

All the fun of starting a new school year was slightly dampened Sunday week ago after a phone call to say there was a fire in one of our buildings at school. Thankfully it was not a classroom, but in the PE Shed, it did mean the loss of a lot of crucial equipment – especially if playtime and lunchtime are your favourite times at school!

With the fire being the result of an arson, it becomes incredibly frustrating and annoying the amount of work created and time wasted, not just for the school in the clean-up, but for all the people involved from the moment the fire started, as predominantly, it is volunteers that first respond.

The fact that a thirteen year old thought it was okay to do this is itself a hugely disappointing factor in this event. The impact it then had on at least 30 people on the Sunday, and another 80 school children on the Monday is the other disappointing part of this event.

To the people involved in responding to this event and the ensuing result in finding the perpetrator, I am incredibly grateful for your efforts.

To the Mt Somers Rural Fire Unit and the Methven Volunteer Fire Brigade: your quick response ensured that although we are likely to lose our building and have lost \$9500 worth of equipment, that it could have been a lot worse of it had got to the Caretaker's side of the shed.

To Kevin Collins (Fire Investigator), Aaron Tapp (Methven Police) and Leigh Jenkins (Ashburton Police CIB), your thorough investigation led to a quick resolution ruling out the need to look further afield for a troublesome arsonist – the last thing our district needs at present.

To the many schools who offered support, and the Mid Canterbury Rugby Union and Mt Somers Rugby Club who ensured the children



had some balls to kick around, thank you for your thoughts and wishes.

A fire is a horrible thing that I hope many of you will never need to experience. We are only glad that everything is replaceable and no-one was hurt.

Rest assured, the school year has gotten off to a great start as we welcomed new staff and pupils to the school and I'm sure our year will not be unduly affected by the loss of our PE shed.

Photo: Jason Ree (Mid Canterbury Rugby Development Officer) and Hayden Reveley (Mt Somers Rugby Club) presenting balls to some of our pupils after the fire