

Department of Education and Training Asbestos Audit Program

You may have noticed new labels affixed to a number of windows around the school. School Council discussed this at our school council meeting on Tuesday night and wanted to let everyone know why this has happened.

As part of the Department of Education and Training's, Health and Safety Management Plan, and to fulfil obligations under State Legislation, schools are responsible for maintaining, reviewing and revising a detailed school Asbestos Register identifying any asbestos present at the school. In assisting with this obligation, the Department has developed Asbestos Management Plans to provide schools with clear information on meeting these legislative requirements. A school's Asbestos Management Plan outlines the responsibilities, procedures, protocols and systems for effective management of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) and ensures the minimisation of health risks associated with the presence of Asbestos.

When PPPS was built in 1998, it was deemed 'asbestos free', with each of the relocatable buildings receiving the same rating before being allowed onto our site. The school has a letter from the architect who oversaw the building of the school, stating that no asbestos was used in the construction of the main buildings. We have copies of audits done on the portables and also a letter from the Department stating that 'any relocatable allocated to the school will have any asbestos removed prior to being sited'.

Since 1998 we have been part of Department Asbestos audits with the same outcome in all visible areas.

In recent years Coffey Environmental Pty. Ltd. was appointed to provide asbestos management services and to undertake audits across the state.

Coffey conducted an asbestos audit of our school in April this year and the hygienist suspected minute amounts of Chrysotile Asbestos in the mastic (putty like) substance around the windows of a number of (portable) rooms: 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32 and the computer lab. The samples were examined under a Stereo Microscope and selected fibres were analysed by Polarized Light Microscopy in conjunction with Dispersion Staining Method. **This substance was not tested in earlier audits.** It was revealed that the window mastic in the above listed rooms did contain minute amounts of Chrysotile Asbestos. Asbestos is rated on a Risk Score from 12 – 15 as High Risk to 1- 4 as Very Low Risk. As ours was rated as Very Low Risk, labels have been affixed to the windows of these affected rooms, with no other action required unless we needed to repair or replace the glass. These labels are in addition to the labels already present at the main entry and exit points of the school.

Please be assured that if we were told there was a danger to our students or staff, we would not use these rooms.

Under the legislation new labelling is required to be installed in all schools. The labels are mandated to remind contractors to contact school reception to ensure they have up to date information from the School's Asbestos Register prior to proceeding with any works. The new labels form part of a comprehensive program to ensure Victorian Government Schools remain safe. These labels are mandatory and help form part of a school's asbestos management process.

We hope this will inform you and help allay any concerns you may have.

David Whewell
Principal