

4th September 2014



Mr William Powell AC/AM
Chair of Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

Dear Mr Powell

Petition: P-04-522 Asbestos in Schools

Thank you for your correspondence received on 31st July 2014 seeking views on the petition as referenced above. Governors Wales believes that the health, safety and welfare of pupils and staff is paramount and understands the rationale behind the wording of the petition. Governors Wales offers the following comments:

- Chapter 25 of School Governors' Guide to the Law¹ provides an overview of certain areas of responsibility relating to health and safety.
- The Welsh Government Guidance Document on Asbestos Management in Schools² details the requirement of Local Authorities and governing bodies in respect of asbestos management procedures and legislation. The responsibilities are clearly outlined pertaining to the relevant duty holder.
- The Health and Safety Executive has also produced a checklist and FAQs to help schools review their asbestos management arrangements.³
- We are mindful that, whilst Health and Safety legislation at present does not require schools to inform parents / carers about any existence of asbestos within schools, some schools will however provide such information, to assure parents / carers that effective management arrangements are in place⁴ (the full FAQ on this can be found on the HSE website). This would, we feel, be good practice based upon effective risk management and surveys by specialist, qualified surveyors.
- We feel that schools should, therefore, respond openly to enquiries from parents etc., about the presence of asbestos on the premises.
- The consequence of not complying with asbestos regulations is clearly a criminal offence. We believe, therefore, that effective communication and collaboration (as appropriate) is essential for all stakeholders on this area of concern.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries concerning the above.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Morris
Director

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¹<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolhome/schoolfundingandplanning/schoolgov/schoolgovguide/govgchap21to27/?lang=en>

²<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/asbestos-management-in-schools/?lang=en>

³www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/index.htm

⁴<http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/asbestos-faqs.htm> - Should parents be told about asbestos in their children's school?