

Five proposals you (as a Governor) could put to your Head Teacher and Senior Management Team, when seeking assurance about the safety culture in your school.

Proposal	Unwelcome response	Disappointing response	Acceptable response	Pleasing response	Excellent response
1. I believe we should incorporate employees' personal safety commitment/performance into the school's appraisal process. In this way we would effectively link monitoring of H&S performance with assessment of the employees' overall performance.	At present, adding a layer of safety bureaucracy into staff appraisals would be impossible. We are already behind with our current appraisal process.	We occasionally consider safety performance when considering rewards and promotion but it is a very informal process.	I have been considering how we could best do this for some time. Perhaps at the next governors' meeting we could see how best we can allocate resources.	We do consider safety performance in our appraisals, but it is not one of our core elements for significant rewards such as pay and promotion.	We have been running such a system for several years. Perhaps we could review it together to see if there any gaps or enhancement we could consider.
2. I believe that in the organisational section of the school safety policy we should describe clearly what health and safety expectations are placed upon key individuals and our employees together with the consequences of not complying.	We do not have a policy.	I am not sure there is a need; we have a safety policy which we show to Ofsted / ISI inspectors and they always tick the box.	Our policy clearly details governors' and the head teacher's roles, but does not cascade responsibilities through the organisation. No reference is made to consequences.	This is something I did when I first took over this post; ensuring staff have clear expectations is vital. Let me show you where they are written down	Safety expectations are clearly detailed in our policy. We involved the whole workforce in seeking then agreeing safety responsibilities.

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<p>3. I believe we should seek input from the staff over the proposed safety changes being introduced by the government for schools.</p>	<p>The changes will have little effect on our school. We stopped school trips on safety grounds a couple of years ago and see little benefit in re-introducing them.</p>	<p>If I was to go into the staff room and start to seek views on health and safety I would be inundated with cries that we do not have time.</p>	<p>I have displayed information received on the staff notice board in case anyone is interested in the changes.</p>	<p>Whenever any significant safety change is being planned I always communicate and consult with the staff, I believe safety communication should be a two way consultation with staff and when appropriate pupils.</p>	<p>In addition to column 4, we have already planned a training session to bring everyone up to speed with the changes and how they will affect school trips in particular.</p>
<p>4. I believe we should introduce a planned number of safety tours by the Head Teacher and Bursar/Business Manager</p>	<p>I am tied to my desk and can only react to incidents. I do not have the time to be a visible presence.</p>	<p>I do conduct walk through inspections. My focus is only on non-compliance.</p>	<p>Good idea. It would give me an opportunity to recognise safe behaviour, give praise and say thank you where deserved. It will also allow me to give prompt, honest feedback on concerns I and others may have.</p>	<p>We already display the good leadership attributes detailed in column 3.</p>	<p>Good leadership attributes detailed in column 3 are part of KPI for the Head Teacher and senior staff.</p>
<p>5. Perhaps we should seek ways to evaluate our safety performance against others.</p>	<p>This would not be a good idea as we have had several accidents recently and would be likely to be at the bottom of any health and safety performance table.</p>	<p>Benchmarking is a good idea, but I am not sure we can spare the resources.</p>	<p>We currently undertake internal benchmarking so we can compare safety performance between sites. It may be useful to compare like for like with other schools.</p>	<p>That would be really useful. Benchmarking H&S performance will give us valuable insights. We could compare our overall HSE performance with others who have gained SafetyMARK.</p>	<p>The school already benchmarks itself against several other comparable schools.</p>



Outcome:

Scores mostly:

Pleasing and Excellent responses - The Head Teacher and Bursar/Business Manager is/are creating an environment in which unsafe acts are challenged and safe behaviours promoted. They are working towards an accident free workplace.

Acceptable and Pleasing responses – The Head Teacher and Bursar take health and safety seriously, but are mainly reactive in their approach.

Some Disappointing responses – Health and safety is seen a hindrance, yet another burden placed on already overworked staff. Key staff need to be directed to achieve barely satisfactory health and safety compliance.

An Unwelcome response – Health and safety is on the back burner. Safety outcomes are down to luck and/or a small number of staff.