



Asbestos Warning to Schools – pinning Christmas decorations and trimmings to walls, window or door reveals, ceilings and ceiling tiles, etc.

The festive period is upon us once again and Schools take pride in decorating classrooms and communal areas to celebrate this time of year. If your school was built prior to the year 2000 it may contain asbestos. Please remind staff before they start pinning Christmas decorations to walls or hanging them from ceiling tiles, etc. to check they are not unwittingly disturbing any potential asbestos containing materials as this can result in the release of asbestos fibres into the air.

All School buildings, with the exception of new builds since 2000, will have an asbestos survey and an asbestos management plan in place where there is known to be asbestos containing material or 'unknown' material on site that may contain asbestos. The location of these materials **must** be highlighted on the buildings floor plans. Staff working in areas that may contain asbestos must be advised of the risk and how it is managed. If you are unsure whether an area contains asbestos, **do not** put decorations up there. Examples of where asbestos containing materials can sometimes be found include:

- ✚ Asbestos insulating board (AIB), which looks like plasterboard. This can be anywhere as it was used as general building board in previous years. It can be in the walls, ceilings, ceiling tiles, window and door surrounds and columns of any room including classrooms, corridors, toilets, halls and above suspended ceilings, etc.
- ✚ Ceiling voids of schools can potentially contain asbestos debris which may be released if the ceiling tiles are disturbed.
- ✚ Sprayed asbestos can be on ceilings or around structural beams.
- ✚ Asbestos lagging can be around heating pipes, in the walls, loft and in floor ducting.

Further guidance on the management of Asbestos is available on the Premises Management Guidance & Records section of the [schools portal](#).

Be safe when working at height

At this time of year when staff are 'decking the halls' and putting up Christmas decorations, it presents an opportunity to remind them of good practice when working at height in the classroom or around the school. Use the correct equipment for the job e.g. step-stools and step-ladders. **Do not** be tempted to stand on chairs or desks for a 'quick fix'! Ensure only those staff trained to use ladders are allowed to do so. Staff using ladders and steps must wear sensible shoes and clothing and working alone should be avoided wherever possible when working at height. Guidance on this topic is available on the [schools portal](#) and includes a link to e-learning on ladder safety.

Let's get Christmas off to a safe and healthy start!



Issued by: Health, Safety & Quality Team

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