

# Reducing asthma triggers in the school setting

## Exhaust from school buses and other vehicles

- Implement the Clean Air Zone program sponsored by the Department of Environmental Quality
- Create a “no-idling” policy that prohibits buses and other vehicles from idling near the school

## Tobacco and Wildfire Smoke

- Enforce no-smoking policies on school grounds and at all school functions
- Encourage parents/guardians to avoid smoking indoors, in cars, or around children
- If there are wildfires near the school, close windows to keep smoke out of the indoor air environment and allow students with asthma to have recess and lunch breaks indoors

## Pets

- Avoid pets with fur or feathers in classrooms used by students with animal allergies
- Consider having a furry and feathered pet-free school

## Pests

- Do not leave food or garbage out and position dumpsters away from school buildings
- Store food in airtight containers
- If pests are present, control them using Integrated Pest Management
- Limit pesticide spray to infested area

## Molds

- Fix all leaky plumbing and other sources of water entry into the school
- Wash mold from surfaces and allow them to dry completely
- Keep drip pans in air conditioning units, refrigerators, and dehumidifiers dry and clean

## Cold Air and Weather Changes

- Encourage children to cover their nose and mouth with a scarf on cold or windy days
- Use air conditioners during humid, windy, or high allergy conditions
- Encourage susceptible children to avoid too much activity during extreme weather
- If recommended in the student’s asthma action plan, assist the student in using their inhaler prior to going outside in cold weather

## Allergens

- Keep windows closed, if possible, during times when pollen levels are high
- Identify students with food allergies and avoid highly allergenic foods (peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, cow’s milk, soy, eggs, fish) in school menus; modify arts and crafts projects to exclude food substances known to cause allergic responses.
- Allergy action plans should be in place for students known to have food allergies.

## Strong Odors and Sprays

- Encourage school staff to avoid wearing strong perfumes, cologne, and hair sprays
- Use no/low VOC (volatile organic compounds) paints, adhesives and cleaning products in the school
- Ensure adequate ventilation near art supplies and laboratory chemicals
- Provide maintenance annually for the school’s heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC)

## Respiratory Infections

Encourage students to:

- Have an annual flu shot
- Wash hands with soap and water regularly
- Cover their mouth or nose when they cough or sneeze

