

Scaffold collapsed onto school playground

A scaffolding contractor has been fined after scaffolding it had erected collapsed onto a neighbouring primary school.

Cardiff Magistrates' Court heard that Swain Scaffolding Limited had erected scaffolding seven metres high and eight metres long at the gable end of a residential property in Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan.

On 5th May 2017, at approximately 1.30pm, the scaffold collapsed landing on a single storey roof above the playground of neighbouring Albert Primary School.

At the time of the collapse, a group of nursery children were in the playground only a few metres away; minutes before the collapse the playground had been full of children playing after their lunch break. None were hurt.

An investigation by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) found that the scaffolding was not designed or installed to withstand foreseeable loads. It was not tied to the adjacent building nor did it have adequate buttressing or rakers; it was essentially a freestanding structure. The investigation found that it was almost inevitable that the scaffolding would collapse, even in unremarkable weather conditions.

Swain Scaffolding Limited of Rhiwbina, Cardiff was found guilty of breaching Regulation 19(2) of the Construction Design and Management Regulations. It was fined £24,000 and ordered to pay £3,452.50 in costs.

HSE inspector Gemma Pavey said after the hearing: *"Failure to adequately design and install scaffolding, so that it can withstand foreseeable loads, creates risk to workers and members of the public who could be injured by an uncontrolled collapse."*

