



## **SCHOOLS NOT MAKING THE GRADE IN HEALTH & SAFETY**

Many schools may be in breach of health and safety legislation according to new research from building services and compliance business Managed Support Services (MSS). The Health and Safety Performance at Schools annual survey and benchmark study suggests that as many as 78 per cent of the 55 schools that participated are not fully compliant, with fire safety a particular area of concern.

The online survey involved 40 questions regarding each school's existing arrangements and covered five main categories: Health and safety policy, risk assessments, fire safety, first aid and health and safety management. Although most schools performed well for health and safety policy and first aid, the results were increasingly mixed for the other sections.

Fire safety appears to be an area of health and safety that needs to be urgently addressed with almost half of the schools surveyed seemingly in breach of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In particular, around 30 per cent of the schools stated that they had not complete a fire risk assessment in the past year and are therefore not compliant with the legislation.

Elsewhere, 55 per cent of schools indicated that they have not completed (or reviewed) DSE workstation assessments in the last 12 months, whilst only 24 per

cent of schools claim that they consult with staff on health and safety issues and 71 per cent of schools acknowledged that they do not complete health and safety briefings with pupils at the beginning of each term.

When asked how competent they think they are at completing specific health and safety activities, *Making staff feel involved in H&S* and *Embedding a positive H&S culture in the school* received the most negative response with 29 per cent and 31 per cent respectively rating these as poor or not competent enough.

Andrew Baylis, Managing Director of MSS Health & Safety commented: “The findings of the study show there are some clear areas of improvements needed to ensure universal compliance within the education sector. Furthermore, simply complying with the minimum requirements of health and safety is just the tip of the iceberg, because enforcement authorities want to see a positive culture that is embedded in the school, so there is still some way to go.”

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