



Case Study: Schools Safety Education Programme Source: Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service

Summary

This case study sets out to show how Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) has successfully engaged with schools to improve the safety of Children and Young People in Hampshire.

Background

During 1995 HFRS decided to present all schools with a Fire Safety Education Programme for teachers to deliver. Following evaluation, despite its comprehensive links to the relevant National Curriculum subjects, this resource did not get used and remained outside of work deemed relevant for teachers to deliver. The Service needed a strategy that successfully gets these life-saving messages to children in schools, raises the profile of fire safety within the education arena, reduces arson and prevents death and injuries.

What we did

HFRS held discussions with the LEA and decided to employ a seconded teacher who would develop an education programme that would be more realistic for teachers to access. This, initially, needed to be a universal delivery, to raise the profile of safety education to all schools and empower teaching staff and parents to share the responsibility of educating their children and pupils. A commitment was made for HFRS staff to deliver actual lessons to Year 5 and 6 pupils, alongside school staff, to springboard the learning and then provide follow up activities and resources.

This strategy worked. Teachers' appraisal forms reported that we had got it right; parents were supporting their children with homework challenges relating to fire safety in the home and pupils were remembering the messages that we were teaching.

We spoke at Head Teachers and Staff training days, wrote articles in education newsletters and journals and soon it became apparent that all schools wanted this and saw value in working in partnership with HFRS, as the professionals, in this way.

A dedicated team was established and the programme extended to include the other Key Stages. Schools signed up included those in Special Education settings and the private sector. We also began working with children educated outside of school, being either excluded, or educated at home.

Key outcomes

We have carried out a number of comprehensive evaluations of the Schools Education Programme. As a result, the programme is continually evolving and the 'learning outcomes' remain current and appropriate. The programme currently covers Fire Safety and Burn Prevention, Arson Awareness, Road Safety, and Water Safety.

All of our new resources, initiatives, teaching modules, website games and activities are evaluated by teaching staff and pupils. We ask for feedback on the appropriateness in terms of current school/national priorities e.g. Every Child Matters and Healthy Schools. We ask about the interaction and interest stimulated and the ability to inspire follow up work.

All learning outcomes are evaluated using age appropriate evaluation tools. Pupils' knowledge gained and retained is recorded along with pupils' changes in attitudes before and after a visit. Information which, in turn, informs us in all our future planning.

We record any reduction in secondary fires, malicious calls or deliberate setting off of fire alarms if they have been highlighted as a problem in the school and its immediate community.

Our challenge to continue to improve

Despite having become well established as an excellent resource for schools, working with over 97% of pupils at each stage of their education and making a valuable contribution to our own corporate aims, we realised that we had to be even more cost effective. Our challenge was to introduce a strategy that didn't just drop the strong partnerships we had made with schools, but enabled us to target the correct level of resource according to need and slip into more of a supporting role to those schools that were not highlighted as a priority.

We analysed data from our own Arson Task Force and Fire Setters Intervention Team, as well as our partners in the Road Safety Teams and the Police Authority, to prioritise areas to target. We acknowledged local data and knowledge and were able to identify a catchment area to a school that could be at risk, or be attended by pupils at risk. Consequently money is now spent on high quality early prevention work in an attempt to eradicate or at least limit the need for, often more expensive, intervention work later on, where attitudes and behaviours are often well established.

Resources

The diverse team still has a seconded teacher as its Education Adviser, with all the benefits of joint training opportunities for staff, access to current changes in education policy, including distribution of resources and funding. The work of the team is now integrated within Hampshire's CYP plan as well as our own. Other members of the team include part time operational Fire Officers on a primary contract working alongside non-operational staff with an educational background. This is a cost effective model which does not compromise either the credibility or professionalism of the programme.

We currently have two Education Fire Engines, a Home Safety Vehicle, and more recently an Arson Awareness Vehicle, that support our programme and education events during School Holidays. We also have a portfolio of lesson plans, activity ideas, a range of educational games and equipment and a Kidzone website that provide a foundation for all our work with Children and Young People across Hampshire

Key contact

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