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If You or Your Child Attended the School in the Past

Your school should have identified all of its asbestos at least twenty years ago, and they should have managed their asbestos since then.

All LEAs and schools were warned of the dangers of asbestos in 1967, and advice was given in 1976 and 1986 that should have ensured that all of them identified their asbestos and implemented effective systems to manage that asbestos. All good LEAs and school authorities will have followed the guidance and ensured that their asbestos poses a minimal risk. If they have not followed the guidance then it is possible that teachers, children and ancillary staff will have been exposed to asbestos.

If you have worked at a school or your child has attended a school then ask the school the following

Ask the school how it has managed its asbestos whilst you or your child attended the school

If the school have followed the guidance then they will have a record of inspections and details of how they have managed the asbestos. Ask them to show you:

- An asbestos survey carried out in 1986 or soon after. This should give details of the location, the extent, type and condition of the asbestos.
- All subsequent asbestos management plans and surveys.
- A few schools will have identified and managed their asbestos for many years before 1986 and will be able to demonstrate that that is so.
- They will also have a written asbestos management plan that will show what measures they have taken over the last thirty years to protect the asbestos from damage.
- The school will also have regularly inspected the asbestos to ensure that it has remained undamaged, and will have a record of those inspections.
- They will have records of how they have carried out regular reviews of the management plan to make sure that it is still effective.

If the school are able and willing to show you the paperwork, then it is likely that they have followed the advice, although even then there are certain aspects that should be looked at carefully to make sure that the plan is effective. Details of that are given later. If the school are unable to show you the paperwork because it does not exist, then it is likely that they have not followed the advice and that their asbestos management has neither been effective nor safe. If they tell you that they have followed the advice but are not willing to show you the paperwork then it is possible that they have something to hide. Ask the Chairman of Governors why they will not show the paperwork.

Advice given by Department of Education

In 1976 the Department of Education advised all Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and all school authorities that asbestos has been widely used in school buildings and that if damaged it could release dangerous fibres. The Department of Education advised that strict safety precautions should be taken when building or maintenance work is undertaken. They also advised that:

This advice still applies

- Damaged exposed asbestos coatings, or coatings that could be damaged, should be sealed, resealed, repaired, otherwise protected or removed.
- Other asbestos materials that are likely to present a health hazard should be sealed protected or removed.
- If hazard from asbestos dust is suspected the first concern must be for the safety and health of the occupants.
- All LEAs and school authorities are to ensure the most careful regulation in the use of asbestos in all schools.

In 1986 the Department of Education gave specific advice to all LEAs and schools to assess the risk from asbestos in their buildings and then to take measures to make it safe. They issued the following guidance:

- As there is no known threshold level for exposure below which there is no risk, it is important always to take whatever steps are necessary to reduce exposure from any form of asbestos to the lowest reasonably practical level.
- Identify the presence of asbestos, its extent type and location.
- Assess the potential for fibre release in the light of an examination of the type, integrity, location and accessibility of the asbestos material including, in the case of a school, its accessibility to children.
- Decide what remedial action is necessary, and in what order of priority. The guiding principle should be to avoid the release of dust.
- If asbestos is sound and undamaged, and undisturbed in normal use, it may be left in place.
- A management system should be introduced to keep its condition under review.
- Where the material is accessible, and there is no extensive damage and no loose or friable debris, it will be necessary to seal or enclose it and to introduce a management system.
- When it is not possible to seal or enclose the asbestos effectively it may be decided to remove it completely.
- When the asbestos is subject to frequent disturbance and likely to release dust, it may be decided to remove it completely.
- Wherever possible removal work in schools should be carried out during the holidays.

This link takes you to [what to do after an incident.](#)

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