



Welcome!

Autumn 2022

To our Autumn edition of the Schools Stay Safe Newsletter.
Read on for advice on ways to stay safe for you and your family.

Chimney Safety in your home

As the colder months approach, we look to heating our homes with a cosy fire. But have you had your chimney swept lately?

Chimney sweeping is recommended in October and February due to frequency of use during the winter period and build-up of soot in the chimney breast.

To keep your family safe, follow these guidelines:

- Keep chimneys and flues clean and well maintained.
- Make sure embers are properly put out before you go to bed.
- Always use a fire guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers.
- Be aware that chimneys that have been lined still require regular sweeping.

How often should you clean your chimney?

- Oil - Once a year.
- Gas - Once a year.
- Bituminous coal - Twice a year.
- Wood - Up to four times a year.
- Smokeless coals - At least once a year.





Halloween and Fancy Dress

Do you know the dangers around Halloween costumes catching alight? It is good to know the likelihood can be avoided with a few simple steps.

Advice for parents

- Check that all Halloween and fancy-dress costumes you buy carry a CE or UKCA mark on the label.
- All Halloween and fancy-dress outfits should always be kept away from fire, lit candles, and all other naked flames.
- Do not carry pumpkins with lit candles inside, consider using battery-operated candles instead.
- Children should always be supervised by a suitable adult.
- Homemade fancy dress costumes or those not tested to the same flammability standards may ignite easily and burn quicker.
- Ensure children can be seen in the dark. Think about wearing something reflective such as a reflective strip, and carry a torch.

[Fire Chiefs urge care and caution with children's costumes \(nationalfirechiefs.org.uk\)](http://nationalfirechiefs.org.uk)



Fireworks

Firework displays at home can be great fun, but it is important they are used safely. Children tend to get hurt rather than adults so you must keep them safe!

Sparklers can get almost 5 times hotter than cooking oil and should not be given to a child under 5.

- Always buy fireworks from a reputable shop and ensure they conform to British Standards – check they have BS7114 written on the box.
- Do not buy them from an unlicensed market stall or anywhere you are not sure about.
- The public can buy and set off most fireworks that fall under categories 1 to 3.
- Always read the instructions carefully.
- Ensure you have plenty of room to set them off.
- Make sure there is only one person in charge of the fireworks.
- Don't drink any alcohol until they have all been set off.
- Never return to an unlit firework, it could still be live.
- Make sure you extinguish all embers before going to bed.
- Consider going to an organised event instead.



NFCC and BBA urge families to think twice about home firework displays.



Carbon Monoxide

As we approach the colder months, we all look to putting the heating on again. It is vital that you service and maintain your boiler once a year. It will prolong the life of your boiler and may protect you from harmful carbon monoxide gases.

If you have a carbon monoxide detector installed at home, it will alert you to a leak immediately.

You should test it once a week where possible. If your detector sounds you should:

- Stop using all appliances and evacuate the property immediately (try to stay calm and avoid raising your heart rate.)
- Call the National Gas Emergency Service number on 0800 111 999 to report the incident or the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Gas Safety Advice Line on 0800 300 363.
- Not go back into the property (wait for advice from the emergency services.
- Get immediate medical help.

[Carbon monoxide: general information - GOV. UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Did you know?

- Carbon monoxide does not have a smell.
- It is known as a silent killer.
- It is highly poisonous and is a flammable gas.
- Home boilers that are installed incorrectly, and the use of BBQs and portable generators inside homes can produce carbon monoxide.
- A brief exposure to small amounts of carbon monoxide may cause headache, flushing, nausea, dizziness, vertigo, muscle pain or personality changes.
- Exposure to higher amounts may cause movement problems, weakness, confusion, lung and heart problems, loss of consciousness and death.

If you need any further information or advice on any of these topics, please feel free to call our friendly staff at your local station:

- **Borehamwood**
020 8258 1101
borehamwood.fire@hertfordshire.gov.uk
- **Hatfield**
01707 346900
hatfield.fire@hertfordshire.gov.uk
- **Potters Bar**
01707 346100
pottersbar.fire@hertfordshire.gov.uk
- **Welwyn Garden City**
01707 343500
welwyngardencity.fire@hertfordshire.gov.uk