

## Dear Parents and Guardians,

Due to an increase in fires in Ontario in 2022, the Otonabee-South Monaghan Public Fire and Life Safety team is asking for your help. In normal times, we routinely meet with students face-to-face to teach to them about fire safety. In current times and for optimal impact, we are urging all parents, guardians and caregivers to regularly review the principles of fire safety with all children in your care and implement the basics of Fire Prevention, Detection and Home Escape Planning within your home.

**PREVENTION** | Please discuss the following educational safety messages with children and all members of your household:

- Practice safety in the kitchen by never leaving the kitchen while cooking, as unattended cooking is the number one cause of fires in Ontario. If a fire occurs on a stove top pan or pot, safely slide a lid or baking tray over the fire to smother it, and turn off the element once covered.
- When charging electronic devices, charge them on non-combustible surfaces rather than surfaces such as beds or under bed sheets.
- Candles should ideally be battery operated, but if using traditional candles, they must only be lit by an adult. The candle should be in a container that doesn't tip easily. Once lit, candles must be kept away from anything that can burn. And, remember to blow them out before anyone leaves the room.
- Space heaters and other heating equipment should be plugged directly into a wall, placed away from combustible items, and not left unattended.

**DETECTION** | Only working smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms save lives. Demonstrate and discuss the importance of knowing the sound of smoke and CO alarms to all members of your household.

- A working smoke alarm must be located on every storey of the home, and outside of all sleeping areas and a CO alarm should be installed outside of all sleeping areas of the home. Ideally, every bedroom should be equipped with a smoke alarm and all smoke alarms should be interconnected.
- Test these life saving devices monthly and replace them by the date that is shown on the side or back of the alarm (as per manufacturer specifications, usually, 8-10 years for smoke alarms and 5-10 years for CO alarms). If you have a fire emergency in your home, a working alarm will give you and your family the time needed to get out safely.

**ESCAPE** | A well practiced home escape plan will support your family's safe evacuation from the home in the event of an emergency.

- Discuss and prepare a home escape plan with all members of your household.
- Practice it twice a year. We encourage you to practice this by sounding a smoke or carbon monoxide alarm with your pets nearby, and gathering all members of your household who may need assistance to evacuate.
- Choose a predetermined meeting place outside, in front of your home and educate all family members to never go back inside for anything. Always go to the meeting place once you hear the alarms. Never leave the meeting place to call 9-1-1 until at least 2 people are there, so everyone can safely be accounted for.
- Call 9-1-1 once you and your family are safely outside.
- If unable to evacuate your home, gather your family in a room with large window, close and seal the door behind you, call 9-1-1 and provide your address and location. All scenarios should be discussed and practiced ahead of time.

Thank you for being fire safe and reviewing these important fire safety messages with the children in your care. Please take the time now to sit with all members of your family and make fire safety a priority within your home. The life you save could be your own!

As always, if you have any questions, please contact our Fire Department.

Yours in Fire Safety,

Fire Chief Chuck Parsons

Public Educator Cara Wood

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