

Common Surface Mold FAQs



What is mold?

Mold is a type of fungus that grows in damp, humid places and spreads through tiny airborne spores. It's commonly found on materials like drywall, wood, and carpet.

How does mold form in schools?

Mold grows when moisture is present for too long—usually from things like plumbing leaks, roof damage, HVAC condensation, or poor drainage. It can begin growing in as little as 24 to 48 hours if the problem isn't fixed.

Who is most affected by mold?

Those with asthma or allergies, weakened immune systems, and anyone with respiratory issues may experience symptoms like coughing, sneezing, itchy eyes, rashes, or asthma flare-ups.

Can mold make students or staff sick?

Mold can cause allergic reactions or make existing health conditions worse. Reactions vary based on a person's health and how much mold is present.

How is mold cleaned up?

Mold and moisture should be cleaned or removed within 24–48 hours. Porous materials like ceiling tiles or drywall may need to be replaced.

Can school staff clean small mold problems?

Trained staff can handle small areas (less than 10 square feet). Larger areas require certified cleanup teams.

What does Virginia require schools to do about mold?

Virginia law requires schools to follow EPA guidelines for testing and cleanup, notify parents and staff if there are health concerns, and report findings to the Virginia Department of Health. Stafford Schools follows a formal Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Program that meets all of these requirements.

How does Stafford Schools prevent mold?

- Regular building inspections
- Monitoring humidity, temperature, and air quality
- Prompt repair of leaks or water issues
- Filter changes and HVAC maintenance
- Temperature settings between 68–73°F
- Certified third-party oversight from industrial hygienists

What happens if mold is found in my child's school?

Cleanup will follow EPA protocols and be overseen by licensed professionals. Affected areas will not be used again until testing confirms they are safe. Students or staff may be temporarily relocated.

Want to learn more?

- VDH Mold Info:
<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-health/public-health-toxicology/mold/>
- VDH School Reporting:
<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-health/public-health-toxicology/school-mold-reporting/>
- EPA Mold Resources: [epa.gov/mold](https://www.epa.gov/mold)

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