

## DEALING WITH ASBESTOS IN SCHOOLS

### Principles

1. There should be a policy of "Openness" about asbestos in schools.
2. Parents and teachers should have a "right to know" what asbestos is present in their, and their children's, school.
3. All schools by law should be required to carry out a thorough asbestos survey. This should include air tests. (see Testing and Inspections below).
4. Children should have the same rights as adults when in an asbestos environment. These rights would normally be exercised through parents, guardians and teachers.
5. Schools should be treated as a special place. Children's special vulnerability to asbestos should be recognised in asbestos management procedures.
6. There should be a national audit of the extent and condition of asbestos in schools, the data should be centrally collated and open to public scrutiny.
7. The details of asbestos incidents in schools should be centrally collated and open to public and internal scrutiny, so that the effectiveness of HSE and DCSF and individual local authorities' asbestos management policies can be assessed.
8. There should be an open, scientific assessment and political and public agreement on the acceptable risk to children in schools from cumulative asbestos exposure.
9. Government policy should be the phased removal of all asbestos from schools. Priority being given to those schools with asbestos in the worst condition

### Testing and Inspections

10. Standards and a protocol for air sampling in schools should be set. These should include;
  - A protocol for tests following an asbestos incident to determine past exposure of staff and pupils,
  - A protocol for determining whether a room is safe for reoccupation after an asbestos incident.
  - A protocol for determining asbestos fibre levels from hidden asbestos materials in a school.
11. There should be regular air tests to determine asbestos fibre levels from hidden asbestos. These should be carried out under controlled conditions with disturbance that is representative of everyday school activity such as doors being slammed, walls hit and windows banged.
12. The cumulative risk to children of background and peak exposures during their twelve years at school should be assessed based on such tests.
13. There should be a central register of all types and Marks of "System" built schools and temporary classrooms. The register should include the specified location of asbestos and the possible locations of asbestos.

### Asbestos Guidance and Training

14. Asbestos guidance should be written specifically for schools that gives:
  - Practical advice on asbestos management.
  - Measures to be taken following an asbestos incident in a school.
15. Standards of asbestos training of key people in schools should be set. Training courses should be attended by governors, head teachers, asbestos managers, caretakers and maintenance staff.
16. All staff should have training about the dangers, locations and precautions to be taken with asbestos.

### Government Action

17. There should be a Department for Children Schools and the Family post specifically to oversee all matters to do with asbestos in schools. The officer should have the necessary expertise.
18. An 'Asbestos in Schools' campaign should be reinstated to improve the management of asbestos in schools. The forum should comprise experts from a wide range of specialisations, including the DCFS, HSE, Children's Commissioner, local authorities, occupational hygienists, parents and teachers' representatives, ATAC and ARCA. They should have executive powers to assess the scale of the problem and to implement measures. They should advise the Government.
19. Government policy should be the phased removal of all asbestos from schools. As part of that all asbestos should be removed from schools when refurbished under Government initiatives including BSF, PCF, PFI and PPP.
20. A Parliamentary Select committee should be convened to take evidence, discuss and report to the Government on the problem of asbestos in schools.
21. There should be a Parliamentary debate on the problem of asbestos in schools.

Go to [www.schoolasbestosaction.co.uk](http://www.schoolasbestosaction.co.uk) for the parent's campaign to find out if their children are being exposed to asbestos in schools