Have you set fire to a pile of rubbish?		YES	NO
6	Have you set fire to paper in your bedroom?		YES	NO
7	Have you set fire to a dustbin?		YES	NO
8	Have you set fire to other people's things at home?		YES	NO
9	Have you set fire to a rubbish skip?		YES	NO
10	Have you set fire to curtains?		YES	NO
11	Have you set fire to grass?		YES	NO
12	Have you set fire to a haystack or a barn?		YES	NO
13	Have you set fire to an empty building?		YES	NO
14	Have you set fire to a car?		YES	NO
15	Have your fires caused any damage?		YES	NO
16	Have you set fire in your own home?		YES	NO
17	Have you set fire to someone else's home?		YES	NO
18	Have you started a fire with petrol or other bomb?		YES	NO
19	Have you set fire to a school?		YES	NO
20	Have you set fire to a factory or warehouse?		YES	NO
21	Have you set fire to a shop, pub or cinema?		YES	NO
22	Have you set fire to a library, hospital etc?		YES	NO
23	Have you set fire to a building with people in it?		YES	NO
24	If you have set fire to something other than the above please write it here.		YES	NO

Section 2: ABOUT MY FIRES

1	If you light a fire you get caught	HARDLY EVER	QUITE OFTEN	ALWAYS
2	My fires are accidental	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
3	Have you set fires to deliberately destroy things?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
4	Do you light fires when you are upset?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
5	Do you set fires after problems at school?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
6	Do you set fires when you are bored?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
7	Does lighting a fire make you feel better rather than talking about your problems?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
8	Do you set fires when you are angry?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
9	Do you set fires when things have gone wrong at home?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
10	Do you plan out your fires carefully in advance?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
11	Have you set fires that the police would like to know about?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
12	Do you dream about fires?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
13	Have you accidentally burnt yourself?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
14	Do you enjoy watching things burn?		YES	NO
15	Do you usually light fires ...	ALONE	WITH A FRIEND	WITH A GROUP
16	Would you like to burn down your school?	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
17	Does a fire help you to get your own back on people?	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
18	Does lighting a fire get rid of angry feelings?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
19	Do you enjoy watching fire engines?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
20	How many of your fires have lit fires?	A LOT	A FEW	NONE
21	Does a fire make you feel excited?	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
22	Are you blamed for fires that you didn't light?	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
23	Do fires help you to get rid of problems on your mind?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
24	Do you feel guilty after you have lit a fire?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
25	Do you think about fires during the day?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
26	Do you get worried about a fire before you light it?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
27	Do you set fires to get you own back on people?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER

Section 3: ABOUT MYSELF

1	Do you feel fed up with living?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
2	Have you ever taken something that wasn't yours?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
3	Do you really hate school?	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
4	Do your parents understand you?	MOSTLY	SOMETIMES	NEVER
5	Do you find it difficult to get on with others?	YES	SOMETIMES	NEVER
6	Are you upset about things at home?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY
7	Are you in a gang?		YES	NO
8	Is there someone living at home that you don't like?		YES	NO
9	As a person, do you think that you are:	A FAILURE	IN BETWEEN	SUCCESSFUL
10	Do you miss school through truanting?	A LOT	SOMETIMES	NEVER
11	I have lit fires for	A YEAR OR LESS	1 – 4 YEARS	5 OR MORE YEARS
12	Have other people in your family also lit fires?		YES	NO
13	How many spare time hobbies and interests do you have?	NONE	A FEW	QUITE A LOT
14	How many fires do you think you have started?	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 20
15	How much help have you had to stop lighting fires?	A LOT	SOME	NONE
16	Would you like to be able to stop lighting fires?	YES	SOMETIMES	NO

Appendix 2

Fire Setting Behaviour

