

**TEACHERS PACK**



**by Mark Wheeler**

A theatre-in-education programme for  
Year 8 pupils to deter arson attacks

**STOPWATCH**  
T H E A T R E C O M P A N Y

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**Thank you** for inviting StopWatch Theatre Company to perform Arson About by Mark Wheeler in your school. We understand that organising events likes this can cause significant disruption to the school timetable, so appreciate your help in making our visit happen. These pages should tell you everything you need to know about our visit.

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### **What is it?**

Arson About is a theatre-in-education programme for Year 8 students about the consequences of Arson. It tells the story of a typical incident in a school that culminates in tragedy.

### **How does it work?**

It is delivered in a single 75 minute session which comprises a 45 minute play and 30 minute workshop. It may only be performed to Year 8 students, with a maximum group size of 200 per performance.

### **What is the story?**

Ian, his girlfriend Molly and his best mate Stueey are on a night out to the fair. But hanging over the 2 boys is the accusation that one of them has been sending threatening notes to a teacher. They decide to go into their school after evening classes have finished to investigate. But when Ian has to make a choice between his girlfriend and his best mate, he is literally playing with fire. His wrong decision causes Molly's death and widespread destruction of the school. We see the consequences on Molly's family, and the boys themselves as the police investigation begins.



### **What will the students learn?**

When the play has finished the audience learn more about the problem of arson and resolve the story of the play. The first section uses forum theatre to establish the potential consequences of deliberately started fires. Then Ian and Stueey are interrogated by the audience to find out why they behaved as they did. When the audience find them both guilty, the consequences for themselves, their victims and the community at large are graphically demonstrated, and the audience are left with chilling proof that Fire Kills.

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## What do I need to do on the day?

- Don't tell the audience what it is about - the element of surprise is important!
- Do allow only Years 8 to participate – other age groups are not suitable and may be disruptive
- Do set up the chairs according to our seating plan before we arrive, or make some assistance available when we arrive
- Do ensure we have sole access to the hall 60 minutes before the start time. We will be setting up lighting and sound equipment, and require 3 mains power points
- The production uses one short blast from a smoke machine – COSHH data sheet is available
- Do bring the audience to the hall 5 minutes before the start time, ideally without coats and bags
- Do ensure we have a full 75 minutes to perform the play and workshop
- Do be aware that it will take us around 20 minutes to pack up and clear the hall
- Don't ask us to perform in a gym or sports hall unless there is no alternative. These spaces make very poor theatres and the audience will have difficulty hearing everything
- Don't ask the team to perform the play or workshop without teacher cover. There must be a teacher in attendance at all times
- Do make sure you have downloaded the follow-up pack from our website. This contains a number of flexible activities that are ideal for tutor or PSHE lessons
- Do try to allow form teachers and PSHE staff to attend the performance. This will maximize the benefit of the follow-up sessions



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## Arson About Seating Layout (208 seats)

