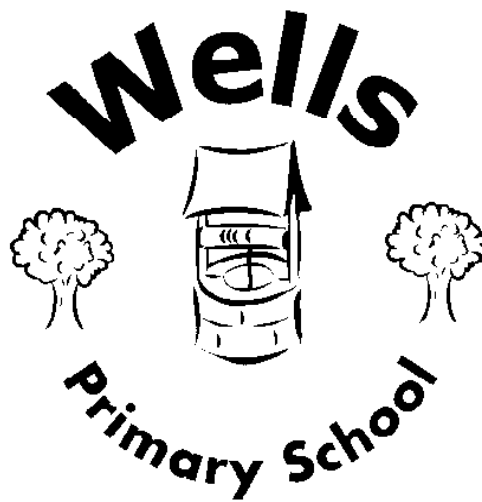


# Wells Primary School

## Asbestos Policy



Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of Governors

Reviewed: May 2024

# WELLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Asbestos Policy

### Introduction

There is evidence of asbestos-containing materials in a small number of areas of the building at Wells Primary School and the school therefore has an Asbestos Management Plan in place. The aim of the plan and this policy is to ensure that pupils, staff, contractors, visitors and all those using the premises are protected from exposure to asbestos.

The school recognises that it has a legal and moral duty to protect anyone using its premises from exposure to health hazards such as asbestos. The head teacher, school business manager, and governors take this responsibility very seriously.

Wells Primary School was built in the 1960s when materials containing asbestos were once widely used in building, construction and equipment, particularly as a form of insulation or fire-retardant material. However, asbestos has now been recognised as posing a significant health hazard and its use has been outlawed. Despite this, asbestos remains in many existing buildings, especially in older buildings, and so a duty of care is placed upon buildings owners under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 to ensure that any asbestos that remains in their structures is identified and the risks properly and safely managed. The local authority organised an Asbestos Management Plan for Wells Primary School which is reviewed annually.

The Asbestos Management Plan has been carefully administered since its introduction. To the best of our knowledge, areas containing asbestos materials are now contained within locked cupboards that are rarely accessed. However, the school is aware that asbestos-containing materials may be present in other parts of the building that have not yet been identified and therefore takes a cautious approach.

### Risk

Most asbestos materials actually pose little risk unless they are disturbed. There are three main types of asbestos – chrysotile, amosite and crocidolite. They are usually called white, brown and blue respectively. However, they cannot be identified by their colour and laboratory analysis is required.

When disturbed, their fibres can be released into the atmosphere where they can be inhaled. Once in the lungs, the fibres will remain there for a long time and, eventually, can cause serious diseases such as:

- Mesothelioma – a cancer of the pleural and peritoneal lining considered to be exclusively related to asbestos exposure. By the time it is diagnosed, it is almost always fatal.
- Asbestosis – a scarring of the lung tissue, impairing the elasticity of the lung and hampering its ability to exchange gases.

- Lung cancer – a malignant tumour of the bronchi, tumours growing through surrounding tissue, invading and often obstructing air passages.
- Diffuse pleural thickening – a non-malignant disease in which the lining of the lung becomes scarred. Symptoms of all of the above include shortness of breath and severe breathing difficulties.

### **Schools' duties**

The duty to manage asbestos requires the owners, or those responsible for non-domestic buildings in the UK, to:

- Find out whether or not a building contains asbestos and what condition it is in;
  - Assess the risk, e.g. if it is likely to release fibres;
  - Make a plan to manage that risk.
- The regulations do not require duty holders to remove all asbestos when found. They do, however, require the owners of buildings that might contain asbestos to assess their risk and, where required, to carry out a survey and control that risk. If any asbestos is detected, expert advice should be sought on its management. In many instances, the safest course of action is to isolate the asbestos and to leave it in situ where it should remain undisturbed. Much will depend on its condition and position. Its position should be noted in a suitable register and any in-house building or maintenance staff or external contractors advised of its position.
- If, however, asbestos is in poor condition or is likely to be damaged or disturbed, then duty holders will need to decide whether it should be repaired, sealed, enclosed or removed. • This policy has been completed with reference to the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) L143 (second edition) Managing and working with asbestos.

### **Wells Primary School**

- An asbestos inspection survey is carried out annually by an independent expert surveyor.
- The results of the inspection are recorded, identifying any parts of buildings where asbestos may be located and recording its position and condition in the Asbestos Register. The register will be kept up to date to reflect any changes in condition.
- The risk of asbestos fibres being released into the air from the materials in any identified areas will be assessed, taking into account the materials' condition and how likely they are to be damaged or disturbed.
- A management plan will be drawn up, stating which areas, if any, need asbestos to be sealed, encapsulated or, as a last resort, removed.
- Where there is any doubt as to the risks posed by asbestos, then expert advice will always be sought and followed from a suitably qualified and competent source.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that the head teacher, school business manager, caretaking staff, governors, and staff are made aware of the current asbestos status of the buildings and outbuildings.
- The condition of all asbestos-containing materials or materials suspected of containing asbestos will be re-inspected/monitored at agreed intervals to ascertain that there has been no damage or deterioration. Where damage or deterioration is found, the asbestos-containing material will be reassessed and repaired or removed as appropriate.

- Any work on asbestos-containing materials will only be undertaken by appropriate people after a full risk assessment and in consultation with the local authority.
- Surveys and work on asbestos will be undertaken by competent people only. For example, only contractors licensed by the HSE will be used for the removal of asbestos-containing materials (these can be found on the HSE web-site). Where work is low risk and is assessed as likely to be sporadic or of low intensity, other contractors may be used, but only after a suitable risk assessment. On no account will asbestos be disturbed, removed or disposed of by in-house staff or by contractors without the appropriate certification, notification and protective equipment or precautions.
- Everyone who needs to know about the presence of asbestos will be alerted and no one will be allowed to plan, design or start work that could disturb asbestos unless the correct procedures are to be employed and a safe plan of work agreed. Any work to be conducted on school buildings, including all maintenance work or building work, will be planned with reference to the Asbestos Management Plan and contractors, and employed maintenance staff will be given full access to the register and relevant records and plans.
- All contractors, and sub-contractors, must sign the Asbestos Register to acknowledge that they understand the above information.
- All asbestos removal contractors will be expected to comply with current regulations and with the approved code of practice. They should complete the required notification to the HSE and attend all relevant meetings with the school to agree a plan of works and put health and safety arrangements into place. Certification of the removal of asbestos and its safe disposal will be received by the school and forwarded to the local authority.
- If any asbestos is accidentally damaged or disturbed, the head teacher – or person in charge of the site at the time of the incident – will take action to ensure that the asbestos is immediately isolated and affected areas sealed/cordoned off. In all such cases a suitably qualified expert contractor will be contacted immediately to assess the situation and recommend a course of action. The specialist contractors will be expected to make the necessary repairs/removal of material, clean up and advise on subsequent air monitoring and health surveillance requirements.

### **Management duties**

The head teacher, School Business Manager and premises staff have a duty to:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of and implement this policy and comply with the requirements of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and the associated approved code of practice.
- Prevent the exposure of employees or contractors to asbestos wherever possible.
- Keep the Asbestos Management Plan and Asbestos Register up to date to show any changes that could affect the risk assessment.
- Protect, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of all maintenance staff and contractors by ensuring that no maintenance work is carried out without prior reference to the Asbestos Management Plan and Asbestos Register.
- Ensure that, if asbestos is removed, it is removed by a suitably qualified and competent specialist contractor and that asbestos waste is properly disposed of in sealed, labelled containers with consignment notes.
- Ensure that the school makes no use of any product that contains asbestos.
- Make adequate resources and training available to staff to enable compliance.
- Consult with and report to governors on matters relating to asbestos.

### **Staff duties**

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 includes a requirement on anyone to co-operate as far as is necessary to allow the duty holder to comply with the Regulations. Staff (and volunteers) in this organisation therefore have a duty to:

- Familiarise themselves with this policy.
- Report any suspicion or discovery of a substance that could be asbestos to their line manager or supervisor immediately.
- Ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken prior to any construction or maintenance work being carried out, including planning all works with reference to the existing Asbestos Register and Management Plan.

### **Applicability and scope**

- This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the school without exception. All staff have responsibility for ensuring that they work within the remit of this policy and in the manner in which they have been trained.

### **Responsibilities**

- Responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of this policy lies with the head teacher and the governing body.