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Management Plan for Indoor Air Quality

Northfield Public Schools

Management Plan for Indoor Air Quality

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1.0 Introduction

Good quality indoor air contributes to a favorable learning environment for students, productivity for teachers and staff, and a sense of comfort, health, and well-being for all school occupants. This management plan describes procedures and guidelines relating to indoor air quality (IAQ) for Northfield Public Schools and references the Tools for Schools Action Kit from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

2.0 Responsibilities

The program coordinator, or designee, is responsible for the following:

- Oversee the implementation of the management plan
- Provide resources needed to implement the plan
- Determine when outside professional assistance is needed
- Ensure the annual notification to staff, students and parents is completed
- Register IAQ questions from staff, students, and parents

3.0 Communication

The management plan for IAQ and other related reports are located at the District Office with the District's health and safety programs.

A statement is distributed annually via the school website, informing the staff, students, and parents about the location of the management plan for Indoor Air Quality and how to contact the IAQ coordinator. This information is documented with this program.

4.0 Procedures for Handling IAQ Concerns and Remediation

The following describes the process to be implemented if a building occupant is concerned about IAQ:

- A person who has concerns about IAQ contacts the building principal or head custodian in their building for reporting and assistance with concerns.
- After reviewing the situation, the building custodian will investigate to try to resolve the problem internally. If the concern cannot be alleviated, the building custodian will notify the IAQ coordinator and a questionnaire may be provided to the affected person. The completed questionnaire would be returned to the IAQ coordinator.
- The IAQ coordinator will review the questionnaire and contact the appropriate outside firm to help investigate and/or remediate the problem, if deemed necessary.
- Remediation will be conducted and may require an outside contractor.
- The IAQ coordinator, or designated consultant, will communicate with the initiating party during the process of investigating and remediating the issue.

Northfield Public Schools may have an IAQ assessment and sampling performed in an area in response to symptoms experienced by a staff member or student. If the assessment and sampling does not identify a condition or concern that might account for the symptoms experienced by an individual, involvement of a physician is often warranted as the next step. It is recommended that an allergist or other specialist (not a general physician) conduct the examination and help to determine if there are specific triggers or allergens that might be affecting the individual. The specialist may show that the individual is sensitive to or affected by low levels of a specific contaminant that does not usually affect the general population. If a specific trigger or contaminant is identified, further sampling might then be warranted.

5.0 Building Walkthroughs

Building walkthrough inspections are completed annually to identify potential IAQ issues. The walkthrough is modeled after the EPA Tools for Schools checklists and reports of walkthroughs are located in Appendix A. The walkthrough uses sight, sound, and smell to assess if there are obvious water intrusion problems (interior and exterior), obvious ventilation failures and/or problems, obvious building/structural failures and/or problems, overall cleanliness of buildings and classrooms, and operations and maintenance programs. It is intended to be a quick overall assessment of each room for obvious problems that may impact indoor air quality. The reports are reviewed by the IAQ coordinator or designee, who will then take appropriate action to address problems that were identified.

6.0 Indoor Air Quality Teacher Surveys

An IAQ survey may be distributed annually to provide an avenue for reporting any IAQ concerns and to inform employees on what they can do to improve IAQ in their own areas. The survey may cover the following topics: animals, thermal comfort, ventilation, building maintenance, moisture concerns and general cleanliness.

The IAQ coordinator reviews the surveys and any concerns discovered are addressed. The surveys may be completed online, and a final report is maintained with the management plan.

7.0 Ventilation Assessments

A ventilation assessment is completed each year by the head engineers or designated consultant. The ventilation assessment is maintained with this program and covers the following topics:

- Outdoor Air Intakes
- System Cleanliness
- Control for Outdoor Air Supply
- Air Distribution
- Exhaust Systems

8.0 Facility Cleanliness

The current maintenance program involves vacuuming of carpeted rooms and dusting regularly. Dusting of personal items is the responsibility of the classroom teacher. A deep cleaning of furniture and flooring is conducted in each room over the summer break.

The District maintains a routine heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) inspection and maintenance program that includes coil and drain pan cleaning and inspection, adjustment of motor operators and dampers, regular filter changes, unit cleaning, and checking of damper controls and settings.

9.0 Related Guidelines

9.1 Animals in the Classroom

The goal of the IAQ program is to decrease student and staff exposure to potentially harmful animal allergens. Bringing animals into the buildings should be discouraged. If animals are to be allowed in the classroom, the protocol will be as follows:

- Before bringing an animal into the building, the teacher will ask the principal for permission. The principal will consult with facilities staff.
- All animals are required to be properly vaccinated.
- The location of the habitat for the animal will include consideration of HVAC components. Animal habitats will not be placed near air supply or return air vents and will not be kept near unit ventilators. The habitat will be placed on a hard floor surface. The animal will not be allowed to wander around the room (especially on carpet).

- A cleaning schedule will be implemented for the habitat and surrounding area. The classroom teacher is responsible for regularly cleaning the cage, as well as the table or floor the cage rests upon. Students will not be allowed to clean cages or equipment.
- The teacher will always be present when animals are handled by a student.
- All staff and students will wash their hands before and after handling animals, cage debris, or animal supplies.
- Concerns regarding the health issues or care of the animal should be brought to the building principal for immediate consideration.

9.2 Pest Management

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a coordinated approach to pest control using the most cost-effective means to prevent unacceptable levels of pests, while causing the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment. IPM uses a combination of methods that include:

- Reducing or not allowing food or snacks in the classroom, especially when the room is carpeted
- Inspection and monitoring of pest population sites
- Managing waste by keeping refuse in tight containers and locating waste containers away from buildings, if possible
- Maintaining structures (fixing leaking pipes promptly, sealing cracks)
- Adding physical barriers to pest entry and movement (screens for chimneys, doors, and windows)
- Modifying habitats (removing clutter, relocating outside light fixtures away from doors)
- Using traps (light traps, snap traps, and glue boards)
- Using pesticides judiciously

9.3 Food Services

Cooking activities generate odors, moisture, food waste, and other trash, which, if not managed carefully, can lead to IAQ problems. The District ensures the following precautions are taken:

Cooking Area

- The exhaust fans are inspected to make sure they are working properly. If problems are noted, the building custodian is contacted.
- Exhaust fans are operational whenever cooking, washing dishes, or cleaning.
- Any leaks or odors of combustion gas are reported immediately to the building custodian.
- The kitchen is cleaned after use as required by the district and Department of Health policy.
- Signs of mold, mildew, or algae are reported to the building custodian.
- Pest problems are reported to the building custodian.

Food Handling and Storage

- Food service areas are regularly checked for signs of insects or vermin.
- Food handling and storage practices followed are as recommended by the District and the Department of Health.
- General cleanliness is maintained.

Waste Management

- The District's policy of recycling waste is followed.
- Waste is stored in appropriate sealed containers.
- Dumpsters are located away from air intake vents and operable windows.

9.4 Latex

Latex allergy is a reaction to certain proteins in latex rubber. The amount of latex exposure needed to produce sensitization or an allergic reaction is unknown. Increasing the exposure to latex proteins increases the risk of developing allergic symptoms. In sensitized persons, symptoms usually begin within minutes of exposure; but they can occur hours later and can be quite varied. Mild reactions to latex involve skin redness, rash, hives, or itching. More severe reactions may involve respiratory symptoms such as runny nose, sneezing, itchy eyes, scratchy throat, and asthma (difficult breathing, coughing spells, and wheezing).*

Because gloves and balloons are the most common and accessible sources of latex, the District has chosen to prohibit their use in District buildings. If an employee or student has a severe latex allergy, other forms of latex will be assessed in that particular building.

* *Information from NIOSH Publication #98-113: Latex Allergy, A Prevention Guide.*

9.5 Fragrances

Exposure to fragrances and scents can cause some staff and/or students to experience asthma or allergic reactions, including upper respiratory irritation, headaches, and other symptoms. All District employees are encouraged to use personal products (such as perfume, cologne, after-shave, hairspray, and body lotion) that are low odor or fragrance free. In addition, the district selects maintenance and cleaning products that are low in odor.

As a district policy essential oils may not be used as follows:

- In diffusers
- Applied to any student, even if the parent requests staff to administer, without a Health Care Provider order
- In professional development sessions
- Any circumstance that is disruptive or puts another's health at risk

If essential oils are found:

- In diffusers:
 - Diffuser is removed and disposed of properly
- On students/staff which are disruptive or putting another's health at risk
 - Do not use water to wash off as it may increase irritation by spreading the oils.
 - Offer clean clothing, as needed and as available

10.0 Annual Review

The Northfield Public Schools IAQ coordinator, along with a designated safety consultant, reviews the IAQ plan on an annual basis. Changes to the plan are identified on the annual review form found at the beginning of this plan.

Appendix A

*Indoor Air Quality Walkthrough Reports and
Teacher Surveys
(Maintained in the District Office)*

Appendix B

Annual Notification Documentation

Linked on website: <https://northfieldschools.org/wp-content/uploads/Indoor-Air-Quality.Right-to-Know.Asbestos.etc.FINAL-2021-22.pdf>

Appendix C

*Indoor Air Quality Assessment Reports
(Maintained in the District Office)*