

Update



Dear Education Colleagues

Welcome to Shropshire Council's Health and Safety Winter Newsletter. Please make sure all your staff get to see a copy. Remember to report all near misses and accidents—this helps us with trend analysis and prevention planning. Enjoy the Christmas break.

With Best Wishes

Health and Safety Team

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Cold Weather Advice



Lots of useful information can be found in the Cold Weather Advice for Schools document within SLG

With checklists for:



Heating



Site Maintenance



Vehicle



Burst Pipe Prevention

There are phone numbers, Gritting/Salting information, as well as salt supply information.



Slips Trips and Falls often increase in the Winter. Our arrangement has been updated, there are lots of tips and advice such as:

Slips, trips and falls—do's and don'ts for all staff.

- * Do clean up all spills immediately. Preferably, soak up liquids with paper towels; vacuum or sweep dry debris.
- * Do mark spills and wet areas with signs or eliminate pedestrians with barriers.
- * Do keep walkways free from clutter.
- * Do avoid running cables across walkways. If this is not possible, cover them to prevent a trip hazard.
- * Do ensure walkways are well lit.
- * Do report broken/defective lighting and floor surfaces as soon as they are noticed.
- * Do ensure you/your staff are wearing suitable footwear, particularly with the correct type of sole for the work environment.
- * Do make use of handrails when ascending or descending stairs.
- * Don't carry too many items at once, particularly when using the stairs. Always have a hand free to use handrails.

More information can be found on SLG.

We are all responsible for Health & Safety

Carol Concert—Fine



School fined £35,000 after child severely burned at carol concert

A London primary school has been fined £35,000 after a child received 45 per cent burns to their body at a carol concert.

The school was found guilty after a trial following an incident at a church on 11 December 2019.

During the carol concert, 60 Year 3 children from the school were waiting in costume, in a narrow corridor, holding 10-inch lit taper candles. As they were waiting, a seven-year-old boy wearing a home-made sheep costume made out of cotton wool balls, caught fire.

The fire was extinguished with some difficulty and the child received first aid at the scene before being taken by air ambulance to Broomfield Hospital and found to have sustained an estimated 45 per cent burns to their body.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the school had failed to take appropriate measures to account for the risks inherent with giving lit candles to children, while wearing potentially flammable costumes.

The injuries sustained by the boy will require on-going, regular, invasive surgeries throughout his youth and into adulthood and have been life changing for him and his family.

The school pleaded not guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act but were found guilty by a jury at Southwark Crown Court on 19 June 2023. At Southwark Crown Court on 30 June they were fined £35,000 and ordered to pay £25,970 in costs

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Sarah Whittle said: “This was a shocking and scary incident that could have so easily been avoided.

“Common sense alone should have been enough to see the risk. Mitigation in this case would have been the substitution of wax candles for flameless ones, thereby reducing the risk to zero. This was a step the school took after the incident but by then it was far too late for a young child who will be forever affected by this.

“The importance of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has never been made so clear.”

Asbestos



Inspections into the management of asbestos in school buildings 2022/23

HSE's report on the [management of asbestos in schools](#) summarises the findings of a programme of over 400 inspections in schools across Great Britain. It looks at how schools are meeting their legal duties to manage asbestos effectively.

The findings from these inspections help identify areas of improvement that can assist schools to improve standards in managing asbestos in their estates.



Schools have duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to its employees or others who may be put at risk by its premises or activities, including contractors undertaking work on its premises. Schools must ensure that contractors who carry out work on the School premises do so in a way that does not create risks for pupils, staff, visitors or other contractors.

- ⇒ Select a **suitable contractor**
- ⇒ Ensure the Contractors have a **full induction**
- ⇒ Make sure your **Asbestos Register** is available and signed correctly by the contractors

The following documents are available on SLG:

[Asbestos in school Premises quick Guide](#)

[Asbestos Management Premises Plan](#)

[Asbestos Policy and Procedures](#)

Are you sitting comfortably?

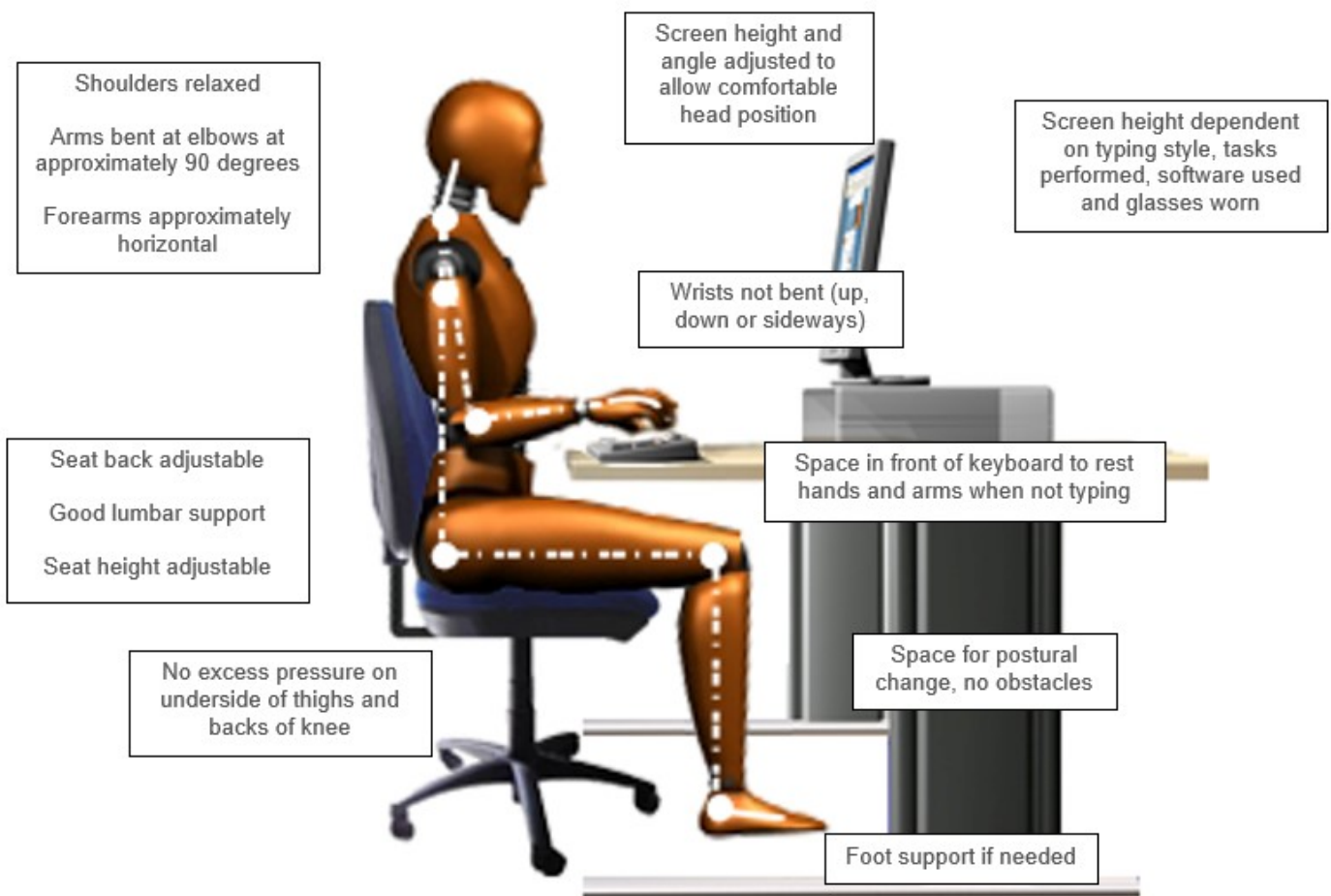
DSE

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

Your health and wellbeing is important. To ensure you are able to work comfortably, ensure you complete a DSE Assessment at least annually, or if your circumstances change i.e.;

- you are now working at a different desk
- you are pregnant
- you've had a change in health

Workstation Set Up Diagram



Basketball/netball posts



Sports Equipment in Schools



There has been another incident involving a freestanding basketball post (similar to the one pictured here) which blew over and struck a child. If your school has freestanding equipment such as this, then you are advised to take note of the advice from afPE (The Association for Physical Education) as follows:

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998, requires that all equipment should be subject to systematic and regular inspections to identify any signs of damage or wear and tear that may cause injury and to determine if the equipment is fit for purpose. These inspections should be carried out by the school and recorded

A minimum of an annual inspection of sports equipment / physical education apparatus should be carried out by a competent contractor such as Sportsafe, RoSPA or another suitably qualified contractor. Schools should familiarise themselves with the inspection report and ensure all actions are addressed

The frequency of inspections may vary depending on the environmental conditions / level of use and quality and durability of equipment. Eg. equipment that is subject to harsh outdoor conditions is likely to need more frequent inspections than that used in an indoor environment

Checks for free-standing basketball / netball posts should also include:

- The safe weighting of the posts ie. following the manufacturers instructions as to what the stand should be weighted with and the correct amount of weighting
- The system in place for checking the correct weighting is maintained
- How the unfixed posts are stored when not in use
- How posts are transported / carried from the storage area
- The suitability of the court / area where they are used
- The suitability of the weather conditions when in situ
- The equipment has been purchased from a reputable and reliable company. A British or European Standards Kitemark (BS and BS EN) on equipment, provides assurance that the products are safe and well made.
- A suitable and sufficient risk assessment is in place which includes the maintenance and inspection procedure

Crime Prevention



Safer Schools



Only a few Shropshire schools are due to update their **Safer School** involvement. This basically means holding an annual *Safer School* meeting with a focus on security, safety and safeguarding. Please contact Ian Bartlett, Crime Prevention Officer, (01743) 252821, ian.bartlett@shropshire.gov.uk for more information.

A significant number of Shropshire schools have '*Safer Schools*' on their website. If you would like the information, please contact Crime Prevention Officer, as above.

As part of *Safer School* site walks, is it not unusual to find weaknesses in school boundaries. Many schools are working to **improve boundaries**. Due to cost, this is frequently a phased approach. Appropriate boundaries deter and delay absconding and also, reduce the risk of unauthorised site intrusion. The height of boundaries are unique to the position but as a standard, the starting height for security is 1.8 metres. Crime Prevention can advise on detail if required.

Martyn's Law is the government's cross-party future direction for counter terrorism [Martyn's Law overview and what you need to know](#) | ProtectUK. This is likely to apply to all schools. Early days but as soon as further information is available, schools will be informed.

Visitor/staff badges and lanyards are an 'essential' element of school security and *Safer Schools*. As a minimum, these are required. Staff/visitor badges and lanyards are the fall-back for security when all other security measures have been breached.

Lanyards are especially effective due to their visibility. All pupils, staff (including supply staff) should be familiar and be regularly reminded of both their meaning and how to respond.

Individual schools will have their own preferences for producing their visitor badges and colour of lanyards.

Whilst on the school premises, visitors should be asked to make their issued school badge/lanyard visible to all staff and pupils.

For all visitors, lanyards to reflect whether they have a DBS for the school premises.

Popular lanyards for many schools are red with 'Visitor' printed in white. Although red isn't essential, this could represent a non-DBS visitor who is accompanied at all times whilst on the school site. For visitors that have a DBS for the school premises, this lanyard should be school specific, making the lanyard non-transferable between schools i.e. unusual colours and/or school motifs. Whilst the colour green may be seen/interpreted as safe, ideally a green lanyard with 'Visitor' printed in white, should not be considered.

It should be a priority to ensure all **school visitor badges** are retrieved before the visitor leaves the school premises. It is an essential aspect of managing visitors on the school site. From experience, Shropshire schools are good at retrieving their visitor badges.

An excellent test of a school's visitor badges, is a mystery visitor. Many Shropshire schools carry out this check and its proven to be worthwhile. An authorised visitor (governor/Police) tours the school without wearing a visitor lanyard/badge with the anticipation of being identified by staff and pupils. The results are frequently interesting.....

Training/ H&S Team



Training/Health & Safety Team

Emma Cushing has now joined our team as Lead Health & Safety—First Aid Training Officer. We are also recruiting a Support Trainer currently.

Training can be booked via the ERP system.

If you require Face-to-Face training, then please email: health.safety@shropshire.gov.uk

As you will know from Steve Compton's weekly email, Sharon Burt sadly left the team for pastures new in October. We are finalising the recruitment of her replacement currently and look forward to sharing details of our new Schools Health & Safety Officer with you in the New Year.

In the meantime support remains available by our Duty Officer system.

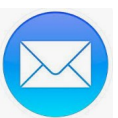
Finally, we would like to wish you a safe, healthy and Happy Christmas.

How to contact us?

A health and safety duty officer from the team is available to assist you on:



01743 252819



health.safety@shropshire.gov.uk