

Tips for a Safer Classroom

Simple tips for a safer classroom for you and your students.

1. STORE CLEANERS PROPERLY

Any product with the warning label “Keep Out of Reach of Children” must be exactly that: kept out of reach of your students. Store cleaning products and other chemicals in an upper cabinet, a locked closet or drawer. All products must have an MSDS sheet available. All containers must be labeled with the contents. Check your school’s policy for cleaners in the classroom.

2. SECURE BOOKCASES & SHELVING

To prevent tipping, secure unstable bookcases and shelving units to the wall. Secure all stacked bookcases and shelving to the lower part and, if unstable, secure entire unit to the wall. Notify maintenance of unstable bookcases or shelving.

3. SECURE CARPETS, RUGS & CORDS

Bunched carpet, loose throw rugs and unsecured electrical cords may be tripping hazards. Secure carpets and rugs and place cord covers over electrical cords. Consult with maintenance for acceptable methods.

4. TAKE CARE WITH ANIMALS & REPTILES

Carefully consider having animals and reptiles in the classroom. Check your school’s policy on animals in the classroom.

- Animals such as rabbits, small rodents, guinea pigs and birds can be allergenic, as are some types of wood chip bedding.

To prevent injuries from bites or scratches, do not handle animals unless bite-resistant gloves are worn.

- Clean cages daily in a sink away from snack areas.
- If reptiles are housed in a classroom and handled by students, a “wash hands” sign must be posted on or near the reptile container and hand washing facilities must be available.
- Written notification to parents is recommended if an animal is to be kept in a classroom.

5. STORE FOOD SAFELY

Prevent visits from uninvited animals such as mice and rats by storing food in rodent-proof containers.

6. ENSURE HEALTHY AIR QUALITY

- Use fresh air or fans to remove odors or find and eliminate the source of the odor. The use of air fresheners, scented oils and candles only mask odors, and may contribute to breathing problems.
- Upholstered furniture, cushions, pillows and stuffed animals can gather dust and may contribute to asthma. Store stuffed animals and cushions in plastic bins when not in use. Replace upholstered furniture with leather or vinyl furniture or regularly vacuum using a HEPA filter bag.
- Leave vents open and unblocked to allow proper air flow.
- Keep clutter to a minimum. Clutter can accumulate dust and may be harborage for rodents.
- Do not over-water plants. Stagnant water under planters may cause mold and mildew growth.
- Use low V.O.C. (volatile organic compound) art supplies and markers such as glue sticks, Expo 2 markers and Expo Low-Odor markers.
- Notify maintenance with any air quality concerns or questions.



Classroom Health and Safety Online Resource:

WA State Department of Health School Env. Health and Safety Program • www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Schools/EnvironmentalHealth

Questions? Email EHSchools@snoco.org

Adapted from Spokane Regional Health District • Feb. 2023