



Key Facts about the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and its Relationship with Schools

NEU guidance for members, reps and local officers

What is the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and what does it do?

HSE is the national independent enforcement body for work-related health, safety and welfare, with the aim of reducing work-related death, injury and ill health across Great Britain's workplaces.

What is its role in relation to schools?

HSE inspectors are entitled to offer schools information and advice, warn them that they are failing to comply with the law, serve prohibition or improvement notices, and prosecute.

If there's a health and safety problem in my school, should I contact the HSE?

No, raise your concern with school management and if you are not satisfied with the response contact your NEU health and safety adviser or the Advice Line.

A system exists for union health and safety representatives to use to report serious concerns to the HSE. The HSE's Concerns and Advice form for safety representatives, which can be submitted by post or on-line, is intended to be used only when other formal processes have been exhausted.

Where a health and safety representative believes there to have been a breach in the law which the employer fails to resolve, the representative should raise the issue with a senior union representative (for the NEU this will be the health and safety adviser) or paid union official. If, despite doing this, the issue remains unresolved, the health and safety representative has the option of [contacting the HSE](#).

Does the HSE routinely visit schools?

Not anymore. Since 2011, schools have been classed as 'low risk' (the NEU disagrees with this interpretation), which means that routine visits do not take place.

In what circumstances would an HSE inspector visit a school?

If there is a serious incident in a school involving serious injury or a fatality the HSE will become involved. If there are concerns that the law is being broken, and approaches to management and through the NEU have had no effect, then reporting the matter to the HSE would be the next step.

Is there a cost to the school if the HSE does visit?

If a health and safety law has been broken, then yes. If this has happened, then the school would be liable for recovery of the HSE's related costs, including inspection, investigation, administration and enforcement. Every hour spent is charged at £129.

Does a safety rep have the right to speak to an inspector during a visit?

Yes, in fact HSE inspectors are instructed to seek out health and safety representatives.



Does the HSE have specific advice for schools?

Yes it does. There is [guidance on reportable incidents, school visits, work experience, as well as inspection.](#)