



Date 16th June 2014

Dear Principal

Re: Quarry Safety Campaign “Stay Safe Stay Out”

We are writing to you to ask you to support our national safety campaign which aims to warn young people about the dangers of trespassing in quarries.

Tragically, over the past few years a number of young people have been killed or seriously injured after entering disused or working quarries and got into difficulty in deep cold lagoons or on the steep rugged quarry faces. With warm weather and the summer holidays approaching, there is concern that children, teenagers and young adults could be tempted to enter their local quarry.

To help prevent this, QPANI, with the support of the Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI), are promoting the Mineral Products Association (MPA) national “Stay Safe” campaign to raise awareness amongst younger children, teenagers, parents, teachers and youth workers about the dangers of entering quarries uninvited.

All too often after the death or serious injury to a young person in a quarry, their friends or parents say that they were not aware of the risks they were exposing themselves, they thought they were engaged in a harmless bit of fun. If the friends who were with them had understood the risks, they might have stopped them. This is why we believe that helping to raise awareness of these hazards will help to save young people’s lives.

We are appealing to you to help us pass on this important message to young people in your care - “**STAY SAFE... STAY OUT**” - so that they heed this warning that quarries (working or disused) are not fun places and that by trespassing they place both their own and their friends lives at risk. Fencing and warning signs are there to protect them, please do not ignore them.

The potential hazards that people expose themselves to are:

- Swimming in quarry lakes that can have very cold water even on a hot day in the middle of summer. Strong swimmers have drowned in quarries due to the unexpected impact that the extreme cold has had on their bodies.
- The water in quarry lakes can be very deep and shelving, exit from the water may only be possible in a few places, there may be pumps working or currents that can drag you under the water.
- There can be concealed underwater obstructions and other hazards that can seriously injure swimmers or individuals jumping into the water - tombstoning into quarry lakes is not safe.
- Tunnelling into piles of sand or playing on stockpiles exposes you to the risk of sudden collapses or movements that can easily bury you.
- Walking near the edge of quarry faces exposes you to the risk of serious falls as the edges can be unstable and collapse unexpectedly or sheer faces be obstructed by vegetation.
- Climbing or walking near rock faces can expose you to the risk of rock falls.
- Surfaces in quarries that may look solid, such as the surface of a silt pond, can suddenly break and act like quick sand sucking you down.
- Trail and quad biking in a quarry exposes riders to risks from unstable terrain, unexpected obstructions and being hit by moving plant.
- Young people on bikes or on foot may not be visible to operators of large machinery, they may not appreciate that the driver cannot see them.
- Quarries can often be located in remote sites where mobile reception is poor and there is no one on hand to help in the event of an accident

How you can help

This issue is relevant for each school in the country - as there is always a quarry no more than 10 miles away.

Teachers and youth leaders are vital partners in the campaign to spread the message to young people that quarries are not places to play. Your support could help us save lives.

Resources are available online for Schools and Youth Groups to communicate this serious message and to discourage teenagers and children from trespassing in UK's quarries. Please view the Stay Safe videos, leaflets, posters and education materials. Go to www.mineralproducts.org/youth_playsafe01

Safety education is an increasingly important element of the National Curriculum. If you are able to build information about quarry safety into your lessons, you may like to use some of our schools resources. For general background on quarrying, visit our Virtual Quarry at www.virtualquarry.co.uk.

One of the most effective ways of highlighting the dangers of quarries is to arrange a supervised quarry visit or to invite the local quarry manager to visit your school. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you would like help or advice in setting up a visit or to arrange a "Stay Safe" talk to your school.

I trust you will support us in delivering this vital safety message to young people, particularly in advance of the Summer Holidays.

Yours faithfully,



Gordon Best
Regional Director QPANI



Ken Logan
Principal Health and Safety Inspector
HSE NI

**QUARRIES CAN PRESENT A REAL THREAT AND IN ORDER TO
STAY SAFE YOU SHOULD STAY OUT!**

THE DANGERS:

- Steep vertical drops
- Freezing water
- Falling rocks
- Heavy machinery
- Silt ponds that act like quicksand



facebook

'Stay Safe... Stay Out of Quarries' is on
www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=108362879182825&v=wall&ref=ts