Health and Safety Newsletter - June 2017

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Seagulls (all schools)

School roofs can become an extremely attractive place for seagulls to nest and rear their young. However the seagulls can become a nuisance and also turn aggressive.

Common problems associated with seagulls are;

- Noise caused by calling gulls
- Mess from droppings
- Damage to the property
- Birds swooping at pupils/adults as a way of protecting their chicks

One of our primary schools has recently encountered a problem with seagulls nesting on its roof.

The school is now going through a process that will attempt to remove the seagulls which involves a specialist team removing the eggs from their nest before they hatch.

The best way to deter seagulls from becoming residents is to ensure the premises are litter free and making sure the external bins have their lids closed. If you believe there are seagulls nesting on the roof then contact the H&S team for advice.

Sun Protection (all schools)

With the warmer weather now with us, the issue of pupils being out in the sun will be discussed.

To assist schools, guidance on sun protection has been added to the A-Z section of the Health and Safety Website. (S – Sun Protection)
Drugs equipment found within school grounds (all schools)

Unfortunately, we had a recent report of hypodermic needles being found within a schools grounds. No one was injured and the items were disposed of safely. This sort of report happens rarely, but if a similar incident occurs at your school, the correct procedure is to firstly prevent access to the area and then immediately contact the Streetcare team on 01454 868000. They will need to know the address of the school, what type of equipment it is and the exact location of the item/s. You can also leave a message if it is out of office hours. More information can be found on the council website.

In the unlikely event that anyone is injured by discarded needles, they should seek immediate medical advice from their local Accident and Emergency Department. The NHS website has useful information and advice on this topic.

For further advice and support on any drug or alcohol issue, please contact Rosie Collins or Paul Volker at South Gloucestershire Council Drug and Alcohol Team on 01454 864005.

Scrapstore PlayPod (primary schools)

We recently visited the Scrapstore PlayPod HQ in St Werburghs to find out more about the ethos of the concept and the type of resources provided. It was a very informative meeting and following this we were given a tour of the warehouse and were amazed to see the type of scrap on offer from underfloor heating pipes and suitcases to Zimmer frames and huge wooden washers! It was also good to hear that training was provided by the play team and schools will need to ensure that all relevant school staff have received up to date training which should include risk benefit and dynamic risk assessment.

Once schools receive their delivery of loose parts, the condition of the equipment used during play needs to be monitored regularly by school staff and disposed of when not fit for purpose e.g. sharp edges, cracked plastic, damaged netting. When new deliveries are made, if the items are very different, schools will need to consider what control measures are needed and monitor how pupils are playing with the resources as additional control measures may need to be put in place. We advised therefore, that if you have had a high turnover of lunchbreak staff or if refresher training is required, you contact the play team at Scrapstore PlayPod on 0117 9143002 to organise an appropriate training session. If the resources are used during other times of the day, other staff may need to be trained appropriately.

Developing dynamic lockdown procedures (all schools)

We are occasionally asked by schools who they can approach for assistance with improving or developing their Lockdown Procedures. Pete Naish, Counter Terrorism Security Adviser from Avon and Somerset Police, is the person you need. He can be contacted on Peter.Naish@avonandsomerset.police.uk Pete also kindly sent us some advice on this matter which is now available on the A-Z index (security)
Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage – paediatric first aid training update (effective 03/04/2017) (infant and primary schools)

Relevant schools need to be aware that at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when early years children are present. This will include breakfast and after school clubs and school visits. See DfE guidance for further information.

Important news on accident reporting - RM SecureNet is going (all schools)

Schools need to be aware that the secure way of reporting accidents is changing and that from July, South Gloucestershire Council’s new web-based secure document exchange system, the Secure Online File & Information Exchange (SOFIE) will be in use. IT will be creating log-ins for all current RM SecureNet users, and over the next few weeks will be getting in touch to provide details and a link to the SOFIE website.

Please contact IT if you have any queries to dan.hall@southglos.gov.uk Tel: 01454 863331

Button Batteries (primary schools)

A pupil at one of our primary schools recently had to receive hospital treatment as a result of pushing a small ‘button’ battery up his nose.

The battery came from a small torch which was being used in the classroom. Schools are advised to check if they have equipment which use similar batteries, if they do then it needs to be assessed if the equipment is deemed appropriate for the age of the pupils using it, the equipment should also have a lockable battery compartment.

Once a battery enters the body its will start to react with the saliva, so medical advice is required immediately. Further information can be found by visiting the ROSPA website – Link

Top 10 hazards in school laboratories (secondary schools)

Schools are advised to check document GL238 on the CLEAPSS website. The hazards which were found during science audits include: eye wash bottles; lab benches; biology specimens; chemical storage cabinets; gas piping; electrical sockets; cut-off switches; ventilation and damaged flooring. See link
Electrical socket safety (all Schools)

The recent CLEAPSS newsletter for primary schools included an article explaining why electrical socket covers are not required and the added risks they can bring.

CLEAPSS advice is the following

- Do not use electrical safety socket covers, they are unnecessary and undermine the inherent control measure built in to UK electrical sockets.
- If your school is currently using covers you should take steps to discontinue their use.
- Where socket covers have been used it is important to ensure that the shutter mechanisms are still working.

Further information can be found on the CLEAPSS website. See Link.

Tech Neck (all schools)

It is reported that the number of 16-24 year olds who now say they suffer from back and neck pain has risen by 60%, with many experts blaming mobile devices, users spending prolonged periods of time sat down or walking along looking down at screens. This is of course something which may affect all of us and we need to look at ways of preventing this and staying safe and comfortable.

The posture we adopt as we stare at our devices, can increase the stress on the neck and may cause excessive wear and tear that may eventually require surgery to correct it. Our heads weigh between 10lb and 12lb, as we angle them down to look at our screens, the effective weight on our necks increases – at a 15-degree angle it is about 27lb rising to 60lb at 60 degrees.

The image below shows the effective weight on the spine as forward tilt increases.

So what can be done to prevent it?

1. Look at screen at eye level
2. Use IT devices e.g. tablet mounts, laptop stands
3. Ensure frequent breaks from screen
4. Exercise your neck
Play Equipment (primary schools)

We occasionally have queries from schools concerning parents/carers who allow younger children to play on school play equipment at the start and end of the school day.

Where schools wish to display a notice advising of responsibilities, advice is to use a Warning Type sign, similar to that below, to highlight how the equipment is expected to be used.

![Warning Notice]

**WARNING NOTICE**

**THIS PLAY EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR USE BY PUPILS OF THIS SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL HOURS AND WHILST UNDER STAFF SUPERVISION**

**AT ALL OTHER TIMES PARENTS/CARERS MUST ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUPERVISION OF THEIR CHILDREN AS THE SCHOOL CANNOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY LOSS, INJURY OR DAMAGE EXCEPT SO FAR AS PROVIDED BY STATUTE**

This would only be a warning and does not absolve the school/trust from ensuring the equipment is maintained/checked regularly and that this is documented. It is also advised that this warning is periodically included in any newsletters to parents as necessary.

Asbestos Data Collection (all schools)

Findings from the asbestos management in schools data exercise, which ran from 29/01/2016 to 31/03/2016, are now available to view. See link for further details.

Asbestos training – Head Teachers

We have been receiving some very positive feedback from those who have attended the asbestos awareness training run for us by Somerset Scientific Services. One of the recent comments from a Head Teacher said he felt that all Heads who had asbestos containing materials in their schools should attend, which is something we of course strongly advise. The next half day course is being held on 5th July 2017 at Poole Court, Yate. See CPD online for further details.
Lead in pipes / drinking water (primary schools)

In December 2013, the maximum amount of lead allowed in drinking water was reduced from 25 to 10 parts per billion. Lead poses a risk to health and the standard is in place to protect the most vulnerable consumers (infants and young children).

In response to this tightening of the standard, all water companies have been required to check the water quality at relevant establishments used for the primary education of children and to replace any lead pipework for which they are responsible.

Bristol Water have risk assessed all schools within the South Gloucestershire area and will be undertaking sampling of those schools identified as potentially having lead pipework over the next few months.

Schools that need to have their water tested will be contacted by Bristol Water to arrange a time for when the sampling will take place.

HSE – Myth Busters Challenge Panel

The Myth Busters Challenge Panel provides a mechanism for anyone (whether on behalf of a company or organisation, or as an individual) to challenge advice or a decision taken in the name of health and safety that they believe to be disproportionate or inaccurate. The following are examples of school based cases

School garden bans cane supports for plants due to health and safety

Issue

The enquirer’s wife works as a Teaching Assistant at a local Primary School. One of her duties is to look after the school garden and bamboo canes are being used to support runner bean plants. One of the school governors has stated that for 'Health and Safety' reasons all the canes must have a ping pong ball on the end. This is so the children don't trip and impale themselves on the canes.

Panel decision

There is no health and safety law which specifies cane toppers as a requirement but the Royal Horticultural Society guidance recommends their use on canes which are lower than 1.8 metres high to avoid the risk of eye injuries. The decision to use cane toppers in a school garden therefore seems sensible but it is a pity that it was represented as a "health and safety requirement" rather than plain old common sense!
Lollipop lady banned from waving at cars as it breaches health and safety rules

Issue
A school Lollipop lady is banned from waving at cars by her bosses after one complaint by a member of the public.

Panel opinion
Whilst no-one wants to be killjoy, ‘lollipop’ men and ladies do have a very important job to do in helping manage road safety risks for schoolchildren. They need to pay full care and attention – both for their own safety and that of the children. We are fully in favour of a smile and a kind word, but potentially misleading hand gestures or a loss of attention could have serious consequences. On balance, we feel that the company was right to intervene and did so in a proportionate way in this instance.

National H&S Cases
Pupil died from allergic reaction (all schools)
Nasar Ahmed, a pupil attending a London school tragically died after falling ill in a supervised detention in November last year. He had long term medical issues including severe asthma, eczema and multiple allergies including amongst others, milk. The coroner found that school staff were unfamiliar with his medication box, and there was no mention of an EpiPen or adrenaline in his allergy action plan. They had also underestimated how serious the pupil’s asthma was, listing it as mild to moderate, rather than severe. Staff were also unfamiliar with other pupil’s health care plans unless they were going on a school visit.

On 10 November Nasar consumed a school dinner of tandoori chicken made with milk which caused a severe allergic reaction and whilst staff and paramedics tried to save him the teenager died four days later in hospital.

An inquest heard staff had failed to properly administer the 14-year-old’s medication in the five minutes before paramedics arrived.

Cath Smith, the executive head teacher at Bow School, said: “We are all deeply saddened about this tragic incident and continue to offer our heartfelt sympathies to Nasar's family.

“The safety of those in our care is of course, our overriding concern, and following Nasar’s death we rigorously reviewed all of our safety procedures and are providing more training for staff across the board.

Comment – It is the responsibility of the school and parents/carers to complete an individual health care plan (IHCP) before a pupil commences school. Sometimes, input from a medical professional is also required. If an IHCP cannot be completed in time, the school must ensure that they are advised of what constitutes an emergency for the pupil with medical needs and put arrangements in place to deal with this until the IHCP is finalised. All relevant staff must be made aware of procedures and the IHCP updated as necessary. Staff training may be required.
Health and Safety Training (all schools)

Under health and safety law, employers must ensure that any individual performing a task on their behalf has the competence to do so without putting the health and safety of themselves or others at significant risk. One way of assisting with this is by training. If any of your staff require training or refresher training on the topics listed below, please book a place by visiting CPD on-line.

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<td>19th October 2017 (all day)</td>
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<td>School Visit Leader Refresher Training</td>
<td>22nd November 2017 (am)</td>
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<td>Health and Safety Skills for Business Managers</td>
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<td>Managing H&amp;S in schools for School Senior Leaders</td>
<td>October (Date TBC)</td>
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<td>Fire Risk Assessment Training</td>
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<td>First Aid – Various courses and dates. See CPD on-line for further details</td>
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Health & Safety DVD Library (all schools)

Subscribing schools are able to borrow the DVDs for use on staff training days. The DVDs are 10 – 20 minutes long and can be requested via the Schools Health and Safety mailbox. They are available to loan for a maximum of 2 weeks and schools will need to collect and return them from the H&S Unit at the Broad Lane office in Yate.

The DVDs available are:
- Asbestos
- COSHH (Hazardous Substances)
- Display Screen Equipment (DSE)
- Fire Safety
- Health and Safety in the Office
- Control of Legionella
- Manual Handling
- Working at Height
Additional H&S Services (all schools)

A reminder to those schools on the ‘Basic’ package that we also offer an ‘Enhanced’ package which provides many additional benefits. For details see following link.

Also, for all schools, we provide additional pay-as-you-go services which include:

- fire risk assessments
- on-site briefings on specific topics (e.g. manual handling, hazardous substances, work at height)
- work experience programme advice, support and placement risk assessments (secondary schools only)

Contact Jean McKenna or James Lewington on 01454 863224 for further details.

Schools Health & Safety Helpline

The Schools H&S Helpline is available to all subscribing schools Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 5 pm (4.30 pm on Friday). The number is 01454 863224. We aim to answer all calls, but occasionally you will need to leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.