

## Indoor Environmental Quality

Indoor environmental quality (IEQ) refers to the conditions within a building, which includes air quality (IAQ), access to daylight, acoustic conditions, along with lighting and thermal control. All of these relate to the health and comfort of the occupants of the building. Recent research has shown that a school's physical environment can play a major role in academic achievement. Below are some tips to improve indoor environmental quality in your school:

### Spills or leaks

- ❖ Spilled water or liquids should be contained and removed immediately; excess fluids (especially consumable beverages) can give off unpleasant odors or cause irritations if not corrected immediately.
- ❖ Check sinks or refrigerators for leaks or spills (and forgotten food) and correct right away.

### Cleaning supplies

- ❖ Cleaning sprays/supplies can release a pungent odor.
- ❖ Use unscented cleaning supplies to maintain positive indoor air quality.
- ❖ Any strong solvents or cleaning compounds should be stored away from classrooms and in a well-ventilated area.
- ❖ Check with your designated school representative before bringing in personal cleaning supplies.



### HVAC grills, filters and ventilation

- ❖ HVAC grills and filters that are visibly dirty means that the system is working properly!
- ❖ The HVAC system is designed to filter out large particulates; not to provide "fresh" air.
- ❖ Grills and filters should be cleaned/replaced after accumulation of particulates.
- ❖ HVAC returns and supply grills should remain uncovered and free of clutter. This will help to allow pollutants to exit the classroom and allow for clean air to circulate throughout the room.

### Additional considerations

- ❖ Eliminate air fresheners. Exposure to fragrances can cause irritation and in young children lead to allergies.
- ❖ Reduce or remove cloth items, such as furniture, draperies, stuffed animals. Cloth attracts dust and dust mites and generally do not comply with fire codes for schools.
- ❖ Check for forgotten food or lunches at the backs of cabinets and drawers that can be emitting odors.
- ❖ Closely monitor indoor plants for mold, rotting soil, bugs. Do not overwater or leave standing in stagnate water.
- ❖ Avoid classroom pets that trigger allergy, asthma, or other negative physical reactions.

Contact your site administrator with IEQ issues and maintenance problems as soon as possible.

Additional resources:

<https://www.epa.gov/schools-chemicals>

<https://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/take-action-improve-indoor-air-quality-schools>

<http://www.teachersforhealthykids.org/programs/past-projects/resources/>