

Number:	<i>To be determined</i>
Topic:	Handling and Cleaning Clay in Classrooms
Effective:	June 2014
Cross-Reference:	Clay Handling and Storage – Curriculum Delivery Administrative Procedure
Review/Revision Date:	June 2016
Responsibility:	Executive Officer of Human Resources

INTENDED PURPOSE:

To define procedures for the handling and cleaning of clay in classrooms.

PREAMBLE:

Clay is a general term including many combinations of one or more clay minerals with traces of metal oxides and organic matter. Geologic clay deposits are mostly composed of phyllosilicate minerals containing variable amounts of water trapped in the mineral structure. Clay used in sculpting has been manufactured/processed for that purpose. Clay is a concern as it contains silica in various concentrations, depending on the product used. Silica is a designated substance in the province of Ontario. Assessment of the clays used at HDSB has revealed no exposure risk to staff when handled properly. Current HDSB procedures are sufficient in handling clay and a control program specific to silica is not required. As with any controlled product always refer to the MSDS for the exact composition, precautions and first aid procedures.

Irrespective of silica content in the clay used, these procedures must be adhered to at all times to protect worker and occupant safety.

Any process that involves clay may involve exposure to silica dust. Dusts are most likely to be generated during the cleaning up of dried clay during afternoon caretaking cleaning routines. To minimize airborne dust exposure, never dry sweep floors in art rooms at any time. Use only wet mopping and hosing methods.

PROCEDURES:General Procedure

All employees and students should:

Always:

- Clear up spillages before they dry out (if possible). See Accidental Spillage/Release section for how to clean up dried spills.
- At the end of each class, wipe all surfaces with a wet cloth/paper towel.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap before leaving the room.

Never:

- Dry sweep
- Dry scrape problem areas
- Eat or drink in classrooms using clay

Handling Clay

The following measures are to be taken by staff when handling/manipulating clay:

- Upon receipt of a clay shipment, informed staff receiving the shipment shall inspect the shipment for excessive dust accumulation. If observed, wipe down the boxes of clay with a damp cloth prior to being brought into the building.
- Ensure clay waste receptacles are sealed/covered at all times.
- Tables and shelves are to be moistened with a spray bottle prior to storing sculptures.
- Moisten sculptures before transport.
- In order to keep clay moist between classes and before completion, wrap entire sculpture in plastic and store.
- Ensure proper hand washing, including under the nails after handling clay.
- Ensure wet methods are used for cleaning tools and surfaces. Clean all tools thoroughly before storing.
- Ensure the material safety data sheet (MSDS) has been reviewed prior to use.
- Ensure proper housekeeping within the classroom.
- Teachers are to review Clay Handling and Storage – Curriculum Delivery Administrative Procedure for additional requirements.

Any questions on the process for handling clay should be directed to the Board's Instructional Program Leader for Art or the Health and Safety Department.

Cleaning Procedures

- It is expected that the educational programs using clay will be limited to as few rooms as possible and that staff and students clean up wet clay as soon as possible and leave the room in a clean and tidy condition at the end of the instructional day.
- The teaching staff should communicate in advance with the caretaking staff that this program will be taking place so that the caretaking department can make arrangements for prioritized cleaning of the room.
- The cleaning of these rooms will be modified when the clay unit is being delivered. Only wet cleaning methods on surfaces will be performed at this time.

Room Condition Expectations (prior to cleaning)

- Student tabletops/desks have been cleared of instructional materials.
- Excess instructional materials have been cleaned up, stored and/or disposed of.
- Items are stored properly in their designated location(s).

During the clay unit, in the specified rooms, the teacher and students will clean up wet clay spills and caretaking staff will provide daily cleaning after hours. After hours cleaning will include wet wiping desks and wet mopping floors. Dry cleaning methods (ie. dry cloth wiping or sweeping) will not take place at this time.

Accidental Spillage/Release

Where dried clay has fallen and broken apart the potential for silica dust to become airborne exists. Should this occur, follow these steps in order:

Small Spill (a small sculpture):

- Move students away from the spill and restrict access to the area.
- Teacher wets down spill with a spray bottle.
- Collect spilled material and dispose of in a plastic garbage bag. Seal and place in waste receptacle.

Large Spill (large sculpture, multiple small sculptures or dropped box of open clay):

- Clear the room immediately.
- Shut down mechanical ventilation.
- Call Health and Safety Department.
- Clean up to be performed by Facilities Services staff.

DO NOT re-enter the room until the all clear has been given by the Health and Safety Department.