AP 7-201 – SAFE AND HEALTHY CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS

The following is a guideline for the divisional use of carpets, furniture, appliances and animals in the school environment. We understand that schools use materials and resources such as learning carpets, pets, and alternative seating to support educational programming. However, we also need to ensure that materials/equipment can be cleaned and disinfected to promote a safe environment.

The Western School Division Organization chart (AP 5-101) and Provincial legislation direct that the Principal is the deciding authority at the school level in regard to the operation of the school. The Principal works collaboratively with the Facilities Manager to manage the school environment and the school grounds. The Head Custodian reports directly to the Facilities Manager and also indirectly to the Principal to ensure the effective operation, cleaning and maintenance of the school and grounds. The Head Custodian works collaboratively with the Principal and the Facilities Manager.

It is expected that the Principal and Head Custodian complete a site walkthrough periodically to assess the level of furnishings, carpets, small appliances, pets, and plants in the school/divisional facility and ensure compliance with these guidelines. When items have been identified which need attention, the process within this Administrative Procedure shall be followed to rectify the issue. In regard to all items below staff shall work with the Principal in determining appropriate furnishings for their classrooms and offices. The Principal has final authority. Items that are not approved shall be subject to the removal process below.

Furniture

Furniture placed in schools/divisional facilities should be purchased by the school division. This is to ensure that furnishings comply with the standards set by the division.

Care should be taken when purchasing furniture to choose items of quality construction that can be cleaned/wiped easily and do not cause damage to floors. (e.g., some types of rocking chairs).

Existing furniture shall be removed or repaired if it is in poor condition, has been deemed a health/safety hazard, or causes damage to floors or walls.

Loose Carpeting

All loose carpeting should be purchased by the school/divisional facility through a school equipment supplier or a local carpet store. They must be new, edged and conform to safety standards. They should not have a backing that damages floors. The Principal shall approve carpets in consultation with the Head Custodian.

If a room already has carpet on the floors, additional loose carpeting should not typically be added.

Learning carpets may be used on top of other carpets.

Existing carpets shall be removed or repaired if they are in poor condition, have been deemed a health/safety hazard or cause damage to floors.

Appliances

The Division's current practice for appliances in classrooms/facilities follows recommendations established by MSBA Risk Management.

All small appliances should be approved by the Principal in consultation with the Head Custodian.

All appliances must be in good condition (appropriate plugs and cords) and have either CSA or ULC labels.

No small appliances (including microwaves) in classrooms as they may pose a burn/scalding and a fire hazard. Exceptions would include spaces such as Human Ecology and Staff Rooms.

Space heaters are discouraged due to fire risk, but if they are used, they must be unplugged at the end of each day.

All kitchen appliances must be plugged directly into a receptacle; NO extension cords or power bars.

Pets and Live Material

Animals brought into schools/divisional facilities but must be approved by the Principal. Staff need to be mindful of people's allergies.

Any animals approved for the school are the responsibility of the teacher, including weekends and school breaks. If safety or sanitation are compromised, animals may need to be removed.

Plants

Plants brought into the school/divisional facility by staff members shall be the responsibility of the staff member to water and keep clean.

Extension Cords, Lamps, and Electric Decoration

All extension cords must be supplied by the Division. Staff requiring an extension cord shall request one from the Head Custodian who shall work with the Principal and Facilities Manager if ordering is required.

For safety standards, one extension cord cannot be plugged into another. An extension cord cannot be run through doorways, ceilings or floors or attached with staples or nails.

Lamps in a classroom must have a CSA or ULC (Underwriters Laboratories of Canada) label. The light bulbs must conform to the lamp requirements.

All electric decoration must use LED lights only.

Removal Process

When the Principal has determined that an item in the school does not comply with this Administrative Procedure the following process shall be followed:

- The Principal shall send an email to the staff member indicating:
    - This Administrative Procedure
    - The item in question
    - A request to remove the item within 2 days, after which time (on the third day) the Principal shall direct the Head Custodian to remove the item and place it in short-term storage. The staff member shall remove the item from the school premises within 1 week of it being place in short-term storage.

Ceiling and Wall Decorative Materials

Decorative materials are considered to be anything applied over the existing wall or ceiling finishes. That includes everything from bulletin boards to things like posters, fabric, sports banners, maps, flags, photographs and artwork.

The amount of decorative materials on a wall cannot exceed 20% in a classroom and 5% in a hallway, as required by the National Fire Code of Canada Section 2.10.3.1

Areas on and around doors and windows must not be used for decorations. Multiple layers of decorative materials on walls are not permitted. All paper sheets must be attached at all four corners.

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