

REGULATION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: JPC-RA, JPD-RB, ECJ-RB

Responsible Office: Deputy Superintendent of Schools

Health Care for Children and Staff with Allergies

I. PURPOSE

To establish procedures to reduce the effect of allergens on the performance of students and staff during the school day

II. BACKGROUND

Students of elementary school age spend about one-half and secondary students about one-third of their waking hours in school. Many school staff members spend a minimum of an eight-hour workday in the school building. When these hours are spent in the presence of allergens, students and staff health, attendance, and school work may suffer.

It is essential that the school environment be as free from allergens as possible. It is necessary that all school personnel responsible for planning and administering instructional programs be aware of the allergens that may adversely affect the functioning of students with allergies. A continuous allergic condition, as evidenced by tension, fatigue, or hyperactivity, can impact school performance.

III. PROCEDURES

- A. In selecting materials for use in school buildings, all personnel involved in the procurement process should maintain awareness of the allergic potential of the substances contained in the materials.
 1. Specifications must be carefully written to avoid known allergens such as animal hair carpet underpadding, or "washed" animal hair carpet underpadding, coated animal hair underpadding, synthetic fibers not properly heat treated, kapok, cotton linters, feathers (down), and insect sprays with pyrethrum. Only approved chemical products on the procurement bid list are to be used. These products must be reviewed for known allergens prior to purchase.

2. Specifications should avoid irritants likely to cause problems for those with allergies, such as odorous paint, sawdust, chemical sprays with camphor or tar, formaldehyde, paint thinners, chlorine, and other cleaning, art, or food products.
 3. Donations of rugs and stuffed furniture shall not be accepted by schools.
- B. Building service managers and workers should provide maintenance and cleaning services to reduce the amount of dust and molds in instructional areas and other locations where students spend a large part of the school day.
1. School rugs should be vacuumed daily and shampooed regularly.
 2. Filters in heating and air conditioning systems should be cleaned regularly.
 3. Odorous cleaning products and disinfectants should be avoided.
- C. When school buildings are scheduled for painting or major renovation, the principal shall notify parents/guardians in advance in the following situations:
1. When painting is scheduled in classroom areas or near ventilation systems.
 2. When major renovations are scheduled that will create dust or heavy odors in instructional areas, e.g., tarring of roof, resurfacing driveway, etc. In such instances, appropriate plastic barriers should be used.
- D. Students with allergy conditions may be excused from attending classes in affected areas of buildings during repainting or major renovation while this work is under way and for one or two days thereafter, as may be recommended in writing by the attending physician.
- E. Animals used in support of the educational program will not be housed in classrooms where there is a person with a known allergy to such animals. Parents/guardians will be notified when an animal is to be housed in a classroom. When there is another room available, one which is not used full-time for instruction, it should be used for the housing of animals. MCPS Regulation ECJ-RB, *Care of Animals in the Classroom*, provides additional information.
- F. Written request from a physician to provide an adapted program or release from activities that will be detrimental to the health of the allergic student or staff member will be considered and acted on whenever possible by school staff. Students recovering from an asthmatic episode or an illness resulting from an allergy should

be provided alternative program activities during the time period specified by the physician.

- G. The school nurse should carefully monitor the health records of students known to be allergic to insect stings, food items, or other allergy-related conditions identified by a physician, and notify all appropriate school staff. The school nurse also can be a resource to school staff with allergic conditions.

Regulation History: Formerly Regulation No. 525-16, August 5, 1974, (directory information updated); revised January 28, 2008.