

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

If a student is suspected of having symptoms from indoor air at the educational institution, the student or the parent of an underage student must report the matter to the principal or education manager. The principal or education manager 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 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 education manager about whether further examination of the matter will be started, or what actions have been or will be taken. The principal or education manager shall communicate the feedback to the student or the parent of an underage student. In other respects, the principal or education manager shall follow the Division's instructions on indoor air. The student or the parent of an underage student can always contact the environmental auditors of the City's environmental health care unit. Peer support is available through the parents' committee, for example. Courses at adult education centres are short, which is why anyone suffering from indoor air related issues is asked to select another course or reimbursed for their course fee.

For the student

The principal or education manager directs the student or the parent of an underage student to contact student health care. The student health care nurse will register the extent of the symptoms caused by indoor air and refer the student to the health station for further examination, if necessary. The school will aim to ease the student's symptoms at school through internal solutions designed by the principal,

vice-principal or the education manager and a representative of student health care in cooperation with the student or the parent of an underage student. If a change of school is appropriate for the student, a statement from a student health care doctor or specialist health care is required. The principal or education manager shall schedule a meeting with the student, the parent of an underage student and a representative from student health care to assess and resolve the situation as soon as possible.

Possible symptoms requiring examination and indoor air risk factors

Symptoms that may require examination include increasing 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 bulletins:** Urban Environment Division www.hel.fi/talotiedot or kymp.sisailmaviestinta@hel.fi
- **Contact information for environmental health care:** ymk@hel.fi, tel. 09 310 2611
- **Peer support:** Helsinki region parents' committee Helvary, sisailma@helvary.fi

