

Asbestos in Schools

Simple School Asbestos Check List for Parents

– also useful for –

Governors, Teachers and Support Staff

QUESTIONS	WHO TO ASK	NOTES
Is there asbestos in your child's school?	Ask the governors, the headteacher or the teachers.	
Does every teacher who teaches my child know where the asbestos is?	Ask the teachers who teach your child	It is important that school staff know where the asbestos is so that they can ensure that neither they nor the pupils damage it.
What type of asbestos is it?	Ask the governors, the headteacher or the teachers. Ask to see a copy of the asbestos survey and register. (The register is a list of all the asbestos in the school)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All asbestos is potentially dangerous but Amosite (brown) is up to 100 times more dangerous than Chrysotile (white) and Crocidolite (blue) is up to 500 times more dangerous. • It also depends what type of material it is in. Asbestos lagging, sprayed asbestos and asbestos insulating board can easily release asbestos fibres, whereas the fibres are sealed in place for instance in lavatory cisterns and window sills.
Where is the asbestos? How much is there? What type of asbestos material is it in? What condition is it in?	Ask the governors, the headteacher or the teachers to point out where there is asbestos accessible to children. Check the asbestos survey and register which will show where the asbestos is and what condition it is in.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asbestos insulating board (AIB) looks like plasterboard and can be in the walls, ceilings, window and door surrounds and columns of any room including classrooms, corridors, toilets, halls, cupboards, gyms and swimming pools. It can be above suspended ceilings. It can be anywhere as it was used as a general building board. • Sprayed asbestos can be on the ceilings or around the structural beams. • Lagging can be around the heating pipes, in the walls, loft and in floor ducting. • Floor tiles can contain asbestos which is released if they are damaged or worn
Can the children knock, scrape or damage it? Can children knock into asbestos walls or columns? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can doors and windows with asbestos surrounds be slammed? • Is there a record of vandalism or the possibility of footballs being kicked into ceilings? • Are pictures pinned or stapled to asbestos walls or ceilings? Are decorations ever hung from the suspended ceiling grid?	Ask the governors, the headteacher or the teachers Check the asbestos register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If asbestos is not damaged or disturbed it will not release fibres. But if it is, then it will. • If children can knock into asbestos walls or columns there is the potential for asbestos fibres to be released. • If doors or windows are slammed and the door or window surrounds contain asbestos, asbestos fibres can be released. • Footballs kicked into ceilings can release asbestos fibres. Vandalism can potentially release high levels. • Pictures pinned or stapled to asbestos walls or ceilings will release asbestos fibres. • If decorations are hung from the suspended ceiling grid and the tiles are asbestos then fibres will be released. Ceiling voids of schools can also contain asbestos debris which will be released if the ceiling tiles are disturbed.

QUESTIONS	WHO TO ASK	NOTES
<p>Is the school well maintained, or is it in a dilapidated condition? Is there water damage to walls or ceilings?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are any ceiling tiles missing? • Do all the ceiling tiles sit snugly in the ceiling grid? • Are there any scrapes, dents or holes in the walls? • If there are columns in the rooms, are they in good condition? • Are the windows rotten? • Are the fire doors in good condition? 	<p>Check the condition yourself</p> <p>Ask the governors, the headteacher or the teachers if there are any temporary classrooms? If so were they built before 1980?</p> <p>Check yourself whether the temporary classrooms are in good condition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the condition of the building is poor, then inevitably so is the asbestos it contains. • Any temporary classrooms built before 1980 are likely to contain asbestos.
<p>If there is damage to asbestos in the school are parents always told?</p>	<p>Ask the governors, the headteacher or the teachers what the policy is in your school for informing parents.</p>	<p>Asbestos has been disturbed in schools but parents have not been told that their children have been exposed.</p>
<p>What action is taken if a teacher, child, parent or support staff sees damage to asbestos?</p>	<p>Ask the governors, the headteacher or the teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The actions should be included in the school's "asbestos management plan." • The room should be evacuated and preferably locked. • The damage should be reported immediately. • Only trained, authorised people should enter the room.
<p>Is your child's school a System Built school?</p> <p>If so ask the final questions on page 3</p>	<p>Ask the Governors, Headteacher or Teacher</p> <p>It is not unusual for schools to be unaware that their buildings are system built. You can judge it as they tend to be the flat roofed schools with large areas of windows typical of the 60s and 70s. They often contain large quantities of asbestos.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System Built Schools have many names including CLASP, SCOLA, Hills MACE, Method, CLAW, SEAC, ASC, Onward, Laingspan. • For full details see the System Built Schools research papers at: www.asbestosexposureschools.co.uk

SYSTEM BUILD SCHOOLS

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<p>Is there silicone sealant or tape on the columns, walls or skirting board? Ask why the sealant is there and whether it is sealing in damaged asbestos material.</p> <p>Ask how often it is checked.</p> <p>Ask whether it is only a temporary measure and when it is intended to remove the asbestos.</p>	<p>Check yourself</p> <p>Ask the governors, the headteacher or the teachers</p>	<p>If there is, then it is likely to be sealing in asbestos material to prevent fibres being released into the rooms.</p> <p>Teachers need to know where it is so they can report any damage.</p>
<p>If there is a suspended ceiling do all the ceiling tiles fit snugly in the ceiling grid?</p> <p>Ask how often the ceiling tiles are checked</p>	<p>Look yourself</p> <p>Ask the governors, the headteacher, the teachers or the caretaker</p>	<p>Asbestos fibres can pass through the smallest gap or crack, just as easily as air can. If there is asbestos material or contamination above the ceiling tiles then a damaged, missing or ill fitting tile will allow asbestos fibres to enter the room.</p> <p>The integrity of the ceiling tiles should be regularly checked.</p>
<p>When was the asbestos survey carried out?</p> <p>Was the asbestos survey carried out by an organisation accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service. (UKAS)</p> <p>Has the asbestos survey looked above the ceilings, in floor ducts and in other less accessible places?</p> <p>Is a copy of the asbestos survey and register readily available to anyone who needs to refer to it?</p> <p>Is the asbestos register signed annually by the chairman of governors?</p>	<p>A copy of the survey and register should be available to anyone who might disturb the asbestos. Ideally it should be at the reception desk.</p> <p>Look at it and check that the recommendations have been carried out.</p>	<p>It should ideally have been carried out within the last five years and it should be updated annually.</p> <p>Accreditation is not mandatory, but it gives some assurance that the surveying firm has achieved certain standards.</p> <p>A good survey will look in all the less accessible places. If there are lots of caveats where areas have not been accessed then it is probably a poor survey.</p> <p>There should be recommendations against each location of asbestos. They could include terms such as urgent removal. Seal and inspect. Encapsulate. Manage. Monitor.</p>