

MEMO TO STAFF

Dear Staff:

Please be aware that we have received a request to establish a fragrance/scent-safe environment due to medical reasons. We ask that you review the following information and respond as requested. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

What is the issue?

Exposure to fragrances and scented products can trigger serious health reactions in individuals with asthma, allergies, migraines, or chemical sensitivities.

Fragrances and scents are found in a wide range of products including perfume, aftershave, deodorant, soap, air fresheners, fabric softeners, laundry detergents, facial tissues, and candles. It is a personal choice to use fragrances or scents; however, it is important to recognize that the chemicals from which these are created are, by their very nature, shared. The chemicals vaporize into the air and are easily inhaled by those around us. Today's fragrances/scented products are made up of a complex mixture of chemicals which can contribute to indoor air quality problems and cause health problems.

Susceptible individuals can experience a variety of symptoms, including headache, sore throat, runny nose, sinus congestion, wheezing, and shortness of breath, dizziness, anxiety, anger, nausea, fatigue, mental confusion and an inability to concentrate. Although the mechanisms by which chemicals act to produce symptoms are not yet understood, the impact on all those affected can be quite severe, resulting in great difficulty in work and study activities.

Moving towards a fragrance/scent-safe environment.

To protect those individuals with sensitivities to fragrances and scents and to possibly prevent others from developing such sensitivities, we are asking for your cooperation towards a fragrance/scent-safe environment in the environment. Employees, students, and visitors are strongly encouraged to avoid or reduce the use of fragrances or scented products.

What is the High Prairie School Division school board doing about fragrance/scent related issues in the workplace?

Recognizing that fragrances and scents may negatively impact on indoor air quality, the Board will:

- Minimize the use of products which contain fragrances and scents.
- Promote the use of environmentally friendly products in cleaning and building materials.
- Optimize air quality by means of proper ventilation, as well as ensuring peak performance and proper maintenance of building ventilation systems.

What can you do to help?

- Be considerate of those who are sensitive to fragrances and scents. Avoid using products in the workplace.
- If you must use a fragrance or scented product, please use it sparingly. A general guideline for fragrances and scented products is that they should not be detectable more than an arm's length away.
- Avoid using products such as air fresheners in your work area.
- If possible, avoid using scented laundry products or cleaning agents. Allow dry cleaned clothing to be aired out prior to wearing.

What should you do if you are approached because you are using a fragrance or wearing a scented product?

If you are informed that the fragrance that you are using is creating a health problem and you are requested to refrain from using the product while at work, you may feel puzzled, hurt, annoyed, defensive or even insulted by the request. Understand that is not about you as a person or about your choice of fragrance or scent, but it is about the product and the adverse effect it is having on someone.

- Consider discussing the issue openly with the person or with your supervisor and the person. Ask questions about the health impact on the person and the types of symptoms experienced.
- Work with cooperation and understanding towards a mutually satisfactory resolution.

What should you do if you encounter a person in the school who is either wearing a fragrance or using scented products?

- If you feel you can do so comfortably, approach the individual, and let them know that the fragrance or scent may cause an adverse reaction to some individuals in the workplace. Talk to the individual in a cordial and respectful manner, requesting their understanding and cooperation. Remember that many people are unaware of the potential adverse health effects caused by the wearing or use of fragrances or scented products.
- As an employee, you may ask your supervisor/principal to discuss this matter with the individual involved or with the group of employees.

Thank you for your attention regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Principal
School