



## **SUBJECT:** WOODWORKING MACHINE SAFETY – BENCH SANDING MACHINE

**RECIPIENTS:** All Lincolnshire Schools

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### **Introduction and background**

**A recent incident at a school in Solihull resulted in an 11-year-old pupil suffering serious injuries when his hand was trapped in a bench sanding machine during a woodwork lesson..**

Whilst using the machine, his left hand became trapped between the rotating face of the sanding disc and the machine's table edge. He required specialist surgery to repair tendon damage to his fingers and was off school for several weeks owing to his injuries. He still suffers pain in cold weather and doesn't have full range of movement in his fingers.

**A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found the machine had guarding in place, but it was designed for use by adults. The gap between the disc face and the table edge was 6mm, which was large enough to trap the student's hand.**

The company carried out a generic risk assessment when the machine was installed in 2000 but this failed to identify the potential entrapment hazard. **The machine's manual recommended the gap should be set to 1.5mm and the school failed to adapt the machine to make it safe for use by young students.**

Alderbrook School appeared at Solihull Magistrates' Court on 5 November and pleaded guilty to breaching s 3(1) of the HSWA 1974. It was fined £3500 and ordered to pay £5000 in costs.

### **Proposed Action to be taken by Lincolnshire Schools**

- a) Check bench sanding machines to ensure that the gap is set to the manufactures recommendations for use by students e.g. 1.5mm.
- b) Check that all woodworking machines and other machines used by students are set to the guarding requirements for use by students, e.g. pillar drills have fully enclosed chuck/drill bit guards (refer to previous Advisory Alert on this matter).
- c) Review guarding standards on woodworking and other machines used by students and ask the basic question – "Does this present a trapping hazard to student users?" – if excessive gaps etc are identified then these should be reduced to eliminate the hazard to student users.

### **Further Information/guidance**

**If you require further assistance or clarification on the subject please contact:  
David Hortop on 01522 836717 or 07793187663**