

School trust fined after children injured by classroom ceiling collapse

An educational trust has been fined after 15 school children and their teacher were injured when their classroom ceiling collapsed during a lesson.

Fifteen Year 3 pupils, aged between seven and eight, and their teacher had the ceiling collapse onto them at Rosemead Preparatory School in London, at around 9.30am on 15 November 2021. Tables and chairs being stored in the attic above were among the falling debris.

The children and teacher sustained upper limb fractures, cuts as well as concussion.

Emergency services attended the school on Thurlow Park Road, Dulwich, following the incident with the class teacher and several pupils taken to hospital for assessment and treatment. There were 16 pupils in the class but one student was by the doorway when the incident happened.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found items such as desks and chairs were stored in an unsuitable area in the school's attic. This area was not designed to be load bearing and led to the ceiling collapsing.

The HSE investigation also found Thurlow Educational Trust had failed to undertake any structural or load bearing capability assessments of the area being used to store the items. The trust had also failed to assess whether the area in question was appropriate to be used for the storage of these items.



HSE guidance can be found [here](#).

Thurlow Educational Trust, of Thurlow Park Road, Dulwich, London, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The trust was fined £80,000 and ordered to pay £7,116.31 in costs at Westminster Magistrates' Court on 29 August 2023.

HSE inspector Samuel Brown said: "This incident has resulted in injuries to multiple young children due to the failings of the school to ensure that chairs and tables were safely stored above their classroom.

"Schools should be a place where children can come to learn from teachers and one another without having to worry about their safety.

"Fortunately, this incident did not cause any more serious injuries, but the mental and emotional impact of such an event should not be understated.



“Employers need to take action to ensure that building stability and solidity problems are not caused through overloading areas not designed to bear weight. As proven, the failure to do so can have severe consequences.”

This HSE prosecution was supported by HSE enforcement lawyer Samantha Crockett.

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.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.