



SUBJECT: **Sensible Risk Management in Schools**

RECIPIENTS: **Schools**

ISSUE DATE: **Jan 2015** **REF:** **HSB53**

A New Year reminder to schools: be safe and sound

With another busy school term upon us, amid the flood of tasks and requirements claiming attention, it's tempting to go one of two ways with health and safety. School leaders could push it to the bottom of their list of priorities, cross fingers and trust to luck. Or take a blanket approach and cover every possible eventuality, choking enterprise and initiative in bureaucracy, because they're not sure how to discriminate between trivia and real risks needing prompt and active management.

As a reminder of the unnecessary lengths that schools can go to to eliminate risk entirely, HSE's website highlights cases that come before its Myth Busters Challenge Panel, such as the ban on schoolgirls wearing [frilly socks](#) or the ban on [hot drinks on school trips](#).

Conversely, a case study on [slips in a school canteen](#) shows how easy it can be to ignore or just put up with risk, when it can be reduced by relatively simple measures. And this [prosecution](#) involving school stonemasons who developed silicosis is a reminder that the duty of care extends beyond pupils to all staff employed by a school – and of the consequences of ignoring very real threats to their health and safety.

HSE's [web-based guidance](#) on managing risk sensibly in schools was published in July last year. It is designed to help school leaders adopt an approach based on sound principles; to help them strike the right balance and focus on health and safety issues that matter – while avoiding wrapping children in cotton wool.

Ultimately the aim is that children should be able to undertake positive and exciting learning opportunities in a safe environment.

If you require further assistance or clarification on the subject please contact:

Your Mouchel Health & Safety Adviser (see George section: Corporate > Information for Working > Risk Management > H&S Advisers)