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**Suffolk County Council Schools Incident Reporting – System FAQs**

**Welcome to the incident reporting system for Suffolk County Council Maintained Schools. Here are a few FAQs, and we hope that we’ve addressed some queries. If not – please feel free to get in touch – details at the end.**

**1) What does the system involve?**

Easy – a schools’ form which will be sent by the schools to the Advisor who is named both on the form and the guidance document. The information will be fed into the IT system based at Endeavour House. Any **maintained** schools or schools related employee can fill out one of the forms and then pass it to their line manager who must ensure the details are correct before sending it off.

**2) When did this new system start?**

April 2016.

**3) Why does this system exist?**

The old forms were confusing with their codes, didn’t give managers a chance to explain what they had done after the incident and there was more than one system. All Health and Safety Advisors need to collect data on incidents, and we need to ensure that it’s the right information. So what we tried to do is to amalgamate the different types of forms that were out there and make them into a better one, and create an easier way of sending that information to us in Corporate Health and Safety. No more forms being sent to the wrong people, no more difficulties in knowing they’ve been followed up – information at our fingertips, where we need it!

**4) Does everyone use the same form?**

Just about everyone in Suffolk County Council is a part of this system apart from the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service; they have their own arrangement.

**5) So what form do I use – and how do I fill it in? And what do I do with it after I’ve done that?**

The form is shorter than some of the other forms that are out there currently and certainly a lot easier to complete. The schools’ form can be found on [Suffolk Learning](http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/health-safety/incident-reporting) under ‘Incident Reporting’.

Filling it in is really simple – there’s a range of clearly labelled boxes to fill in and most of the rest of it is ‘tick boxes’. There is a guidance document there as well.

Don’t forget that the main follow up on incident reports is done locally – in school. The forms are collected by the Corporate Health and Safety Team principally for statistical and strategic management reasons and your Schools Advisor also responds to every form received, whether it’s to initially investigate or to say ‘thank you, case closed’.

**6) I’ve heard that a system called ‘iTrent’ is involved, what is that?**

iTrent is the software which ‘runs’ MyHR / MyPeople at Suffolk County Council for non-schools staff and non-schools managers input incident information straight into that portal. Once that information has been submitted, it goes to a database which sits behind the system which is confidential. The incident information is only available to the Corporate Health and Safety Team and their business support officer (BSO). For schools, you send your incident form to your Advisor (details on the form) and they or the BSO will get the information onto iTrent. If all schools are buy into iTrent, they will be asked to use this portal themselves, but this won’t be for some time yet.

**7) What do I do with the form once I’ve filled it in?**

Firstly, if a paper copy has been filled out, if possible, please scan the form and keep it for your local records. You can then email this scan as a pdf to your Advisor and keep your copy on a confidential area on your pc. All records of incidents for your school should be kept in one place for simplicity. You can then confidentially shred the paper copy. If the form has been filled out on a pc via the Word version, then again, this can be saved on a pc and sent to your Advisor. **If you have no scanner, or are unable to scan to email, please photocopy the original and keep your hard copy form in a secure place within your office before sending it to your Advisor.**

**8) You’ve mentioned a database - is the incident information kept safely on this?**

Yes, absolutely. The MyPeople system is an HR system which is made for its security and therefore this was one which fitted perfectly to our needs. The database sits directly behind this in another secure area. As soon as an Advisor inputs information to iTrent / MyPeople, it all gets automatically filtered through to the database. **ONLY** the Health and Safety Advisors can see this information – no one else.

**9) What will you do with the information that is collated in the database?**

Not only are we under statutory obligation to record certain information, the Advisors routinely report the broader information to senior managers. In turn, they attend monitoring groups such as the Corporate Safety, Health and Wellbeing Board (SHAW Board), Directorate Steering Groups, as well as certain trade union consultation meetings. This is done to enable those groups to see how the council is dealing with health and safety incidents. We can only do this with good statistical data. We also need to keep a general watchful eye on what’s happening throughout the county to our staff and pupils – this is part of the county council’s moral duty of care to you all. We are all under a legal duty to identify and rectify any significant risk that we reasonably can. The Schools’ Advisor collates statistics, uses records for evidence, talks to managers, Governors and Headteachers about what’s going on in their schools. It helps to know whether incident numbers are on the ‘up’, and to be able to spot those more unlikely incidents which no one could have expected. When we write reports, we never mention names, nor do we seek to apportion blame within them. If anyone would like to see the kind of reports that are written, and discuss further why Advisors write them – just ask!

**10) So if the council is using this new software system for the majority of the staff, how can we justify this when we need to save money at SCC? Will there be a cost to schools once we are all using iTrent?**

We are delighted to say that this new system has not had an external cost attached to it at all. There are web-based systems on the market which are certainly all singing and dancing, but they cost tens of thousands of pounds, and so it was deemed inappropriate in this day and age to invest in one of these. Instead, iTrent, the current Corporate HR portal, had room for this extra facility and between Corporate Health and Safety and staff in IT, this new system was built. So apart from personnel hours designing it and building the background software, **it’s free.**

**12) I’m still not sure what I have to do, I’ve read the guidance and had a look at the form, but I’m confused. Who can I turn to now?**

You are very welcome to contact your Health and Safety Advisor at any time, or indeed the Corporate Health and Safety Team. We hope the guidance is detailed enough but if there is a glitch in the system, or we haven’t been clear, then we would be delighted to help. You can contact your Advisor at nina.bickerton@suffolk.gov.uk or any of the Advisors at healthandsafety@suffolk.gov.uk.

If you are concerned that the report has not reached us, and it is likely to be a reportable incident under law (see the guidance on Suffolk Learning for this information) then please call us immediately on **01473 260399** (we have a ‘hunt group’ system and your call may be taken by any Advisor).

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We hope this system works for us all – any comments and non-urgent queries can be directed to Nina Bickerton and you will receive an answer as soon as possible.

The school incident report form can be found at the following Suffolk Learning incident reporting page, along with relevant guidance:

[**http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/health-safety/incident-reporting**](http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/health-safety/incident-reporting)