

School fined after teaching assisted injured in fall from height

Todmorden Church of England Junior Infants and Nursery School has been sentenced today for a breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act after an employee fell through the ceiling of the school hall, causing a major injury.

Bradford Magistrates' Court heard that on 18 September 2019, a teaching assistant had accessed the loft space in the school and as they entered, they fell around four metres through the fragile ceiling which resulted in a broken back.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that when the teaching assistant was searching for a spare desk in the loft space, she fell due to the area being only partially boarded, meaning that the fragile ceiling gave way. This incident resulted in the victim suffering a broken back that left her in hospital for three weeks. She is still in recovery awaiting further operations.

Todmorden Church of England Junior Infants and Nursery School of Burnley Road, Todmorden pleaded guilty to breaching Section 6 (3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The school has been fined £4,000 and ordered to pay a surcharge of £181 and £747.80 costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Charlotte Bligh commented: "The school failed to take suitable and sufficient measures to prevent events like this.

"This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices"

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. hse.gov.uk^[1]
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/^[2]
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>^[3]
4. Please see the link below to the page on HSE's website that is the best guide to doing it the right way: [Working at height: A brief guide \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://hse.gov.uk/working-at-height)

