

Environmental Health and Safety

Indoor Air Quality Tips

When people hear about indoor air quality problems they think about mold and mildew. But, a buildup of dirt and dust can also cause allergy reaction and give mold a place to start growing. In elementary and middle schools, our students are growing so fast and shedding so many skin cells every day that dead skin cells are one of the main culprits behind indoor air problems in many of our schools.

Everyone can and must do his or her part to maintain good indoor air quality.

The best way to eliminate indoor air quality negative elements (such as dirt, dust, and pollen) is to not let these elements into your building. Keep negative elements out of your environment whenever possible by keeping doors closed.

Ensure that walk-off mats are in place at each entrance and that they are dry and swept/vacuumed on a daily basis. Requesting that students wipe their feet prior to entering the building will also help to minimize the buildup of dirt and dust.

Carpets should be swept/vacuumed thoroughly on a daily basis. They capture and hold a lot of dirt. Vacuuming is one of the best ways of keeping dirt, dust, and other negative elements out of the site's environment before they can be circulated throughout the building by the heating and air conditioning system.

Trash should be removed daily. Remove foul-smelling items immediately. All trashcan liners should be changed daily.

Mold can and will grow quickly on wet ceiling tiles. Replace stained ceiling tiles immediately. Work orders should be submitted to the Maintenance Department identifying the location of the leak.

Food should not be consumed in the classrooms. Food consumption also causes problems with rodents and other pests. If food is consumed, dispose of food waste in a separate waste can and remove from the classroom as soon as the activity/feeding are over.

Keep classrooms neat and tidy. Books, boxes and projects/displays collect dust and make routine dusting very difficult. Other items that collect dust are plants, stuffed toys, pet animals, upholstered furniture, and knickknack items.

Nothing should be kept on or in front of the HVAC units. These units are not shelves. Proper air management depends on unrestricted air movement. Air supply registers should not be taped off or blocked.

Report problems with the HVAC system immediately. Mold needs moisture to grow. By eliminating leaks we eliminate moisture, thus reducing the food sources for mold to grow.

With your help we can keep our schools clean and provide a healthy environment for us all.