

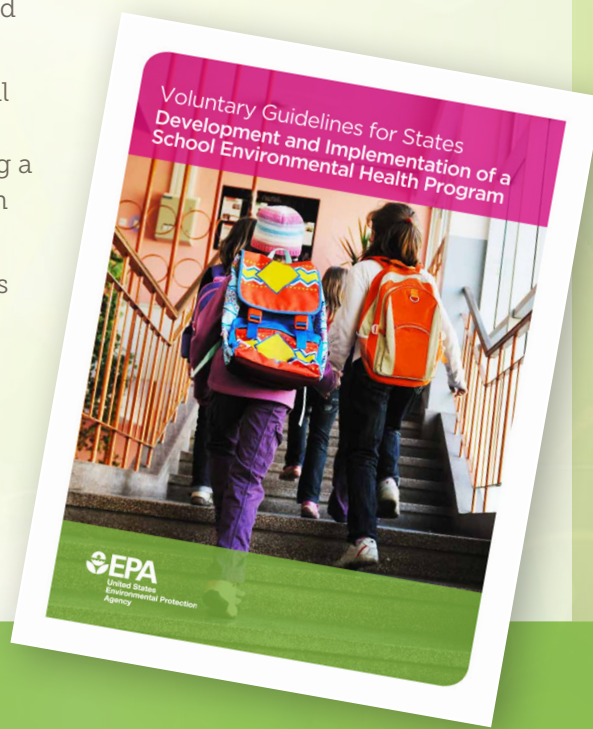
Voluntary Guidelines for States Development and Implementation of a School Environmental Health Program



School environments play an important role in the health and academic success of children. Children spend 90% of their time indoors and much of that time is spent in school. Unhealthy school environments can affect children's health, attendance, concentration, and performance, as well as lead to expensive, time-consuming cleanup and remediation activities. To foster children's health and academic achievement, healthy school environments must be addressed and integrated within the education system.

In response to a federal mandate, EPA has developed *Voluntary Guidelines for States: Development and Implementation of a School Environmental Health Program* to help states establish and implement environmental health programs in K-12 schools. These voluntary guidelines are designed to help states address environmental health challenges in schools by:

- Summarizing the health benefits associated with school environmental health programs;
- Providing guidance for effective policy development and implementation;
- Outlining six steps states can take to establish successful and affordable school environmental health programs, including methods for identifying resources, developing a plan, and suggestions for how to implement and sustain the program;
- Assisting states in providing schools and school districts with technical tools and resources to help schools implement practical, cost-effective environmental health solutions; and
- Sharing best practices and highlighting case studies of successful, cost-effective state environmental health programs for schools that can be implemented by other states.



In addition, the guidelines include a model program that can be adapted by states to be used by schools and school districts to help them develop effective environmental health programs. The model program identifies five broad components that address common school environmental health issues, and each component offers three tiers of actions that schools and school districts can take to build an effective environmental health program that matches their capabilities and resources. Many of the actions, particularly in Tier 1, can be implemented with little or no cost and still yield significant benefits and cost savings. The model program also includes information on improving energy and water efficiency, enhancing classroom comfort (e.g., lighting, temperature, and acoustics), conducting new construction and renovation projects, curriculum development, and training for faculty and staff.

The model program included in *Voluntary Guidelines for States: Development and Implementation of a School Environmental Health Program* identifies five broad components that address school environmental health issues:

1. Practice Effective Cleaning and Maintenance
2. Prevent Mold and Moisture
3. Reduce Chemical and Environmental Contaminant Hazards
4. Ensure Good Ventilation
5. Prevent Pests and Reduce Pesticide Exposure

healthy environments healthy kids

