

GENERAL SAFETY PRACTICES

SAFE HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES

1. Avoid the creation and accumulation of any dust such as that from pencils, charcoal, chalks, pastels, powder paints, clay, plaster, rocks, wood, and fibre.
2. Avoid the inhalation of vapors and fumes from felt pens, glues, paints, or any other substance. Use these only with adequate ventilation.
3. Vent all kilns to the outside. Firing of clay and glazes causes toxic metal fumes highly hazardous to health.
4. Never allow sprays and fixatives to be inhaled. Be aware that invisibly small particles remain suspended in the air for up to three hours. Never use spray cans indoors unless you have a local exhaust spray booth.
5. Avoid highly toxic materials such as turpentine, benzene, carbon tetrachloride, asbestos, lead, mercury, and cadmium since small amounts can have severe effects on major internal organs such as the heart, lungs, kidney, intestinal system, and nervous system.
6. Do not mix food and art materials. Avoid all ingestion. Wash hands thoroughly before eating.
7. Review safety practices regularly and display safety posters conspicuously.
8. Sharp tools such as x-acto knives, linoleum, and wood carving tools should not be used below the 5th grade and then only after thorough safety instruction and with close supervision.
9. Store and handle art materials safely.

CHOOSING SAFER ART MATERIALS

1. Whenever possible, use water-based instead of oil or solvent-based materials. Avoid permanent markers. Their fumes can cause permanent nervous system damage.
2. Use ready-mixed paints rather than powdered paints to avoid the inhalation of pigment dusts during the mixing process. Never allow children near tempera powders since many pigments are highly toxic, containing cadmiums, lead, zinc, mercury, arsenic, and other dangerous carcinogens and mutagens.
3. Use waxy crayons and oil pastels rather than chalky sticks to avoid the creation and inhalation of dust.
4. Use the safer acetone and mineral spirits instead of the highly toxic aromatic and chlorinated hydrocarbons found in lacquer thinners and degreasing solvents. Always use in well-ventilated areas only.

PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Good Housekeeping	Maintain a clean and functional art work space. Dispose of waste materials in appropriate containers.
Tools and Equipment	Be responsible for safe placement and maintenance of all tools and equipment in the art room. Provincial safety regulations calling for the use of face or eye shields, machine guards, and other protective devices must be strictly enforced.
Storage	Provide proper storage for all hazardous materials.
Lighting	Provide for the appropriate type and amount of light for each art activity (see lighting section).
Ventilation	Be informed about adequate ventilation procedures necessary for each specific art activity.
Supervision	Remain in the art room while students are present.

MISLEADING LABELING

Most art materials designed for children are labeled "nontoxic."

The term "**toxic**" is defined by the Federal Hazardous Substances Act as a substance (radioactive material excluded) which can cause injury or illness to man through ingestion, inhalation, or absorption via any body surface. The main problem is that products are tested only for immediate and acute toxicity, such as skin and eye irritation, stomach aches, and respiratory irritation. The Hazardous Substances Act does not require testing for long-term effects such as chronic poisoning, cancer, damage to the nervous system, allergies, chronic lung diseases, and birth defects. Also, smaller manufacturers do not have the resources to carry out extensive toxicological tests. The label "nontoxic" on a product can be very misleading.

The one association of manufacturers that is certified by an authority of toxicology and that does make reliable tests is The Crayon, Watercolor, and Craft Institute. Its products carry the seal CP (Certified Products) or AP (Approved Products). The seal implies that the approved art materials contain no harmful materials in sufficient quantities to be harmful to the body even if ingested by a child.