



ASBESTOS IN SCHOOL PREMISES – A Quick guide

Asbestos Basics

- Don't panic – Asbestos is only dangerous when disturbed. If it is safely managed & contained it doesn't present a health hazard. Asbestos containing materials (ACM's) which are in good condition and not disturbed, do not pose a risk to your health.
- Asbestos becomes dangerous when disturbed by smashing, drilling, sandpapering or sawing, etc. because very fine asbestos fibres float in the air which may be breathed in.

Where is the Asbestos?

- ACM's are likely to be present in any premise built before 2000. Anything built after 2000 is not expected to contain any ACM's.

Who is responsible for managing asbestos containing materials within the school?

- Those responsible for the maintenance and repair (duty holders) are responsible for protecting others, who work, visit or use the premises, from exposure to asbestos.
- In the majority of schools, the responsibility for maintenance or repair will be shared, for example between the local authority as employer and the school.
- In other schools (e.g. Academies), the responsibility may fall solely to a governing body as employer. All duty holders must ensure that asbestos containing materials are located, assessed and managed properly.
- All schools have a responsibility for managing day to day access to ACM's and preventing unauthorised work on them.

What has the Council done to manage asbestos?

- All premises have been surveyed to identify the location & condition of asbestos containing materials. The management survey is intended only to locate asbestos containing materials that could be damaged or disturbed by the occupant's normal activities. Any activities likely to damage concealed ACM's must not be undertaken without a prior Refurbishment / Demolition survey – see below.
- The survey's findings are recorded in the on-site property Asbestos Register.
- Where asbestos has been identified in poor condition, it has been encapsulated, enclosed or removed.
- Where asbestos has been identified in good condition, it has been left, contained and managed. Removing asbestos containing materials may be more dangerous than simply containing them.
- Where appropriate Shropshire Council will arrange the annual re-inspection of ACM's and the issuing of the Re-inspection Report which is to be retained in the Asbestos Register.

Records

- The findings from the asbestos survey commissioned by the Council are recorded and retained in the Asbestos Register. The Asbestos Register records the location of known asbestos, removed asbestos and non-asbestos materials. The Asbestos Register is usually kept in Reception and must be presented to all contractors (and staff) likely to disturb the fabric of the building on signing into the school.

What must I do to manage asbestos within the school

- Each school must complete an individual Premises Plan for Asbestos Management. This document prompts all responsible persons on their individual responsibilities for the management of asbestos containing materials on site and is available to download on the Shropshire Learning Gateway. It should be retained in the Asbestos Register.
- Ensure that when planning refurbishment or demolition projects that a Refurbishment / Demolition Survey is always undertaken – see below

Who is at Risk?

Anyone that uses your premises who may disturb or damage asbestos containing materials are at risk. Anyone who breathes in asbestos fibres is at risk. In fact, anyone whose work involves drilling, sawing or cutting into the fabric of the school could potentially be at risk, for example:

- Contractors e.g. heating & ventilation engineers, carpenters, electricians, telecoms engineers etc.
- Volunteers
- Caretakers / Site Managers
- Teachers
- Handy / maintenance staff
- Catering staff
- **ANYONE!**

All of the above **MUST:**

- Consult the Asbestos Register to check for the presence of asbestos containing materials in the area where they are about to work.
- Sign the Asbestos Register to confirm that they have checked the records.

If the area where they are about to work includes asbestos containing materials, then a detailed assessment of whether the work will disturb or damage the asbestos is required.

WARNING – If the work is intrusive, (e.g. fitting whiteboards or projectors, replacing windows, adding sockets, replacing toilet cisterns, replacing ceiling tiles or skylights), then the School's asbestos management or re-inspection survey is not sufficient and a Refurbishment / Demolition Survey must be undertaken prior to commencement.

Refurbishment and Demolition Projects (Buildings constructed prior to 2000)

- Where the school plans any refurbishment or demolition work a further Refurbishment / Demolition survey **MUST** always be undertaken. The survey should be commissioned by the school, the project manager or building surveyor and should be undertaken by Shropshire Council's asbestos consultant. The survey and any remedial work should be funded by the project.
- This intrusive & destructive survey is used to locate and describe, as far as reasonably practicable, all ACM's in the area where the work will take place. For further advice Contact the Strategic Asset Management Team on 01743 281036 or the Occupational Health and Safety Team on 01743 252819.
- General information on the selection and management of contractors can be found in Shropshire Council's 'Managing Contractors – A Guide for Managers', available on the Learning Gateway.

Training / Information

All Shropshire Council staff will receive appropriate asbestos awareness training for the level of competence required for them to undertake their duties.

- Anyone likely to disturb or manage asbestos in their day to day role e.g. Head Teachers, Site Managers, maintenance and caretaking staff must receive basic asbestos awareness training.
- Free awareness training sessions are available through the Corporate Training Programme. For more details please contact the Occupational Health & Safety Team.
- This training must be refreshed annually.
- It is particularly important that those with responsibility for signing in contractors are aware of the local Asbestos Register and that presentation of the register is part of the contractors' signing in procedure.

If something goes wrong

If the system fails and you think asbestos has been disturbed –

- Stop the work immediately, clear the immediate area to enable all doors to be closed and locked around the area.
- Close the windows and switch off any local ventilation. Leave all contaminated material in the area and display a notice to prevent access.
- Make a list of any persons who may have been exposed.
- Contact the Strategic Asset Management Team or the Occupational Health and Safety Team.

See Appendix C of Shropshire Council's Asbestos Management Plan available on the Learning Gateway.

Useful Telephone Numbers:

Occupational Health and Safety Team	01743 252819
Strategic Asset Management Team	01743 281036

Reviewed by the Strategic Asset Management Team July 2020