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# School Trust Fined After Young Boy's Finger Amputation in Shocking Safety Oversight

## Description

A Surrey school trust has been penalized following a distressing incident in which a five-year-old pupil suffered a severe finger injury. The boy, a Year 1 student at Danetree Primary School in Epsom, faced a life-altering accident on June 15, 2022, when his hand became trapped in a door.

The incident occurred as the young student was exiting the restroom. His right hand slipped into the hinge side of a door, which lacked a crucial safety feature—a door guard. Tragically, this oversight resulted in the tip of his middle finger being amputated. A teacher discovered the severed fingertip shortly after the accident, prompting urgent medical intervention. The boy underwent surgery at St George's Hospital in Tooting, London, to reattach his finger.

While younger pupils in Key Stage 1 were taught in a modern building equipped with hinge guards, this unfortunate event unfolded in an older structure designated for Key Stage 2 students. Key Stage 1 children frequently accessed the Key Stage 2 building for library visits and lessons in music and science. During these times, they were allowed to use the toilets unsupervised, creating an unsafe environment.

A subsequent investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) revealed that GLF Schools, the trust overseeing Danetree Primary, had failed to identify the risks posed to its younger pupils. Consequently, hinge guards were not installed on the toilet doors in the older building, leaving children exposed to potential harm.

On October 30, 2024, GLF Schools, located in Picquets Way, Banstead, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The trust was fined £6,000 and ordered to pay an additional £6,875.70 in costs at Staines Magistrates' Court.

Emma Stiles, principal inspector at HSE, expressed her concern over the incident. "This little boy and his family could have been spared a lot of pain and upset if the trust had installed widely available, effective, and inexpensive hinge guards on the doors accessible to young children. I urge all schools to review their facilities to ensure they have hinge guards where necessary, preventing any future injuries to children while at school."

The prosecution was conducted by HSE enforcement lawyers Jayne Wilson and Jon Mack, with support from paralegal officer Melissa Wardle.

## Ensuring Safety and Compliance in Your Organization

Incidents like the one at Danetree Primary School highlight the critical importance of safety measures and risk assessments in any organization, particularly those involving children. As business owners and leaders, it is essential to proactively identify potential hazards and implement effective strategies to mitigate risks.

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At Cloutput, we specialize in helping organizations develop tailored maturity models and assessments that focus on safety, compliance, and operational excellence. Our services are designed to guide you through the process of evaluating your current practices, identifying gaps, and establishing a roadmap for improvement.

By investing in a comprehensive maturity assessment, you can enhance your organization's safety protocols, ensure compliance with health and safety regulations, and ultimately protect those who matter most—your employees and the communities you serve.

If you're interested in learning more about how we can assist you in creating a safer and more compliant environment, please fill out the contact form below. Together, we can work towards a safer future for your organization.

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