

EAST RENFREWSHIRE LNCT AGREEMENT
GUIDANCE TO SCHOOLS ON HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

Introduction

The present government recently issued a policy statement on Revitalising Health and Safety and East Renfrewshire Council have been enthusiastic in their approach to the latest phase of this policy – Partnership in Prevention. However it has been noted that not all educational establishments have a consistent policy towards a procedure in health and safety issues and some are confused by the role of the Trade Union H&S rep and the principal H&S officer (usually, but not always the head teacher). These guidelines may help in the formation of an agreed Health and Safety policy in schools:

The following practice should be observed

1. In most cases any Health and Safety issue should be brought to the attention of the employee's line manager (in many schools this may involve the head teacher directly). In larger schools these issues can be initially addressed at departmental level and from there brought to the attention of the H & S officer.
2. If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily at this stage then a meeting should be arranged between T.U. H&S rep. and the H&S officer to discuss the next steps, including the use of Risk Assessment as a way forward.

Most issues are resolved at this level, however, failing this:

3. i) If the school has a Health and Safety committee (the committee should have equal balance of T.U. and management), then the issue should be addressed formally at the next meeting.

Alternatively:

- ii) Schools without Health and Safety committee should call on advice from their senior Health and Safety Rep. if necessary.
4. If the issue is not resolved at this stage then the T.U. H&S rep has the right to present the case to the Educational Health and Safety Committee through the T.U. standing member.

In issuing these guidelines all parties should be aware that although all Health and Safety issues should be regarded as serious, the above procedures must be seen as steps to be taken in issues which are not "life or limb" situations. Nor in any way can they be used to circumvent any of the substantial statutory rights of any H&S rep. Arrangements should be made for the health and safety rep. to attend any major accidents or incidents (involving a union member) and facilities be made available for interviewing the member and for documenting such occurrences.

All involved should be aware that Risk Assessment is only a means to an end and not always the answer to the problem and that the controls and recommendation of the Risk Assessment must be acted upon as soon as is practicable - the Risk Assessment document is not another paper exercise simply to be filed away. They should also be aware that use of “generic” Risk Assessment has not always stood up in court and that these documents are better used as templates and, from there, adapted to individual circumstances.

LNCT/BMcH
March 2004



Education Department