

# TIPS FOR HEALTHIER AIR QUALITY IN CLASSROOMS

- **Educate yourself and staff on Indoor Air Quality and the major Asthma and Allergy triggers. Implement the EPA's "Tools for Schools" and the CDC's "Asthma Friendly Campus" Toolkits at your campus.**
- Try to maintain cleanable horizontal surfaces in classrooms. Make sure your room can be cleaned in 20 minutes.
- If your room has carpet:
  - Don't allow food or beverages, unless necessary. If necessary, use a plastic container product that can seal.
  - Help the custodial staff by having students put chairs on the desk at day's end (if possible) in order to properly vacuum/sweep.
  - Check with the custodial staff to ensure they are able to get to all areas of carpet in your classroom in order to vacuum.
  - Remove any carpet squares or fringy/high pile throw rugs.
- Wet-wipe dusty surfaces weekly – have teachers pick up on Fridays so custodian can dust.
- Avoid clutter...put loose items and piles into plastic boxes that can be wet-wiped. One can not dust areas where loose items accumulate.
- Avoid hanging items that collect dust; streamers, projects, papers, piñatas, etc. Posters on walls are ok.
- If you decide to have small valances (short curtains) the teacher is responsible for washing them often so that dust does not collect. A creative idea we have seen was to laminate the material or use a cut short shower curtain. They are easily wiped down.
- No live plants with dirt in your classroom. Plants placed in water vases are acceptable if the water is kept clear. If you chose to have artificial plants, visible dust must be removed and cleaned by the teacher.
- Evaluate if classroom can be effectively cleaned in 20 minutes or less. If you haven't used an item in a while, remove it from classroom.
- Animals should be for curriculum purposes only and then removed when that lesson is complete. Animals should have a health certificate from Region 20 or a licensed veterinarian. Fish in clean tanks are acceptable.
- Remove fleecy items that can harbor allergy triggers... old overstuffed furniture, area and throw rugs, pillows, blankets, and stuffed animals.
- Do not have students bring stuffed animals or pillows from home; these harbor all the allergens from that child's home and put them into your classroom.
- Avoid use of 'stinky' dry erase board markers and cleaners (Use the Low odor markers).
- Avoid use of spray adhesives, contact cement and volatile paints. Use in well ventilated areas
- Do not bring chemicals, paints, sprays from home

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Updated 1/7/11

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- Do not use **ANY** room deodorizing sprays, aerosols, plug-ins, candles, fragranced picture frames, strong perfumes, or anything else with a fragrance. Febreze® antimicrobial™ pump spray (fragrance free) is ok (found in the cleaning aisle at the store).
- Absolutely do not use “Air Ionizer” machines in occupied areas.
- Inventory your supplies and materials in terms of indoor air quality
  - Consider:
    - Are they low-odor?
    - Can they create dust or other particles?
    - Do they harbor allergens?
- Report water leaks, water stains, damp materials, or ‘musty’ or ‘moldy’ smells immediately
- Don’t allow stained ceiling tiles to remain, as it is hard to tell if or when they get wet again.
- Communicate with the facility staff regarding mechanical systems for your classroom. Keep your room comfortable for general public, not individual
- Help ensure your students get adequate fresh air ventilation
  - Do not block air supply or exit grills.
  - Do not use a/c units as a storage facility or bookcases, do not place furniture or items in front of or on top of units. This blocks or inhibits circulation of air.
  - Do not have clutter on your a/c unit.
  - Do not turn off ventilators – contact maintenance staff to fix noisy units, control temperatures.
  - Don’t overcrowd rooms or use rooms designed as offices for any type of classroom.
  - In with the fresh, out with the stale: some type of circulation of air must occur to purge or ‘flush out’ the stale air.
- Monitor your windows – they should not show condensation except on the coldest days – condensation suggests either a moisture problem or not enough ventilation (or both)
- Notify maintenance if you smell odors or see particle matter from other zones in the building: shops, science, laminator, locker room, custodial, graphics, storage areas, combustion equipment, kitchen, buses at curb, etc. Air should move from clean areas to dirty areas.
- Install walk-off mats that provide ‘4 good steps’ at ALL outside entry doors.
- Make sure there is a IAQ person assigned and that ALL IAQ (moisture, mold, odor, etc) issues are directed to that individual.
- Make sure all teachers and staff know who to contact for Indoor Air Quality concerns in your school.

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