

## **Best Practices in Schools**

### **Housekeeping and Maintenance**

Proper application of routine housekeeping practices can reduce many allergens and asthma triggers making the school a healthier environment for all occupants. Below is a list of suggestions that can be used in evaluating your program.

#### **1 Chemicals**

- a. Protect yourself and coworkers. Follow all safety instructions.
- b. Choose the least hazardous chemical that safely performs the task.
- c. Prepare solutions following manufacturer's instructions, never exceed maximum strength.
- d. Never blend chemicals unless specifically allowed on the label.
- e. Use chemical for purpose designed, i.e. Never use a floor cleaner on a desk.
- f. Properly label containers
- g. Store chemicals safely, following rules for compatibility, spill guards, temperature, and ventilation.
- h. Purchase in smaller quantities to avoid storage of large volumes over extended periods.
- i. Properly dispose of excess material that is outdated, no longer usable, or no longer needed.
- j. When ordering products consider fragrance free options. Fragrances can be asthma triggers and are unnecessary in most situations.

#### **2 Trash**

- a. Empty waste containers, both indoor and outdoor, in a timely manner to avoid attracting insects and rodents. This includes large containers such as dumpsters.
- b. Empty recycling containers in a timely manner.
- c. Change liners on a routine basis and whenever needed.

#### **3 Dusting/ Sweeping**

- a. Airborne dust often carries allergens and can be an asthma trigger so use precautions if performing these operations when children are present.
- b. Micro-fiber cloths are much better at trapping dust particles and reduce the particles release into the air.
- c. It is encouraged to use color coded cleaning cloths for various types of surfaces to avoid cross contamination.

- 4 Mopping
  - a. After mopping, dry and ventilate to avoid high humidity situations.
  - b. Any chemicals with warnings of respiratory hazards should not be used when children are present, and the area should be properly ventilated prior to reentry.
  - c. It is encouraged to use color coded cleaning materials for various surfaces to avoid cross contamination.
  
- 5 Vacuuming
  - a. Vacuum should have proper filter system to avoid dust being released into the air.
  - b. Develop a vacuuming schedule that ensures carpets are kept clean.
  
- 6 Carpet Cleaning
  - a. Spot clean spills as soon as possible to avoid mold growth.
  - b. Dry as quickly as possible and ventilate to avoid high humidity.
  - c. Air conditioners are not dehumidifiers. They will remove some moisture but not large amounts. Remember colder is not always better.
  - d. Develop schedule to keep carpets clean. High traffic areas may need more frequent cleaning.
  
- 7 Florescent light bulbs
  - a. Florescent light bulbs contain mercury and should be stored and disposed in a safe manner. Broken bulbs can release mercury vapor into the air so they should be cleaned up and properly stored until disposal.
  
- 8 Storage containers
  - a. Storage containers should be the appropriate size and shape and located so as to facilitate proper cleaning of the classroom.