

## Lesson not learnt at Catherine Junior School Leicester:

Any maintenance work that could disturb asbestos should not be carried out when the school is occupied.



*"A massive asbestos decontamination project will have to take place at Catherine Junior School, in Belgrave, Leicester, following a fire this week.*

*School bags, coats, PE kits and other items left behind during the evacuation by the 380 children will have to be destroyed because of the asbestos contamination.*

*"Workmen were repairing the roof of the gymnasium using a heat gun to melt bitumen to seal the roof.*

*"A stray spark ignited material in the roof space and the roof subsequently caught fire.*

*"The gymnasium has been completely destroyed by the fire and the surrounding classrooms have also sustained fire and smoke damage."*

**Comment:** Maintenance work was being carried out on the roof of Catherine's Junior School while it was occupied. This was despite the fact that it is understood that the school is a CLASP Mk4b built in 1970 and is known to contain significant amounts of mainly AIB.

<http://www.itv.com/news/central/update/2012-11-02/school-closed-for-weeks-after-asbestos-discovery/>

<http://www.thisisleicestershire.co.uk/Catherine-Junior-School-Education-officials-say/story-17223094-detail/story.html>

<http://www.thisisleicestershire.co.uk/Asbestos-Catherine-Junior-School-Leicester/story-17217567-detail/story.html>

<http://www.thisisleicestershire.co.uk/Workers-blamed-blaze-Catherine-Junior-School/story-17202525-detail/story.html>

In this case the work set fire to the school and the children and staff had to be evacuated, but the end result is that there is widespread asbestos contamination. However asbestos fibres can be released just from the activity of workmen on the roof. A primary school of similar construction in York had widespread asbestos contamination from two incidences when work on repairing the flat roof disturbed asbestos materials in the ceiling voids and fibres entered the classrooms.

[Asbestos dust found in classroom at Poppleton Ousebank Primary School, York Term start delayed at Poppleton Ousebank School as asbestos is found](#)

Lessons have not been learnt: Any maintenance work that could disturb asbestos should not be carried out when the school is occupied.

This latest incidence has occurred at the time sentencing is awaited following an incident at a Staffordshire primary school that caused widespread contamination when work was carried out while the school was occupied.

21<sup>st</sup> September 2012 *"Staffordshire County Council is facing a hefty fine after admitting liability when dangerous asbestos fibres were released into a primary school.*

*Glenthorne Primary School in Cheslyn Hay was closed for four months as a result in 2009, costing taxpayers £246,000. Lawyers for the local authority yesterday entered a guilty plea to a health and safety charge brought over the asbestos alert. They admitted failing to ensure persons not in its employment were not exposed to risks."*

<http://www.expressandstar.com/education/2012/09/21/staffordshire-council-in-guilty-plea-on-asbestos-at-school/>

*"Charges have been brought against Staffordshire County Council after dangerous asbestos fibres were released into a primary school.*

*The alert, believed to have been sparked when contractors dismantling a cupboard accidentally disturbed the fibres, shut Glenthorne Primary in Cheslyn Hay for four months and cost taxpayers £246,000. Other parts of the building were also affected.*

*Staff and some 178 pupils were sent home as a result of the health scare on February 13, 2009.*

*The school remained closed until June of that year."*

<http://www.expressandstar.com/news/2012/01/05/charges-after-asbestos-danger-shuts-primary/>

*Michael Lees  
3<sup>rd</sup> November 2012*

