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**HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SCHOOLS**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on health and safety matters in primary schools detailing both concerns and suggested remedial actions.

**Summary**

2. The safety issues within Primary schools are generally low risk. Slips trips and falls provide the main areas of focus, however advice is often provided on matters such as Violence at Work, First Aid and Medication as well as Biological advice with regards the bringing in of animals and plants.
3. There has been an overall decrease in reported accidents for the period April – September 2008 in comparison with the same period for last year and a significant decrease in HSE reportable accidents. A breakdown is provided at **Appendix 1**
4. In an attempt to maintain progress, more schools are being offered support to achieve the RoSPA Safety Award, the Schools Safety Newsletter, which provides legal and best practise updates, will continue to be provided to all schools and a new round of audits will continue to visit each school to monitor their execution of the authorities safety procedures.

**Recommendation**

5. It is recommended that the progress to date and planned actions for 2008/09, be noted.

**Paul Wildsmith,  
Director of Corporate Services**

**Background Papers**

Colin Morrison: Extension 2111

S17 Crime and Disorder	Some actions and information highlighted in the report support reduction of crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	The report addresses improved health and safety and general health and safety issues in schools.
Sustainability	No specific sustainability issues arising from this report.
Diversity	Diversity issues are incorporated into Health and Safety managers.
Wards Affected	All wards equally.
Groups Affected	Employees and pupils in schools.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not affect the budget and policy

	framework.
Key Decision	Scrutiny report.
Urgent Decision	Scrutiny report.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Action detailed in report supports the Healthy Darlington aspect of the SCS.

## **MAIN REPORT**

### **Information and Analysis**

#### **6. Medication in Primary Schools.**

A regular question from schools refers to the use of pupils' medication, such as inhalers and Epipens. Children occasionally forget to bring in their own medication and the query often relates to whether inhalers or Epipens may be used which belong to other children. The simple answer is No. Inhalers and Epipens are classed as medication in the same way that medicines and tablets are. To apply another pupils' medication to an individual could create complications due to allergies. These complications could involve circulation and respiratory problems. Therefore, it is recommended that the school first aider keeps a secure supply of pupils medication within the school. Each piece of medication should be clearly labelled with the pupil's name. Furthermore, Epipens should only be administered by those who have been trained in their use.

#### **7. Slips Trips and Falls**

The vast majority of reported accidents from Primary Schools involve children who have slipped, tripped or fallen in the playground. Quite often these accidents do not get investigated as they are considered to be 'one of those things' which result from recreation. There are, however, two areas which should be borne in mind. The first is the less likely, lack of supervision and the second is the more likely fault with the school premises. Examples in the last year from our schools include loose manhole covers, potholes in the playground, raised kerbs, ice and faulty play equipment. Therefore the school can takes steps to reduce the likelihood of these accidents and may also include the children in these steps. For example, wherever possible the school caretaker should conduct a brief inspection of the play area at the beginning of the shift in order to identify any overnight damage to the play area. Also, when the children notice any damage to their play area, they should be encouraged to report it. Finally, whenever a child has an accident in the playground, the school should establish where the accident took place and mark this point on a diagram of the play area. Every time there is a further playground accident, the point is marked on the diagram. Over a period of time the school may be able to identify locations where accidents are occurring. This may assist in highlighting accident 'black spots' which require increased supervision or maintenance work to reduce channel points, unsafe surfaces, etc.

#### **8. Hit by Moving Object**

Another area which has produced several accident report forms is where children have been hurt by moving objects. Usually this is due to another pupil throwing items such as stones in the playground, but also closing doors have hit pupils who have not paid attention to where they are going and in some cases results in trapped fingers.

Sensible supervision levels and safety talks from staff can reduce incidents involving the throwing of objects. Also door stops or covers for the gaps in doors can reduce the likelihood of trapped fingers and collisions with closing doors.

## **9. Violence at Work**

The HSE defines Violence at Work as *'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work'*

Therefore the statistics include verbal assault as well as physical. This problem is an issue which is managed very well within the authority's schools. However, support is available when required and the Health and Safety Unit has intervened on two occasions when requested.

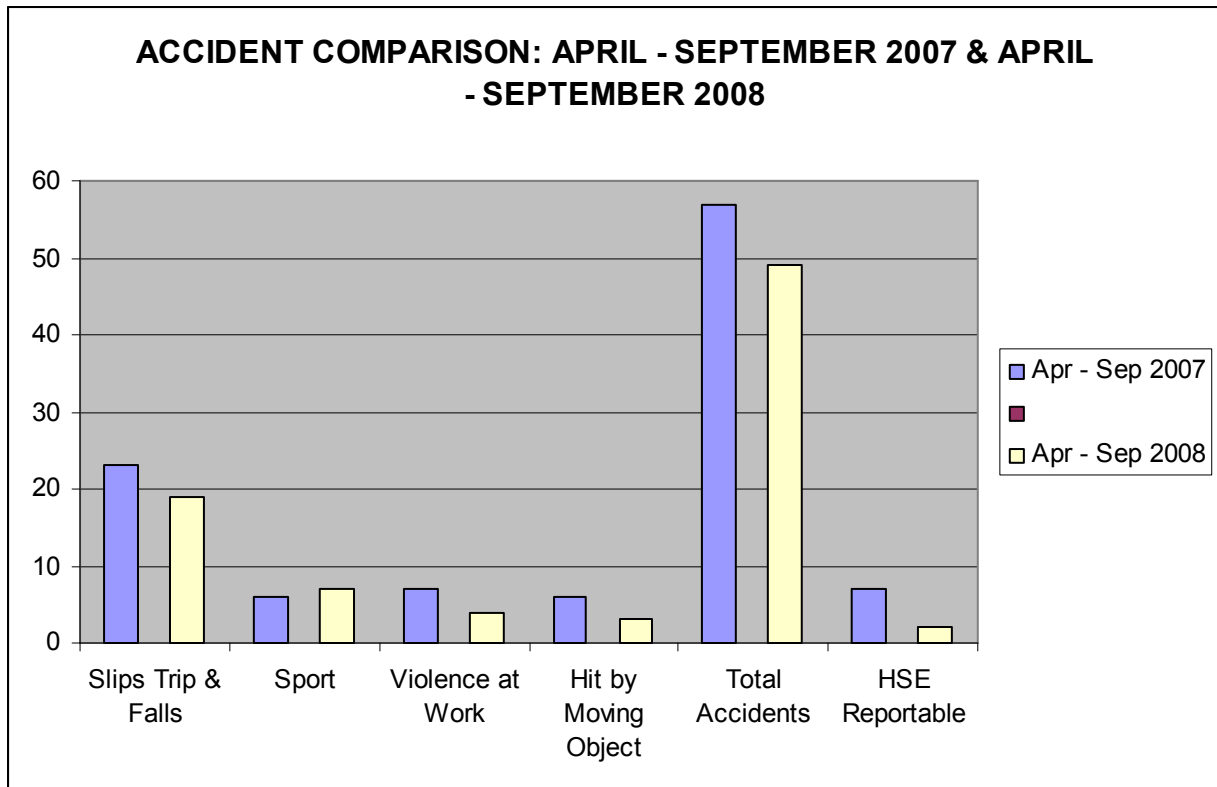
## **10. RoSPA Awards 2009**

Provisionally 6 more primary schools will attempt to gain the RoSPA Safety Award in 2009. These schools are; Cockerton, Heighington, Heathfield, Reid Street, St Johns and Skerne Park.

## **Outcome of consultation**

11. This is not applicable to the Scrutiny report.

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Accident Breakdown for Apr-Sep 2007

Slips, trips and falls – 23  
 Injuries during sport – 6  
 Violence at work – 7  
 Hit by a moving object – 4  
 Total – 57  
 Reportable - 7

Accident Breakdown for Apr-Sep 2008

Slips, trips and falls – 19  
 Injuries during sport – 7  
 Violence at work – 4  
 Hit by a moving object – 3  
 Total – 49  
 Reportable - 2