

Glasgow City Council – Response to Petition PE1268

- ❖ ***Petition by Catherine Mitchell on behalf of St Gilbert's Primary School and all schools in the west of Scotland calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to take action against those local authorities who have failed to implement a robust asbestos management plan and procedures for school buildings containing asbestos and ensure that parents and teachers who require data about asbestos in school buildings held by local authorities have full access to this.***
 - Glasgow City Council wish to clarify that Ms Mitchell has not raised petition PE1268 on behalf of St Gilbert's Primary School as stated.

- ❖ ***In terms of the systems of asbestos management in school buildings, is this effective in relation to its requirements, monitoring and enforcement?***
 - Every school in Glasgow, with the exception of those built post 2000, has been surveyed for asbestos by the Council's United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) accredited Asbestos Survey Team. The surveys were a Type 1 presumptive asbestos survey augmented with actual samples to enhance the information. Every site and room (or space) within it was given a unique identifier and the results input into a central asbestos system which is available on-line at every establishment. Training and guidance was/is given and procedures put in place to ensure that no fabric alterations could be carried out without prior inspection. Areas of higher risk were specifically noted for checking for damage whether from accidents or vandalism.
 - If the Head of Establishment has reasonable cause to believe that asbestos material has been disturbed in the property, or if maintenance work reveals the presence of asbestos, the Head of Establishment should contact the Education Estates Section immediately and also advise the Safety Representative(s) that this has been done. If necessary, tests to determine the nature of the material would be undertaken and the necessary remedial work carried out. The Safety Representative(s) should be advised on the actions taken and the rest results.
 - Routine maintenance is carried out by City Building (Glasgow) LLP by either the dedicated education maintenance team or one of the specialist groups within City Building (Glasgow) LLP. If, as part of a job, they have any dubiety as to the nature of any material they would contact the City Building (Glasgow) LLP Asbestos Section to have the material inspected.
 - The aforementioned applies to all contractors/subcontractors working in schools.
 - This is an appropriate management plan for managing asbestos in situ.

- ❖ ***What is the policy to manage or remove asbestos? If it is to manage it, how is this as effective as removing it?***
 - Within educational establishments the long-term aim is to have buildings which are asbestos-free. However, where asbestos is present, it is safe if it is undamaged.

- If the asbestos is damaged (accidentally or by vandalism) it will be given immediate remedial treatment – it will be encapsulated or stripped out and replaced with an alternative material as appropriate.
- It is generally safer, especially when it is undamaged, to manage asbestos in situ, since there can often be a greater hazard created in removing the material.
- Glasgow City Council's policy is to manage asbestos, which is in safe condition, in situ.

❖ ***What is its advice to parents whose children are in a school containing asbestos?***

- Public concern over the hazards which may be associated with the presence of asbestos has occasionally been reflected in educational establishments when staff or parents/carers of children and young people have expressed anxieties about the possibility of a risk to health because of the existence, or suspected existence, of asbestos in the fabric of the building.
- It should be emphasised that where surfaces are undamaged and intact there is no danger that fibre levels will approach the safety limits set by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- Within an educational establishment, those whose work may bring them into contact with asbestos will most likely be maintenance workers e.g. electricians, plumbers, joiners, gas engineers etc.
- In order to avoid undue concern, Education Services advises parents/carers in response to any concerns they may raise, or if an event predicates that advice would be prudent.

❖ ***How does it engage with pupils, parents and teachers to address concerns they may have about school buildings which contain asbestos?***

- There is no reason why anyone in schools (e.g. staff, children, parents) should be involved in working with asbestos. There should therefore be no risk. However, when remedial treatment to asbestos is being carried out within a school, there are arrangements put in place to ensure the safety of all building users.
- The arrangements include:
 - all staff to be consulted before any major contract goes ahead
 - the Head of Establishment will be advised of the methods to be used and the programme to be followed
 - only contractors licensed by the Health and Safety Executive will be used to remove asbestos
 - the area to be cleared will be sealed off, as appropriate, prior to the removal of asbestos material
 - the seal will not be removed until air tests have shown that the area is safe.

- The Council's asbestos management system is an electronic (accessible by all establishments) web based service. It carries the asbestos survey information for all of our sites, including those with no asbestos.
 - Education has an asbestos co-ordinator who assists schools in the day-to-day issues managing asbestos.
 - Headteachers are trained on the use of the Council's asbestos management system and taken through an asbestos awareness course. No works that involve disturbance of the building fabric are allowed without prior inspection of the asbestos records and/or where necessary having confirmation testing carried out.
- Where works that involve asbestos removals or treatments are carried out, officers with specialist knowledge of asbestos are available to brief and support staff and parents in relation to any enquiries and concerns.
- ❖ ***How does it ensure that advice and assurances to parents whose children are in a school containing asbestos is clear, informed and current and is communicated to them?***
- In addition to points previously highlighted, information is also available via the Council's web site, Management Circulars, Master Safety Files, pamphlets and individual communications from Headteachers as required/appropriate
- ❖ ***What actions has it taken to identify school buildings that still contain asbestos and how does it demonstrate this?***
- All Glasgow schools have been surveyed since 2001 and (as part of our Asbestos Management Plan) continue to be re-surveyed to monitor the conditions on site. Surveys and tests were done by Development and Regeneration Services United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) accredited survey team and the results logged into the Council's central Asbestos Information Management System (AIMS) maintained by Development and Regeneration Services. The system is web based and essentially electronic in nature and a request has been passed for a paper copy to be made available.
 - Education Services are presently updating the management circulars and the master safety files in order to reflect recent changes to the education estate.
 - Education Services, as part of its legal requirement to review its asbestos management procedures, identified that improvements to the recording and logging of routine inspections by establishments was necessary.
 - As part of this process the Council has met with the HSE and further meetings have been arranged to discuss and review the proposed amendments to the monitoring of routine inspections.

This response has been limited to 3 A4 pages as requested. We would be pleased to provide further and detailed information if required.