



The Scottish Parliament

(For official use only) PUBLIC PETITION NO.	PE1268
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Should you wish to submit a public petition for consideration by the Public Petitions Committee please refer to the guidance leaflet [How to submit a public petition](#) and the Guidance Notes at the back of this form.

1. NAME OF PRINCIPAL PETITIONER
Catherine Mitchell on behalf of St. Gilbert primary school and all schools in the west of Scotland.
2. PETITION TITLE
Implementation of asbestos management plan in school buildings
3. PETITION TEXT
Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to take action against those local authorities who have failed to implement a robust asbestos management plan and procedures for school buildings containing asbestos and ensure that parents and teachers who require data about asbestos in school buildings held by local authorities have full access to this.
4. ACTION TAKEN TO RESOLVE ISSUES OF CONCERN BEFORE SUBMITTING THE PETITION
Contact has been made with— <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Glasgow City Council's Education Department requesting asbestos data held by it on asbestos within the school estate and in particular St. Philomena's Primary in Provanmill. Responses have been evasive, incomplete and some requests have had no response at all.• the local MSP for the area and again no action has been taken.• all Glasgow councillors on asbestos within St. Philomena's and the genuine safety issues we have discovered and again with no action taken.
5. PETITION BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Although the Health and Safety Executive issued asbestos management plans and procedures, most if not all local authorities have not been maintaining school buildings, allowing them to become in a poor or bad state of repair. This makes these schools to be graded a (C poor and D bad). All school buildings containing asbestos which are in these graded building are risking the asbestos becoming airborne. The most recent research has stated even a drawing pin placed into a wall or ceiling containing asbestos is enough to release spores into the air (asbestos in schools campaign). Inhaling or ingesting one dust partial is enough to have serious consequences (asbestos in schools campaign). These local authorities have ignored the problem they are making for themselves. Most of the D graded school

buildings throughout Scotland are considered crumbling; if a drawing pin can cause asbestos to be released, what affect does a crumbling building have? Rot lies within these buildings, rot eats into the fabric of these buildings which again increases the risk of asbestos spores being released. We are all in agreement Asbestos is safe as long as it is not disturbed. Having school buildings in these conditions containing asbestos and knowing the dangers is, in my opinion, leaving a ticking time bomb with the staff and children health. This is a problem that has been ignored for years, though not doing the reliant maintenance within these buildings has caused the problem.

In January 2009, Glasgow City Council consulted on the closure of 25 education establishments. One of the 25 proposals was to evict the pupils of St. Gilbert's Primary in Germiston from their Grade 'A' school and move them to St. Philomena's Primary in Provanmill. St. Philomena's is a Grade 'D' system built school containing asbestos. In our investigation of the asbestos within St. Philomena's Primary we have requested several vital pieces of information from the Council which we have either failed to receive or have been given evasive and incomplete data. We have been forced to make our entire requests via the Freedom of Information Act 2002 and GCC has used the full 20 days allowed to it under the Act and in some cases they have exceeded this or have yet to reply.

The information we have received to date does not suggest in any way that the Council has implemented a robust asbestos management plan for a school in the dilapidated condition of St. Philomena's. Two surveys have been supplied to us, one carried out over 6 years ago and another carried out in late March of this year. From the advice we have received, neither survey is sufficient or contained the relevant appendices that you would expect to be attached, i.e., photographs of the condition of the asbestos and floor plans detailing the location of the asbestos.

We have received only one Air Quality Test and one Fibre Count Certificate on St. Philomena's which were carried out in 2006 and 2007. We believe that the asbestos testing that has been carried out on St. Philomena's has been of a rudimentary nature and not of sufficient detail to establish the level of asbestos contamination throughout the entire school.

Health and Safety Executive advise that local authorities should as a priority locate and record the mark and type of all system built schools held within their education estate. We have requested this information on St. Philomena's and all system built schools in Glasgow and have yet to receive a response.

Glasgow City Council has failed to provide us with the data that according to HSE guidance and from advice we have received, should be available. This has led us to believe that the robust procedures that you would expect to be implemented when dealing with such a lethal material in dilapidated school buildings, where the safety of children should be paramount, have in fact not been carried out.

The Council has been obstructive, evasive and unjustifiably slow in its

responses to our request for information. We are led to believe from the GCC website that the information relating to the management of asbestos within all buildings in Glasgow is held centrally and electronically, therefore it should be easily enough located.

As a result of our experience on the matter of asbestos within schools, we feel that the Scottish Government should have policies in place that would ensure that local authorities behave in an open manner and in timely fashion to any request made to them on this subject as it directly relates to the safety of our children. We also feel that more robust procedures should be in place that will make certain that local authorities are checked more thoroughly to ensure they are adhering to the guidance from HSE.

As it stands at present we have failed to be assured that the asbestos within St. Philomena's has been properly managed and that all the procedures that you would expect to be in place have been implemented. Despite this Glasgow councillors voted to move our children into the school this August.

6. DO YOU WISH YOUR PETITION TO BE HOSTED ON THE PARLIAMENT'S WEBSITE AS AN E-PETITION?

YES

7. CLOSING DATE FOR E-PETITION

5 June 2009

8. COMMENTS TO STIMULATE ON-LINE DISCUSSION

Parents and teachers should have easy, quick and transparent access to all information relating to asbestos within the school their children are being taught in or they are teaching in. Individual Robust Management Plans should be in place for all schools containing asbestos and in particular, system built schools. Severe Penalties should be enforced on Local Authorities who fail to follow the guidelines set out by the Health and Safety Executive and who behave in an obstructive manner when dealing to requests on asbestos within their schools.