



Derbyshire
Fire & Rescue Service
Making Derbyshire Safer Together



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| Press Release

Press release from **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service** and **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Authority**

Making Derbyshire Safer Together

9 OCTOBER 2020

SECOND SCHOOL FIRE TO BE DETERMINED AS DELIBERATE

A joint fire investigation into the cause of a fire at St Mary's School in Darley Abbey has concluded that the most probable cause of the fire was a deliberate ignition by the introduction of a naked flame.

Firefighters were called to attend the fire at St Mary's School at 05.24 hours on Saturday 3 October 2020, but despite the best efforts of the fire crews attending, sadly the school was destroyed.

The fire at St Mary's came only 48 hours before fire crews attended another deliberate school fire, this second fire being at Ravensdale Infant School in Mickleover.

Speaking following the conclusion of the fire investigation, Derbyshire's Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Gavin Tomlinson said: "The last week has seen two devastating fires at schools in the heart of our communities.

"I am angered to hear that both fires were started deliberately. Unnecessary distress has been imposed on the children attending those schools, their parents and the teaching staff who work tirelessly to provide our children with the education they are entitled too.

"I am equally angered that these fires happened when there is a simple fire safety solution that would prevent, or reduce such devastation which causes huge emotional and economic loss.

"Alongside the National Fire Chiefs Council I will continue to lobby government to call for a change to fire safety legislation for schools - to mandate that sprinklers will be fitted in all new and refurbished schools. This would bring England in line with Scotland and Wales."

"Sadly my campaign for a change in legislation can't alter what has happened to the communities affected by the fires at St Mary's and Ravensdale Infant Schools and similarly at

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Gavin Tomlinson MBA MIFireE
Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive



Harrington School, Long Eaton in May, but I can assure everyone that I will do everything within my power to prevent other schools being affected in this way.

“The community spirit that I have witnessed from those affected by these senseless fires has been amazing and really does demonstrate that any school is at the heart of a community.

“Everyone working at Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service, whether they be the firefighters who responded, the control operators who dealt with the calls, or our professional support teams, all work to Make Derbyshire Safer Together and prevent such incidents – so on their behalf, once again I would like to send our thoughts to everyone affected and say we all look forward to seeing you come back better and stronger.”

A police investigation into the deliberate fire will continue.

Anyone with any information can contact Derbyshire police on 101.

ENDS