

Operating model for suspected cases of a child having symptoms from indoor air

If a school pupil or child in daycare is suspected to be suffering from symptoms caused by the indoor air of the school or daycare centre, the parents must notify the principal or the daycare centre director. The principal or daycare centre director shall notify the technical property manager about the suspicions or deficiencies in the condition of the building. The property manager and property maintenance service will start by examining the functioning of the architectural engineering system. If no clear deficiencies are found, the property manager will contact the Urban Environment Division's team of indoor air experts. The property manager will notify the principal or daycare centre director about whether further examination of the matter will be started, or what actions have been or will be taken. The principal or daycare centre director will convey the feedback to the parents. In other respects, the principal or daycare centre director shall follow the Division's instructions on indoor air. Parents can always contact the environmental auditors of the city's environmental health care unit. Peer support is available through the parents' committee, for example.

In case of a child in school

The principal will instructs the pupil's parents to contact school health care. The school nurse will register the extent of the symptoms caused by indoor air, and refer the pupil to the health station for further examination if necessary. The school will aim to ease the pupil's symptoms at school through internal solutions designed by the principal or vice-principal and a representative of the school health care in cooperation with the parents. If a change of school is appropriate for the pupil, a statement from the school doctor or specialist health care is required. The principal will arrange a meeting with the parents, a school health care representative, and if necessary, the area manager for mapping the situation and resolving it as soon as possible.

In case of a child in daycare

The daycare centre director will instruct the child's parents to contact the health station. The daycare centre will aim to ease the child's symptoms in daycare through internal solutions designed by the daycare centre director in cooperation with the parents and area manager. If alternative care arrangements or a change of daycare centre is appropriate for the child, a doctor's certificate concerning the child's symptoms is required. The daycare centre director will refer the matter to the next application processing meeting for the area in order to help find the best possible solution for the child.

Possible symptoms requiring examination and indoor air risk factors

Symptoms that may require examination include increased respiratory symptoms of those with asthma, coughing, wheezing breath, shortness of breath; sometimes even respiratory infections, allergic rhinitis, tiredness, and headache. All of these symptoms are quite common, and their cause cannot always be determined. Indoor air risk factors include moisture damage, insufficient ventilation, excessive indoor temperature, dry indoor air, mineral fibres, and various allergens (e.g. animal dust carried into the classroom on another student's clothes).

Further information

- **Building examination reports and bulletin:** Urban Environment Division, kymp.sisailmaviestinta@hel.fi
- **Contact information for environmental health care:** [ymk@hel.fi](mailto:y mk@hel.fi), tel. 09 310 2611
- **Peer support:** Helsinki region parents' committee Helvary, sisailma@helvary.fi

