



# Coalition for Healthier Schools

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the forum for environmental health at school, since 2001...

Coordinated by Healthy Schools Network

## HEALTHY IAQ/IEQ (Indoor Air/Environmental Quality) - GENERAL CHECKLIST

### **PREVENT MOLDS & MILDEW**

*Molds can trigger asthma and other health problems; dampness leads to mold growth*

- ✓ Check for molds and mildew, especially water-damaged materials
- ✓ Check for persistent dampness; musty or earthy smells
- ✓ Check for leaks (plumbing, roofs, windows, basements)
- ✓ Report and fix leaks promptly

### **CONTROL DUST**

*Dust mites can trigger asthma and allergy attacks*

- ✓ Use micro-fiber cloths and mops to clean surfaces; use high-efficiency vacuum bags
- ✓ Remove classroom clutter; store projects in clear containers
- ✓ Use walk-off floor mats at all entrances to trap dirt
- ✓ Leave classrooms ready-to-clean at the end of the day

### **ENSURE FRESH AIR FLOW & EFFECTIVE VENTILATION**

*Poor ventilation allows pollutants to accumulate indoors*

- ✓ Check for odd, unpleasant odors; “clean doesn’t have an odor”
- ✓ Clean air supply vents regularly
- ✓ Keep air flow pathways clear (remove plants, books, papers, projects from vents; windows should open)
- ✓ Use local exhaust fans for water-intensive areas (lavatories, kitchens, gyms) and pollution-generating areas (chemistry, art, biology labs, computer and copier rooms, voc-ed classrooms)

### **PREVENT TOXIC FUMES/REDUCE CHEMICAL EXPOSURES**

- ✓ Inventory and dispose of outdated hazardous, flammable chemicals
  - ✓ Use low-emission products, equipment, interior finishes and furnishings
- Many conventional cleaning products contain respiratory irritants and can trigger asthma attacks*
- ✓ Use certified green cleaning products screened by an independent third party (Green Seal or Eco Logo); these are cost-neutral and effective
  - ✓ Ban air fresheners and room deodorizers

### **PREVENT PESTS AND PESTICIDES, INDOORS AND OUT**

*Pesticides kill living organisms. They can spread through air, seep into soil and water, and be tracked into schools.*

- ✓ Keep plants and dumpsters away from buildings
- ✓ Screen and caulk building cracks and crevices
- ✓ Identify pest problems first; if simple natural controls don’t work, use baits and traps or spot pesticide treatments
- ✓ Use disinfectants only as required and in targeted areas

### **REMAIN VIGILANT**

- ✓ Watch for children whose health worsens when in school
- ✓ Use a suggestion/complaint box for people to submit observations and concerns
- ✓ Fix small problems before they become big, expensive headaches

**References:** US EPA’s *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools* kit at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/> and other EPA tools for states and for schools at: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/ochp/ochpweb.nsf/content/homepage.htm>