

Children's
Services

Health & Safety briefing for school leaders

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7 May 2026
14 May 2026
19 May 2026

Welcome

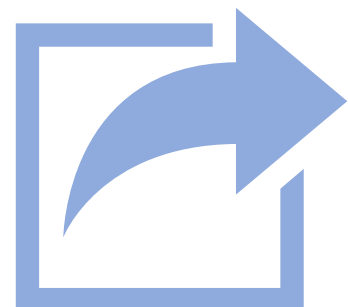


Please feel free to share thoughts and raise questions as we go through the session



The queries will be collated and responded to afterwards

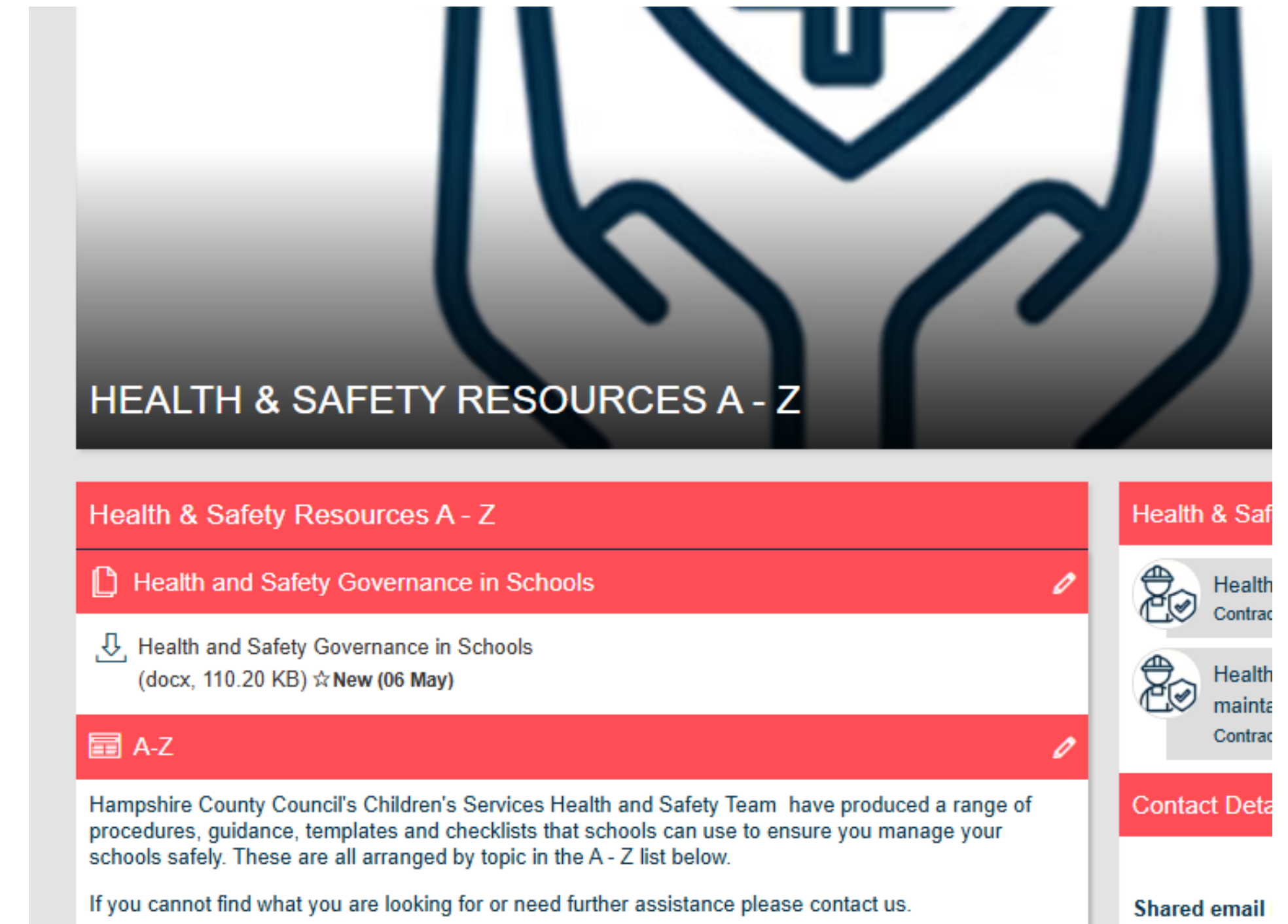
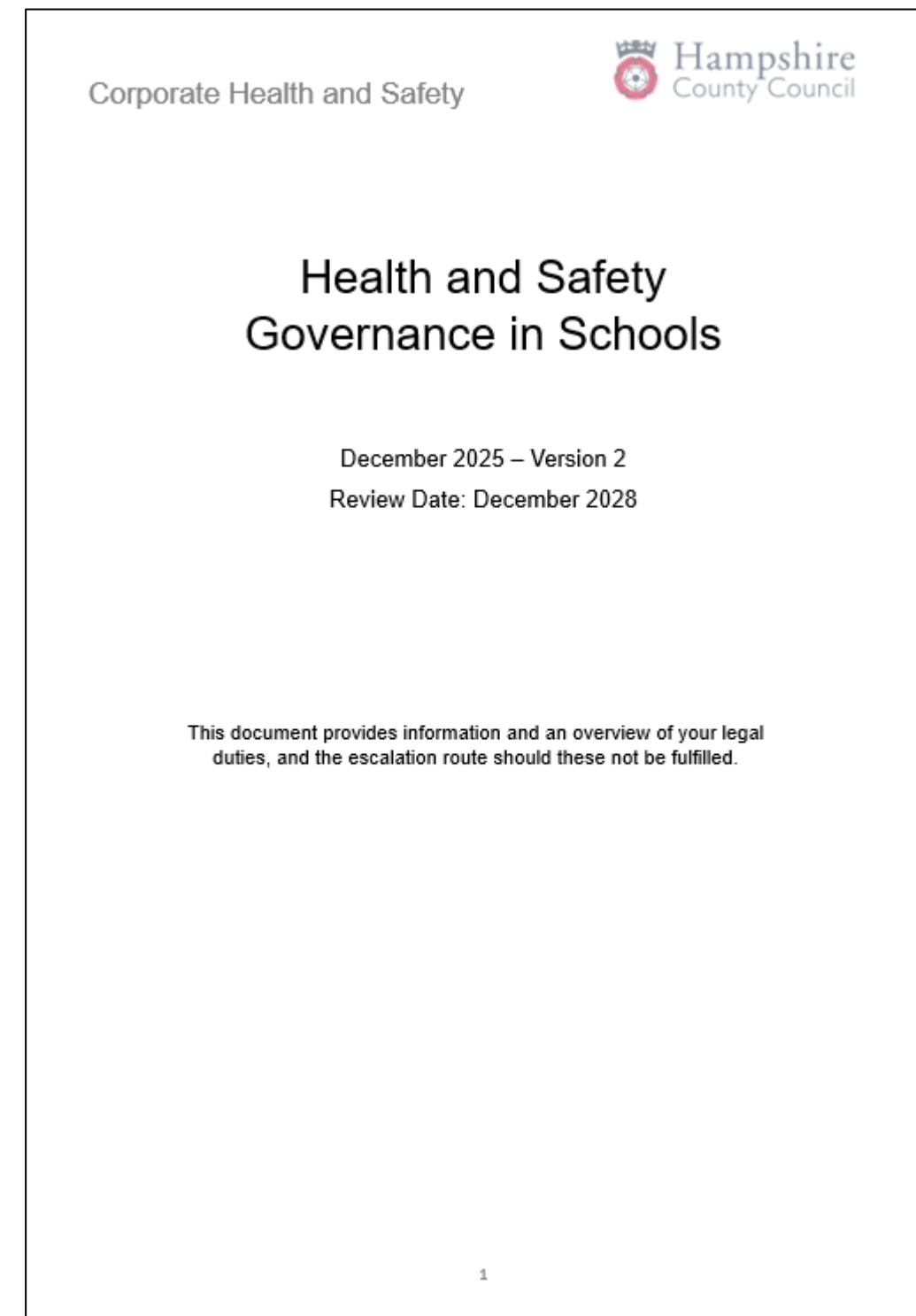
Slides will be shared after the session



Introduction

- Why this session matters now
- Audience: Headteachers and Chairs of Governors
- Clear message – governance decisions prevent – or permit – serious injury
- Updated 'Health and Safety Governance in Schools' document on the Services for Schools health and safety section

[Health and Safety Governance in Schools - 2025](#)



Why are we here today?

The opportunity to shine a lens on:

Regulatory reality

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
involvement changes reality

- Investigations are focusing on decision-making
- Requiring evidence over reassurance
- Enforcement action already happening in the sector

The human impact

- When minor hazards cause serious harm
- Permanent injury to children
- Trauma to staff and families
- Long-term consequences for schools

From routine risk to injuries

- Recent finger entrapment and amputation incidents
- Not isolated or 'unforeseeable'
- HSE now scrutinising schools more closely



Who is legally responsible?

Health and Safety Governance in Schools

Key components of the structure include:

Leadership and Commitment – The governing body and headteacher hold responsibility for health and safety, ensuring that risks are managed effectively.

The governing body should lead by example and take ownership of health and safety. They should demonstrate commitment and provide clear direction.

Headteachers should put in place sensible approaches to health and safety with

There is no safety buffer

- Hampshire County Council as the employer is the duty holder
- Headteachers have delegated responsibility
- Governors have strategic oversight and challenge
- Individual members of the school are required to co-operate regarding health and safety systems and processes

Key legal duties

- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)
- [Education Act 2002](#)

“Reasonably practicable”

- Potential cost does not justify inaction where serious harm is foreseeable

What is and what isn't Health and Safety Governance?

What is Health and Safety Governance?

Health and Safety governance refers to the structure and processes through which an organisation ensures the health and safety of its employees and others. Schools must ensure they have a structured approach to the safety and wellbeing of students, staff and visitors.

It is:

1. **Leadership** - by the headteacher and governing body
2. **Decision-making actions** – timely, scheduled and informed
3. **Assurance** – analytical and evaluative approaches
4. **Escalation** - when things aren't right

What does effective leadership look like?

- Zero tolerance for serious harm
- Clear prioritisation of child safety
- Visible evidence based decision making – not implied intentions
- Proactive, structured and informed oversight
- Focused on impact – not bureaucracy
 - Not paperwork driven
 - Not just site management

Assessing and managing risks

Risk assessments identify measures to control risks during school activities

Required by law:

- Assess risks
- Put in place proportionate control measures

Record significant findings of the assessment by identifying:

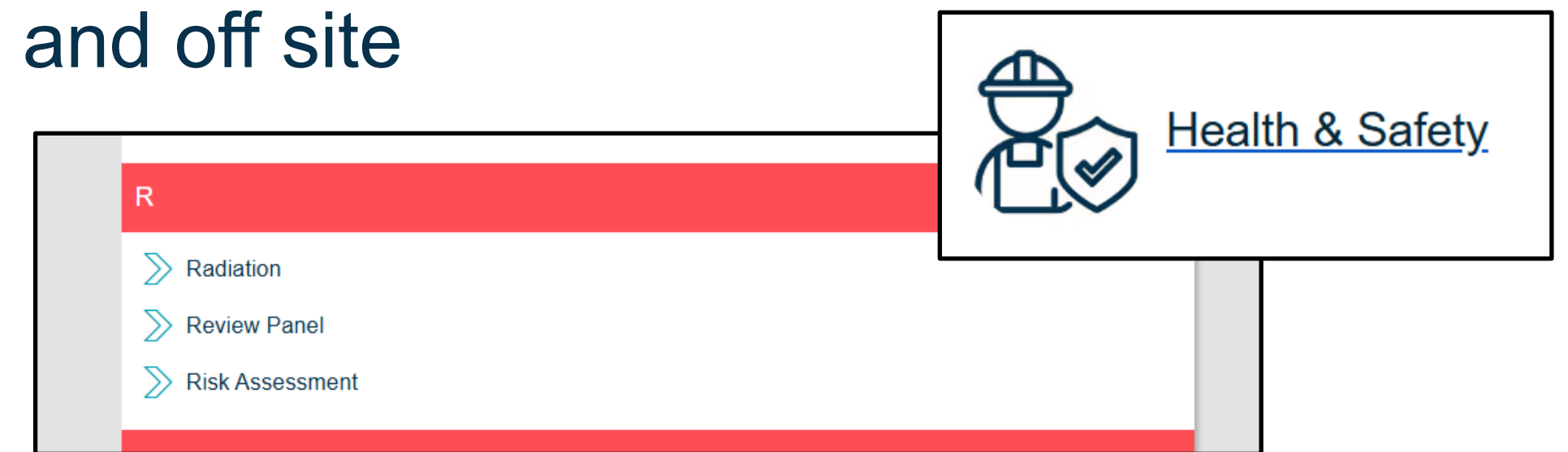
- The hazards
- How people might be harmed by them
- What they have in place to control risk

Aim to be:

- Simple and focused on controls
- Outcomes that explain to others what they are required to do for:
 - Staff
 - Pupils
 - Visitors
 - Contractors

Consider the risks that may arise in the course of the school day:

- School premises, including equipment
- Delivery of its curriculum
- On and off site



What support is available?

- [Health & Safety | Hampshire Services for Schools](#)
- Risk assessor training courses
- Risk assessment procedure, guidance, templates and suggested topics list
- Roles and responsibility training and support

Risk management that actually works

Points to consider in your leadership role....

Delegation without assurance creates risk

- Who completed the risk assessment?
- Were they the people that understand the task/site/activity?
- Who signed off the risk assessments?
- Have risk assessments been reviewed and updated? By whom?

Reassurance is not evidence

Are you clear about:

- Incident trends?
- Outstanding high-risk actions?
- Verification that controls are in place and effective?

Using support early

Corporate Health and Safety Team

- Advice and guidance
- Risk assessment tools
- Escalation support
- Help *before* investigations, not after

Contact details – corprisk@hants.gov.uk

Case study - finger entrapment injury

Incident

- A 6-year-old pupil suffered a finger amputation caused by an unprotected hinge side of a heavy door at a primary school
- The door was in daily use by pupils

What was known?

- Finger entrapment risk was well-established and foreseeable
- Minor incidents and near misses had occurred
- Risk assessment had identified the hazard and the required control (finger guard)

Governance decisions

- Action was deferred due to cost pressures
- Risk severity was underestimated
- Decision not escalated to governors
- No clear timescale nor assurance process

Using the chat function...

What are the implications of this incident – for the injured pupil, the school and the organisation?

Case study – finger entrapment injury

Impact on the injured pupil

- Significant injury
- Lifelong impact

Impact on school staff

- Distress and loss of trust
- Increased scrutiny
- Greater workload (investigations, reviews, implementation of controls)

Impact on the school

- Failure to control a known, foreseeable risk
- Legal and reputational exposure
- Financial implications (legal costs, remedial works)
- Immediate need for urgent safety improvements and wider audits

Impact on the Headteacher and Governing Body

- Accountability for decisions
- Failure to escalate risk
- Requirement to evidence improvement and strengthened oversight
- Possible disciplinary or capability implications

Impact on HCC

- Exposure to legal liability and compensation claims
- Reputational damage
- Increased scrutiny
- Wider review of similar risks across schools



Operational impact

- Immediate actions to eliminate risk (e.g. install finger guards across estate)
- Reactive programme of inspections and remedial works
- Increased assurance activity
- Disruption to normal school operations during remediation

Organisational (strategic) impact

- Evidence of systemic failure
- Need to strengthen governance
- Shift towards risk-based prioritisation over cost pressures
- Reinforcement of leadership expectations around safeguarding and safety

Why health and safety is a governance issue

Incidents occur when:

- Risks are known but tolerated
- Controls are delayed or declined
- Responsibility is delegated without competence
- No one checks completion
- Routine circumstances change

Typical governance failure pattern

What we are seeing in practice

- Known risk identified
- Action deferred due to cost or capacity
- No escalation
- Serious injury occurs

Legionella

Real impact:

- In 2024 a Hampshire Special School experienced significant Legionella contamination
- Resulted in the relocation of most classes to another HCC site for an extended period

Consequences:

- Major disruption to education provision
- Significant stress and anxiety for both pupils and staff
- Health impacts reported (including illness)
- Substantial unplanned financial cost

What to check:

- All water management activity (flushing/descaling) MUST be recorded on Concerto in line with guidance – and continue through school holidays
- In March 2026, 26% of the required preventative activities were 'missed' by HCC schools!
- If unsure, contact the Legionella Team legionella@hants.gov.uk

Key Message: Legionella is not a theoretical risk – it can rapidly escalate into a serious safeguarding, health, and financial issue if not effectively managed.

What HSE inspectors and investigators ask

Five unavoidable questions

1. **Was the risk identified?**
2. **Was it assessed competently?**
3. **Were controls implemented?**
4. **Were controls monitored?**
5. **Who signed this off?**

Why this matters in schools

- In a school setting, failing at any of these points can directly impact pupil safety, wellbeing, inclusion, and legal compliance
- Robust health and safety processes protect pupils, staff, leaders, and governors by ensuring risks are properly identified, managed, and owned, rather than informally absorbed into day-to-day practice

What happens if action isn't taken?

Real consequences

- HSE Notices
- Criminal investigation
- Civil claims
- Reputational damage
- Potential education intervention



Escalation within Hampshire County Council

- Stage 1: Support and correction with Headteacher
- Stage 2: Escalation to governors and Education and Inclusion
- Stage 3: Senior intervention and formal action

Recent accidents – a summary to date

- **30 April 2025:** Finger trapping incident at a school – CHST investigation carried out
- **6 June 2025:** HCC communication regarding updated guidance for doors, directing all schools to fit finger guards in all nursery, KS1 and SEN settings
- **14 July 2025:** HCC receive Notice of Contravention from HSE for incident at a school - **included a 'fine'**
- **20 October 2025:** Second finger trapping incident at a school
- **13 November 2025:** Letter sent to all Headteachers from Director of Children's Services requiring response
- **21 November 2025:** Door hinge entrapment support and FAQ published on School Comms by Corporate Health and Safety Team
- **27 November 2025:** Third finger trapping incident at a school
- **12 December 2025:** Fourth finger trapping incident at a school
- **5 January 2026:** 49% schools submitted response on time - significant input needed from school improvement colleagues to achieve full compliance with responses
- **20 January 2026:** All schools submitted response, with the majority of them confirming they have fitted appropriate finger guards, reviewed risk assessments, and taken proactive steps to ensure door safety
- **Throughout January 2026:** Independent assurance by the Corporate Health and Safety Team

12 February 2026: Partial toe amputation at a school

20 April 2026: HCC receive Notice of Contravention from HSE - **included a 'fine'**

This example is about finger entrapment and amputation – please consider the variety of identified risks we have in schools, e.g. slips and trips, violence and aggression, legionella, moving and handling, etc.

Corporate Health & Safety Team

What do we provide?

Dedicated H&S Team: 14 H&S professionals led by H&S Business Partner, Helen Aston

- Circa 7000 incident reports from Schools each year (6818 in 2025)
- 50-100 Reporting of Dangerous Diseases Injuries and Occurrences (RIDDOR) reports to HSE (67 in 2025)
- Over 40 formal investigations conducted
- H&S self assessments and assurance activities
- Schools' Communications, training packages, policies and resources

Access to H&S resources: Through [Hampshire Services for Schools](#)

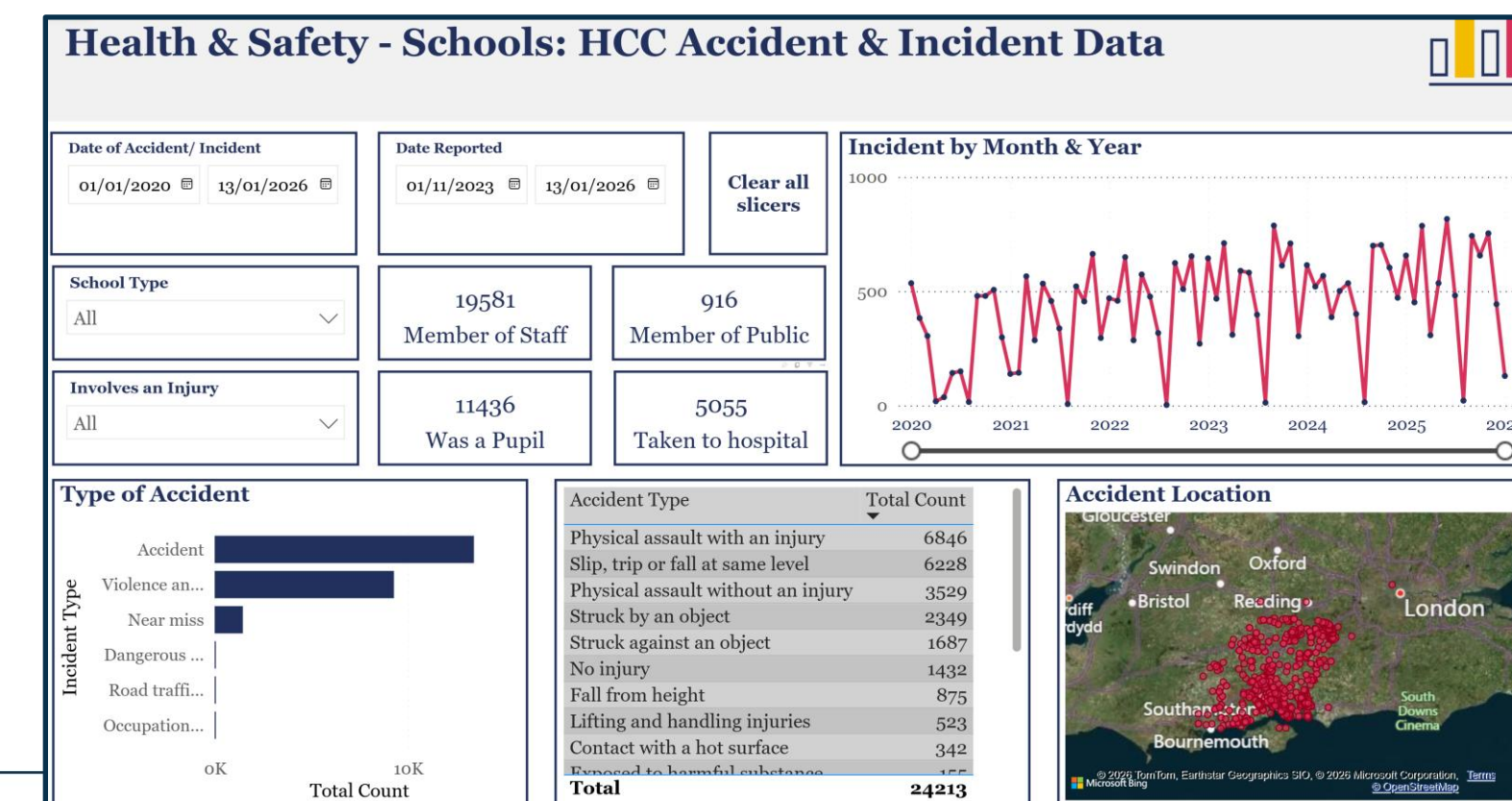
- 75+ different documents from procedures, risk assessments and governor information
- Support and advice on specialist topics including legionella and asbestos

Legal Services:

- Dedicated department of lawyers and legal experts
- Provide clear, reliable support when incidents lead to civil claims or HSE enforcement

HCC underwrites risk:

- HCC has incurred costs of £1.4m in School H&S Civil Claims in the last five years



What do we need from you?

- **Prioritise health and safety** - Ensure sufficient time and resources are allocated, discuss it regularly with your staff
- **Carry out risk assessments** – Not just paperwork: they must be accurate, lived, acted on and shared, forming the foundation of good H&S practice
- **Report incidents** - Appropriately and in a timely manner using the H&S accident reporting tool – CHST report RIDDOR's to HSE
- **Local investigations** - Conducted in a timely manner following the link automatically emailed to the manager following the incident
- **Inform us of near misses** - Encourages learning and embeds a good H&S culture
- **Be responsive** - Action Schools' Comms, respond to our team and take part in H&S initiatives
- **Stay up to date** - Variety of comms routes (schools comms, webinars, Exec Head meetings / committee meetings)

Things to be aware of

- **Updated H&S Governance in Schools document.** Understand your responsibilities
- **Communication.** Review taking place to ensure all routes are effective and update schools appropriately

Contact details - corprisk@hants.gov.uk

ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTING

Summary

Hampshire County Council staff and service users may, unfortunately, have accidents as a result of work activities. All work related incidents must be recorded and investigated.

The Hampshire County Council procedure sets out the consistent way accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences are managed. It sets a Council-wide method for recording and assessing the significance of incidents, escalating them to the appropriate level and a consistent recording method for investigation reports and subsequent learning.

The HCC guidance and HSE links provide additional guidance to help comply with the procedure and regulations.

For further assistance please contact: Corprisk@hants.gov.uk

What to report

Data Protection

The reporting form meets the requirements of the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979 and the Social Security Administration Act 1992 and replaces the Accident Book BI 150.

To comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) personal details entered on this form will be kept confidential. Information from the form will be stored electronically for up to 70 years.

To ensure that the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are met the reports from this form will be used to enable Hampshire County Council meet its legal obligation with regard to health and safety as well as to improve its health and safety performance.

Information from this form will be used in investigations and will be held and stored securely to enable the Council to analyse its health and safety performance with the aim of improving that performance. The Council may use the information in any legal action that could arise from the consequences of the incident reported on this form and may be obliged to disclose information as a statutory requirement.

HCC Incident & Investigation Reporting Documents

- Incident Form
- Incident Report Form - Paper version (docx, 36.04 KB)
Paper version of incident form to be used locally as a temporary record until added to online system

HCC Procedure & Guidance

- Incident reporting procedure (docx, 67.19 KB)
- Incident reporting Guidance (docx, 121.34 KB)

Other Pages

- A - Z
- Home Page

Health & Safety

Page last updated: 08 Nov 2023

6455 | 15 Jan 2026

H&S POLICY

H&S Policy

The Hampshire County Council Health and Safety Policy, recognises that good health and safety management supports the delivery of services for the people of Hampshire. As part of the overall risk management process and culture, good health and safety management will help reduce the risk of injury and loss, help promote a healthy workforce and help protect all who are affected by the County Council's services.

Each workplace should display a copy of their employers signed Statement of Intent, and ensure that staff have access to (or copies of) the HSE H&S Law What You Should Know poster.

Schools also require a school H&S policy which will record the organisational arrangements, responsibilities, and roles of staff. This must be shared with staff regularly or when there are changes.

For further assistance please contact: Corprisk@hants.gov.uk

HCC Health & Safety Policy Documents

- School H&S Policy Template (docx, 103.72 KB)
- Health and Safety Governance in Schools (docx, 2.41 MB)
- HCC Statement of Intent (pdf, 179.97 KB)
- HCC H&S Policy Statement (pdf, 244.84 KB)

Useful Links

- HSE What you Should Know Poster

In summary

- [Health and Safety Governance in Schools - 2025](#): Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 (EA) provides that the governing body and the headteacher of a community or voluntary controlled school, a community special school, or a maintained nursery school must adhere to any health and safety directives issued by the local authority.
- The local authority needs to ensure that each of their schools has access to competent health and safety advice

- Website guidance and advice [Health & Safety | Hampshire Services for Schools](#)

- H&S professionals

- Extensive training and advice for both school leaders and governors

- Termly newsletter [Health and Safety Newsletter - Spring 2026.docx](#)

- Headteacher representation at **Headteacher People and Health and Safety Standing Committee**

Results

Health & Safety
STORE | Published: 03/08/2022 | HS-0822-
The **health** and **safety** of your staff, pupils and certainly can create concern and worry. We see and safe through a structured approach. We are following the HSE model of Success.

Health and safety guidance
RESOURCES | Published: 20/11/2023 | HIA
Although this guidance is particularly applicable cleaning materials. Follow guidance given in the hazardous chemicals in schools. | Summary | Studies and diagnosis of hazardous

Health & Safety Resources A - Z
RESOURCES | Published: 12/07/2023 | HS
Health & Safety - Top Level Page | A-Z | Hampshire guidance, templates and checklists that schools you cannot find what you are looking for or need.

Occupational Health
RESOURCES | Published: 16/06/2023 | HS
Occupational Health on the im
Well Occur

Health & Safety
RESOURCES | Published: 20/11/2023 | HIA
In art, **safety** is about more than rules and regu

School's Health and Safety
Spring Newsletter - Edition 23

Hampshire
Services
HEALTH AND SAFETY

Thank you

Health and safety in schools is not optional or procedural; it is a fundamental duty.

We must be confident that risks are properly identified, managed and overseen, that this involves all staff, and that it is proactively led by school leaders, including the governing body, with clear accountability at every stage.

This briefing reinforces that effective health and safety practice relies on consistency, clarity and accountability; where good practice exists it must be sustained, and where gaps are identified they must be addressed.

Our shared aim is simple – every pupil and member of staff should be safe, supported and able to thrive

Appendices

Schools where Hampshire is the employer

In Hampshire we have:

- 382 Maintained schools where Hampshire is the employer:
- 3 maintained nursery schools.
- 4 Education Centres.
- 303 community/community special schools.
- 72 voluntary controlled schools.
- In these schools there are exactly 110,313 pupils.
- There are approx. 22,000 staff.

The RIDDOR reports cover staff, pupils and visitors (although reporting conditions are different).

- 2025/26 – 55 RIDDOR reports
- 2024/25 – 56 RIDDOR reports
- 2023/24 – 83 RIDDOR reports

Responsibilities of schools

[Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools - GOV.UK](#)

Responsibilities

Pupils should be safe in school and when undertaking out of school activities. The risk management to keep them safe should be proportionate to the nature of the activities.

Teachers should be able to take pupils on exciting school trips that broaden their horizons. Pupils should be able to play freely in the playground and be able to take part in sports. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has guidance on [promoting a balanced approach to children's play and leisure](#).

The employer or, in the case of independent schools, the proprietor, is accountable for the health and safety of school staff and pupils. The day-to-day running of the school is usually delegated to the headteacher and the school management team. In most cases, they are responsible for ensuring that risks are managed effectively. This includes health and safety matters.

[The role of school leaders - who does what - HSE](#)

In schools sensible health and safety starts at the top and relies on every member of the management team making sure that risk is managed responsibly and proportionately. It is about creating a safe learning environment, giving pupils an appreciation of risk and how to deal with it. It means doing what is reasonably practicable to reduce significant risks by putting in place control measures to manage the real risks. It is not about the elimination of all risk.

Responsibilities of employers

Frequently asked questions - HSE

Where the local authority is the employer they should ensure the arrangements for managing risks in their schools are sensibly implemented. In practice this will require the local authority to set authority wide health and safety policies and procedures. The local authority will often retain resources to provide strategic input on risk management including:

- Setting of consistent policies and standards,
- Providing competence on strategic and technical issues
- Monitoring schools to check policies and procedures are implemented and working.

The local authority also needs to ensure that each of their schools has access to competent health and safety advice. Some local authorities provide this as part of their central function – but where funding is delegated governing bodies may select sources of advice and guidance from other providers - or purchase this as a service from the local authority. Obtaining health and safety advice in this way does not mean that schools can ignore their employer's health and safety policies.

Health and Safety Governance in Schools - 2025: Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 (EA) provides that the governing body and the headteacher of a community or voluntary controlled school, a community special school, or a maintained nursery school must adhere to any health and safety directives issued by the local authority.