

# Safety First

**U**sually, we have a too casual approach towards the safety norms at the school. Since at school we deal with children, it is our prime duty to be doubly cautious and follow all the safety measures in the school campus. **Mr. RONODEB GHOSH**, Safety Expert of City Montessori School, Lucknow tells MENTOR that we cannot play with the safety of children at the school campus and throws light on some of the safety measures that every school should have.

In the recent years in Tamil Nadu, many lives of school children were lost due to a devastating fire. On enquiry, it was found that there were no fire fighting or safety arrangements in the school campus.

Deeply concerned over the sad demise of the school children and after hearing a PIL No. 483/2004, Shri Avneesh Mehrotra Versus Union of India and others, the Supreme Court intervened and issued an order dated 13.04.2009 to all the District Authorities and Fire Officials of India to thoroughly check each and every school and also ensure that all the safety measures have been taken and fire fighting devices have been installed.

It is our moral duty to make the school a safer place for children. It needs involvement of the School Management Committee, Disaster management committee, First aid committee and Safety management committee of the school and Teachers, particularly the ones looking after the discipline or sports should be made responsible to ensure that Fire Evacuation/Fire Safety Drills, Earthquake evacuation drills are organised on a regular basis.

In case of an earthquake, children in the ground and first floor should rush out of the building and stand far away from the school building. Children whose classes are on the second floor or above should not try to come out of their classes, instead they should either hide under their table

or stand in the corners of the class room. They should not hide near any cupboard or rack. Preferably, they should put something on their head to avoid any head injury. Lifts and escalators should not be used during an earthquake. If the children are playing in the play field, they should avoid hiding under a tree.

Apart from fire, school children are also vulnerable to bullying, sexual harassment and abuse by senior students and sometimes, even by male teachers. Utmost care should be taken that children are not left alone to avoid any such mishaps. Incidents of sexual abuse in the school is growing in an enormous proportion.

Every other day, we learn from the newspapers of horrific incidents. We have to certainly find out a permanent way to check this menace. If we want to make our school a safe place for children, the concerned staff and authorities of the school should follow and adhere to the following guidelines:

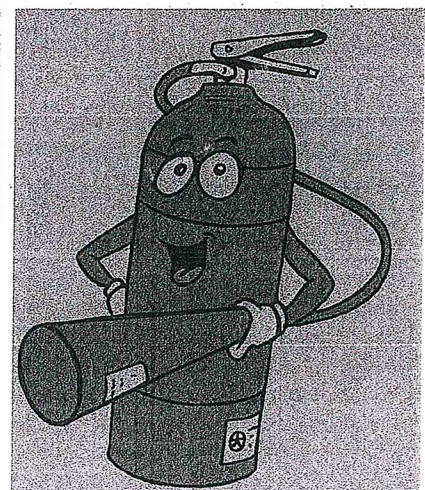
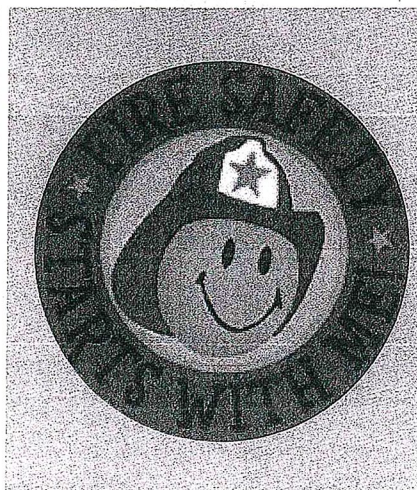
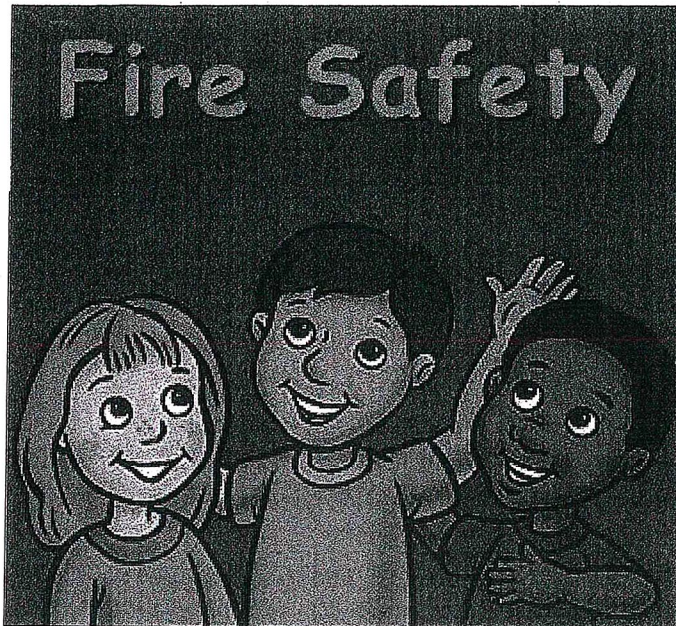
## DO'S

- The Main Electric Panel Room should be very neat and clean and free from moisture
- All Electrical loose connections should be connected by lugs/thimbles, nut and bolt, never twisted and joined
- The wire joints should be properly protected with insulation tape, to avoid any shock
- Avoid excessive load on the plug connections, i.e. there should be only one connection in each plug



- Use 15 Amp Power Points for motors, heaters, machines of high voltage
  - Railings of the staircase should be of enough height so that the children don't fall down while climbing up or down
  - Check for any protruded projections on the chairs and desks of the students
  - Ensure that the stairs are not slippery and the width of the staircase is not below 1.5 metres. The flight height should not be more than 6 inches
  - Electrical Fire should be doused only through CO2 or ABC type fire extinguishers only. Do not pour water. Dry sand can also be used to douse the Electrical Fire
  - Switch off the Main Electrical Supply in case of Electrical Fire
  - Always use CO2 type fire extinguishers to douse fire of Computers and other electrical gadgets. Please do not use ABC type fire extinguisher in this case
  - Kindly ensure that all lights and fans are switched off before leaving the classroom, when the school is closed
  - All inflammable waste should be disposed out of the school premises
  - Wherever there is a welding work going on in the school premises, kindly ask the welder to keep one bucket of sand or water and fire Extinguisher in close proximity, so that it can be used in case of emergency
  - All inflammable items should be removed immediately from the basement area
  - Kindly ensure there is no leakage of gas from the LPG cylinder
  - Use wet Heisin Cloth bags to douse fire of LP Gas Cylinders
  - All inflammable chemical such as Sodium (Na) should be kept in airtight containers and never in an open container in the science labs
  - All coolers and ACs should be properly checked of any loose connection, before switching on in the summer season
  - Please ensure that there is no Excessive load on Electric Gadgets, which may result to fire
  - PETs and Coaches should remain vigilant when children are playing in the field or swimming. A small neglect can cause a major harm
  - Avoid using Lifts and escalators during fire or earthquake.
  - Keep a First-Aid box handy
  - Train the students not to panic and start running during evacuation. They should not push each other, instead form 2 or 3 rows and come out of the building in case of any emergency. Lots of lives are lost due to stampede
  - In case of fire, lie down on the ground, crawl and come out of the building. 70% of death in fire incidents is due to choking
- ### DON'T'S
- Avoid working on live electricity line
  - Do not touch live Electrical Connections when you are wet
  - Do not throw water on the floor on installations in the Electric Panel Room
  - Do not leave loose terminals of wire exposed
  - Do not leave naked electrical joints
  - Do not use water to douse Electrical Fire
  - Do not put excessive load on 5 Amp Sockets. Avoid using multi-plugs
  - Do not check the ~~vaults~~ <sup>vents</sup> of Air Conditioners when they are on
  - Do not put oil/water on the stairs. Wipe clean immediately in case of any spillage
  - Do not keep the broken table and chairs unattended, remove them and replace only after repair
  - Do not allow learners to swim in the deep end of the pool
  - Do not leave the children unattended while playing in the field
  - Do not allow scooter/motor cycle borne children to enter school premises without helmets
  - Do not leave the children unattended in the pool
  - Do not leave the children unattended, particularly the girl child





#### Proposed measures for Fire Safety at School Campus

- There should be a clear setback of 6 meters all around the school building for free movement of the Fire Tender in case of any emergency
- Terrace should have at least 5000 to 10,000 litres capacity water storage tank and it should be connected with Down Comers/wet risers with Hose Reel on each floor
- One Fire Extinguisher (ABC Type) should be installed within a radius of 200 square metre area after every 15 metres of distance
- There should be at least one Fire Extinguisher near the generator and also near the main Electrical panel

- All fire extinguishers should be refilled by ISI Mark Powder after expiry of one year
- All inflammable items should be removed away from the school campus

We have to follow the proverb, Precaution is better than cure. Since these children are the future of the world and since we at school are the Lighthouse of the society, hence it becomes our moral duty to make the schools a safe haven for the children. We at school should feel elated that God has handed over His finest creation to us, in the form of a 'Child' and it becomes our social responsibility to safeguard the interest of the children.



**NATIONAL LEVEL FIRE EVACUATION DRILL ON 21<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY, 2012  
AT CITY MONTESSORI SCHOOL, KANPUR ROAD CAMPUS, LUCKNOW**

