Dear<HEAD TEACHER>,<CHAIR OF TRUSTEES>,

I am a member of Townswomen’s Guilds (TG), one of the UK’s largest women’s organisations whose members campaign on a wide range of topics. I am writing to ask you for more information about asbestos at <INSERT NAME> School. I am asking this because I am concerned about the safety of both the children and the teaching and support staff at the school. I’m sure you are busy, with many things competing for your time but I would ask that you find time to take these questions seriously. The latest research in the UK shows that over 86% of schools in the UK do currently contain asbestos, putting over 7 million pupils at regular risk of exposure. A survey by the NUT in 2015 found that only 46% of teachers knew if there was asbestos in their school. This lack of knowledge puts them and their pupils directly at risk.

Mesothelioma has a very long latency meaning that many victims are diagnosed with the illness 30 to 40 years after their exposure. 249 school staff have died from mesothelioma since 2001. In 2016 alone 32 teaching professionals died. Children are particularly vulnerable to developing mesothelioma. A child first exposed at age 5 is five times more likely to contract mesothelioma than someone first exposed at age 30. It is estimated that between 200 and 300 people are dying each year as a result of exposure to asbestos when they were at school. 2 million asbestos fibres can fit on a pin head and can pass through the smallest gap or crack. The HSE reports that there have been almost 200 reported asbestos disturbances in schools in the last five years. There is no safe level of exposure to asbestos.

At our 2018 AGM, TG members voted to support the motion that, ‘*every establishment that contains asbestos must produce an annual report for staff, pupils and their families. This report must explain how asbestos can affect health, where asbestos is present and how it is being monitored and maintained’*. As part of our ensuing campaign, I would like to learn more about the situation in my local area, and would be grateful if you could please answer the following questions:

**My questions**

Has an up to date asbestos survey been carried out for <INSERT NAME> School? Is there asbestos present and is there an ‘asbestos management plan’ in place?

If there is asbestos please can you tell me:

1. How much asbestos there is? Where is it? What condition is in it? What plans are in place for it’s management and removal?
2. Can the children knock, scrape or damage the asbestos? Can teachers or support staff disturb the asbestos? Have there been any recorded instances of asbestos disturbance in the school?
3. Do all teachers, support staff and volunteers (including staff on temporary contracts) know where the asbestos is? Do teachers, school support staff and volunteers know what actions to take if they see any damage to the asbestos? Are staff and volunteers regularly updated on how the asbestos is being managed and the plans for it’s removal? Do all new staff and volunteers receive information about asbestos as part of their induction?
4. Will the school commit to producing an annual report for all parents and school staff reporting on the extent and condition of asbestos in the school and the plans in place for it’s management and removal?

I’d be grateful if you could respond to this request by writing to me at <INSERT ADDRESS>. Many thanks for your time and for everything you do for our children.

With best wishes,