



Healthy Schools Checklist

School environments play an important role in the health and academic success of children. Children spend a great majority of their time indoors and much of that time is spent in school. Unhealthy school environments can affect children's health, attendance, concentration, and performance, as well as lead to expensive, time-consuming cleanup and remediation activities. Healthy school environments must be addressed and integrated within the education system to foster children's health and academic achievement.

Practice Effective Cleaning and Maintenance

For Cleaning

- Schedule routine cleaning when building is unoccupied
- Use high efficiency vacuums and filters
- Ensure garbage is stored in appropriate containers and disposed of properly at end of each day
- Purchase and use walk-off mats at all entrances
- Reduce clutter
- Establish a green cleaning plan
 - Products should be recognized by a third party eco-certification program like Design for the Environment (EPA), Green Seal or Ecologo
 - Use practices such as: spray cleaning cloths with product rather than the surface to be cleaned, use microfiber cleaning cloths and purchase products as concentrates and dilute on site.

For Maintenance

- Establish a preventative maintenance plan
- Caulk around windows and doors and ensure all are working properly
- Check weather stripping and door sweeps and replace as needed
- Cut back overgrown vegetation near exterior walls
- Fix any water leaks and removed damaged materials

Prevent Mold and Moisture

- Conduct routine moisture inspections for moisture problems, water damage and visible mold
- Fix plumbing or roof leaks as soon as possible
- Vent moisture generating appliances to the outside
- Dry wet areas within 24-48 hours

- Downspouts should drain into storm sewer or a visibly sloped grade away from the building
- Gutters, downspouts, scuppers and storm drains should be intact, free of debris and properly connected
- Maintain indoor humidity levels between 30-60%

Reduce Chemical & Environmental Contaminant Hazards

- Conduct a chemical inventory of the school or locate and review an existing inventory.
- Where applicable, perform screenings and inspections of chemical-containing equipment (e.g., PCB fluorescent lighting ballasts, mercury-containing items) to ensure the equipment is properly managed.
- Visually inspect chemical storage areas. Are the chemicals: clearly labeled, in undamaged containers, outdated, in a designated storeroom or cabinet with operable locks?
- Review the school's mercury inventory list.
- Test frequently occupied rooms at or below ground level for radon.
- Encourage teachers to use school and art supplies that do not contain toxic chemicals or other contaminants
- Compare the school's drinking fountains with those identified on EPA's list of known lead-containing models. Lead concentrations at all drinking water taps should be below 20 ppb for a 250 ml sample.
- Implement an anti-idling policy for school buses, passenger vehicles, and delivery trucks, and post signs stating all vehicles are prohibited from idling on school premises.
- Conduct a chemical cleanout. Use the school's chemical inventory to identify unused, unneeded, degraded, and unknown chemicals.

Ensure Good Ventilation

- Ensure the school building has a functioning ventilation system. Take steps to ensure all rooms in the school building are ventilated
- Inspect the maintenance room for unsanitary conditions, leaks, and spills.
- Establish and implement a regular schedule for inspecting and changing filters.
- Ensure condensate pans are clean, unobstructed, and draining properly.
- Establish and implement a regular cleaning schedule for air supply diffusers, return registers, and outside air intakes. Check ground-level and roof intakes for pollutant sources (e.g., dumpsters, bus-idling areas, plumbing vents, and kitchen exhaust fans).
- Ensure that ducts and the interior of air-handling units or unit ventilators are clean.
- Keep unit ventilators clear of books, papers, and other items.
- Ensure HVAC system settings fit the actual schedule of building use (including night and weekend use).
- Perform regular HVAC system inspections and establish a HVAC maintenance plan
- Install carbon monoxide detectors near combustion sources

Prevent Pests and Reduce Pesticide Exposure

Establish an integrated pest management (IPM) program that will:

- Keep doors shut when not in use and make sure they have functioning door sweeps
- Keep vegetation, shrubs, and wood mulch at least 1 foot away from the school building.
- Allow food and beverages only in designated areas and store food in airtight containers.

- Clean all food crumbs or spilled liquids immediately.
- Remove piles of boxes, newspapers, and other potential hiding places for pests.
- In food prep and serving areas store food and waste in containers that are inaccessible to pests.
- Place screens on vents, windows, and floor drains
- Reduce the availability of food and water: remove food debris; clean all food crumbs or spilled liquids right away; fix dripping faucets and leaks; and dry out wet areas.
- Clean food preparation equipment after use and remove grease accumulation.
- Use caulk or paint to seal cracks and crevices.
- Clean floor drains, strainers, and grates.
- Seal pipe chases.
- In maintenance areas ensure mops and buckets are clean, dry, and stored appropriately.
- Immediately place garbage in a trash can with a lid that closes securely, and remove trash daily.
- Require regular site inspections and trapping to determine the types and infestation levels of pests.
- Set action thresholds, or levels of pest populations or environmental conditions that require action.
- Monitor pests and record information in a pest sighting log.
- Keeping written records of all aspects of the IPM program.
- Evaluate the IPM program to determine the success of the pest management strategies employed.
- Once all other strategies have been exhausted to control pests, use baits and traps before making a broad pesticide application

Text adapted from “Voluntary Guidelines for States Development and Implementation of a School Environmental Health Program,” US EPA, Office of Children’s Health Protection, October 2012



Improving Kids’ Environment

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