

Safety Alert



SUBJECT: Finger traps

RECIPIENTS: All Schools & Children's Centres

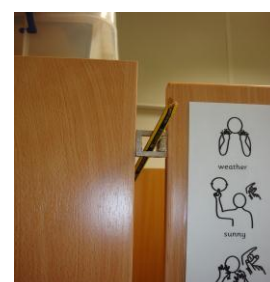
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Finger Amputated

There has been an incident in Telford where a five year old pupil who attends a special school had their finger amputated in the hinge of a cupboard door.

Furniture for this school was supplied by ESA McIntosh who have been informed of the incident and are investigating. Tests have been done using a pencil in place of a finger, and if placed between the hinges, the normal closing movement of the door will only dent the pencil. If however the pencil is placed in the square aperture of the hinge that presents with the door open then the normal closing action of the door creates a guillotine effect that shears straight through the pencil.

The picture below shows this potential – you can see the pencil debris on the hinge and the remains of the clear tape used by staff as temporary measure to prevent further incidents (this had to be removed for the test).



Because of the now known risk this design of hinge poses it is particularly unsuitable for use on furniture in special needs and early years settings. Older children and adults should be less inclined to insert fingers into holes! Clear tape on the outer face of the hinge provides a temporary solution but in the longer term a more robust alternative or replacement of the hinges is needed.

If you require further assistance or clarification on the subject please contact:
Mouchel Safety Adviser 01522 836714.