

May 2005

NEW LEGAL PRESIDENT QUELLS FEARS OVER RISK-TAKING

Avoiding litigation does not mean wrapping people up in cotton wool, according to a leading personal injury lawyer.

Incoming president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers, Allan Gore QC, says assessment of risk is about promoting activity rather than restricting it, and has vowed to focus on developing a safety culture in this country during his year in office.

“This is at the very top of my agenda – a safety culture in which people take responsibility for others,” he said. “This means managing risk – instead of avoiding it – to ensure activities aren’t banned and school trips aren’t cancelled.

“We don’t need to stop children from playing conkers in the playground; we don’t need to take down window boxes or cut down trees, because if we assess risk in the first place, we can prevent avoidable accidents.”

Gore said it is a lack of education about risk assessment which leads people to believe they can be sued for anything.

“Teaching unions don’t need to panic and put an end to school trips,” he said. “This fear of being sued is ungrounded as the whole point of carrying out a risk assessment is to prevent avoidable injury, without inhibiting a spirit of adventure.

“We only have to look at the new ‘health and safety culture’ of Hay Lane School when it embraced this ethos as a lesson learned from tragedy. Managing risk means we are taking responsibility for the safety of others, and this can only be a good thing,” he said.

“Over the coming year APIL will be working closely with organisations such as the TUC and Health and Safety Commission, with the aim of promoting a healthy attitude to safety and risk,” he said.

- ends -

Note to editors: For further information, please contact:

Lorraine Gwinnutt
Head of Legal & Public Affairs

or

Lisa Wardle
Press & PR Officer

APIL
11 Castle Quay
Nottingham
NG7 1FW
Tel: 0115 958 0585
Fax: 0115 924 3485
email: lorraine.gwinnutt@apil.com

APIL
Tel: 0115 958 0585
Fax: 0115 924 3485
email: lisa.wardle@apil.com