

# 'BFIRESAFE@SCHOOL' LESSONS TO BE LEARNED ACROSS EUROPE



The BFireSafe@School project, which was first launched as a pilot in Ireland in August 2019, is now delivering a new teacher-led fire safety education resource for post-primary students across Europe. Report by Finian Joyce, Chief Fire Officer, Leitrim Fire Service; Shreya Ravichandran and Derek Ross, Trinity College Dublin.

**T**his Erasmus+ funded project has been developed by a project consortium of nine partners in seven EU countries – Ireland, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Lithuania and Spain. The lead partner is Leitrim County Fire Service while the Project Co-ordinator is Leitrim's Chief Fire Officer Finian Joyce.

This newly developed teacher-led programme is providing fire safety education for post primary students that is interesting, fun and enjoyable for both teacher and students alike. The new resource has been developed to place student wellbeing and personal safety at the centre of learning, and aims to ensure that students learn the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary to keep themselves and others safe from fire.

The project was motivated by a recent study by the Federation of European Fire Officers (FEU), which found that fire safety education in school is focused mainly on primary school children aged 8-9.

In addition, it also revealed a lack of any standard approach to fire safety education for post-primary students across Europe. The findings of the FEU study and those of a survey conducted specifically for BFireSafe@School highlighted a need to address the fire safety education gap in post-primary education in Europe.

As a result, BFireSafe@School has devised the first harmonised fire safety programme developed specifically for post primary schools across Europe.

The programme has been endorsed by the Chief Fire Officers' Association in Ireland, FEU (Federation of European Fire Officers) and the Association of Teacher Education in Europe, based in Brussels. It is available in ten languages: English, Irish, Basque, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Lithuanian and Spanish.

## INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

The production of the educational programme, which was co-designed and co-developed over a two-year period, was a collaboration between an Irish-led Project Working Group (PWG) made up of fire and rescue services professionals, educational experts, safety organisations and an ICT company specialising in online learning.

The PWG comprised of Leitrim Fire Service, Longford Fire Service, Tipperary Fire Service, Meath Fire Service, Westmeath Fire Service, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board, Trinity College Dublin, the Road Safety Authority, the Health and Safety Authority and the National Directorate

for Fire and Emergency Management.

In addition, several project consortium meetings were held with partners across Europe to ensure the validation, effective localisation, alignment and development of the programme content.

Leading fire safety organisations worldwide, such as Underwriters Laboratories (USA), National Fire Protection Association (USA) and the Science Museum in Tartu, Estonia, also supported the content development, which has brought an important international profile to the project.

An important achievement of the BFireSafe@School co-design and co-development ensured that training content could be translated onto an online platform. Following this, the educational content was pilot tested in several post primary schools in Ireland before being rolled out more extensively in schools across Europe.

A key milestone was the launch of the first pilot test of the BFireSafe@School programme in Ireland in August 2019 by Eoghan Murphy TD, the then Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government. Fire services personnel, education professionals and students from several Irish post primary schools attended the launch at the Custom House.

## ONLINE ASSESSMENTS

BFireSafe@School consists of ten units suitable for various age groups, Junior Cycle (12-15), Transition Year (16) and Senior Cycle students (17-18). At the end of each unit students complete short online assessments and certification is available.

### The ten units are as follows:

- Unit 1 - Managing Myself – Safe Person Concept
- Unit 2 - Fire Science
- Unit 3 - Fire Safety Indicators
- Unit 4 - Case Studies – Learning from Past Incidents
- Unit 5 - Calling the Emergency Services
- Unit 6 - Fire Safety in the Home
- Unit 7 - Fire Safety in the School
- Unit 8 - Fire Safety in the Environment
- Unit 9 - Emergency Action Plans
- Unit 10 - Careers in the Fire Service

**INNOVATIVE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

BFireSafe@School is available online in a user-friendly format and uses innovative digital technologies to deliver the programme. These include an Augmented Reality app called *FireSmartAR*, developed in collaboration with an Irish company called Little Red Edu (which can be downloaded from the App store).

A virtual reality app has been developed in association with a Spanish company called Tescinor, an online gaming app called *'Rescue Heroes'*, developed by our Lithuanian partners LearnKey, the use of robots, science experiments, videos on fire science, a school evacuation video and information on careers in the fire service. All the content is available within a specially developed Learning Management System.

BFireSafe@School can be integrated into existing subjects on the school curriculum, such as Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Wellbeing, Science and Career Guidance.

With its availability in multiple languages, it can also be used as an additional language resource by language teachers. To assist teachers in delivering the programme, a Teachers' Handbook has been produced with additional resources and tips for use, both in class and online. Fire personnel can also support teachers in delivering aspects of the programme in school.

**SO, WHAT IS NEXT?**

The BFireSafe@School learning experience has the potential to enormously benefit students in their everyday lives, and it can enhance their wellbeing throughout their lives and empower them with the necessary skills to be responsible and safe citizens.

The programme is free, easy to use and requires no previous knowledge. To register as a teacher, student/other or fire personnel visit [www.bfiresafeatschool.eu](http://www.bfiresafeatschool.eu).

You can also follow the project on social media platforms:

-  **BFireSafeAtSchool**
-  **@BFireSafeSchool**
-  **bfiresafeatschool**
-  **bfiresafeatschool**

For teachers who wish to use this new resource, CPD will be offered in two separate certified online training workshops on 15 and 22 September. For information on the workshops, email project co-ordinator Finian Joyce [fjoyce@leitrimcoco.ie](mailto:fjoyce@leitrimcoco.ie)



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