

Injuries to children: who's telling the truth?

For many administrators it is an all too familiar scenario. A parent complains that his/her child suffered an injury at school several days before. So much has happened since the alleged event that for a minor incident it can be very difficult for anyone to recall, days later, exactly what happened.

What makes the problem particularly difficult is that school pupils will often seek to excuse their own misdemeanours by passing the blame on to someone else. When a parent asks about a minor injury caused by over-exuberant behaviour in the playground, the child might seek to deflect any implied blame by suggesting that bullying or rowdy behaviour elsewhere in the school was the cause.

Quite naturally, all parents are concerned to see that their children are not the subject of bullying and wish to be assured that the school is a safe place. Thus, they take the matter up, and if the school has no clear record of the event, the parent is left with a feeling of unease.

The only way around this is for the school rigorously to collect and process information on all incidents of which the staff are aware. However, this in turn can become an onerous task – and the collation of such information may simply be forwarded to the school office, in the hope that someone will have time to sort it all out.

The best way to resolve all these issues is to use an Incident Reporting Kit, which ensures that parents always get details of all incidents reported to the school relating to their child. In this way the parent knows that, if their child explains that a bruise or a torn pair of trousers has arisen from an event at school several days previously, there should be an incident report. If none such has been received, then automatically the parent knows that no one at the school witnessed the event, and that the event was not serious enough for the child to report it to a member of staff at the time.

There is a further benefit in that the system gives an extra feeling of confidence among staff who are assured, through its existence, that all the incidents in which they have involvement are formally recorded. This then gives them greater protection should any child make an accusation against a teacher at a later date or should the teacher personally be involved in any health and safety issue in the school.

An Incident Reporting Kit that generates duplicated reports for both parents and the school has been developed by SG World. Details are available at www.theeducationcatalogue.co.uk. Alternatively, telephone SG World Customer Service Department on 01270 588 211 for more information or to arrange an appointment with your local sales representative.