

# CLEANING FOR HEALTH

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Creating Asthma-Friendly Schools



Massachusetts Coalition  
For Occupational Safety And Health

# Cleaning for Health:

Cleaning that protects public health, without adversely affecting the health of staff, building occupants, and the environment.

***Health First!***

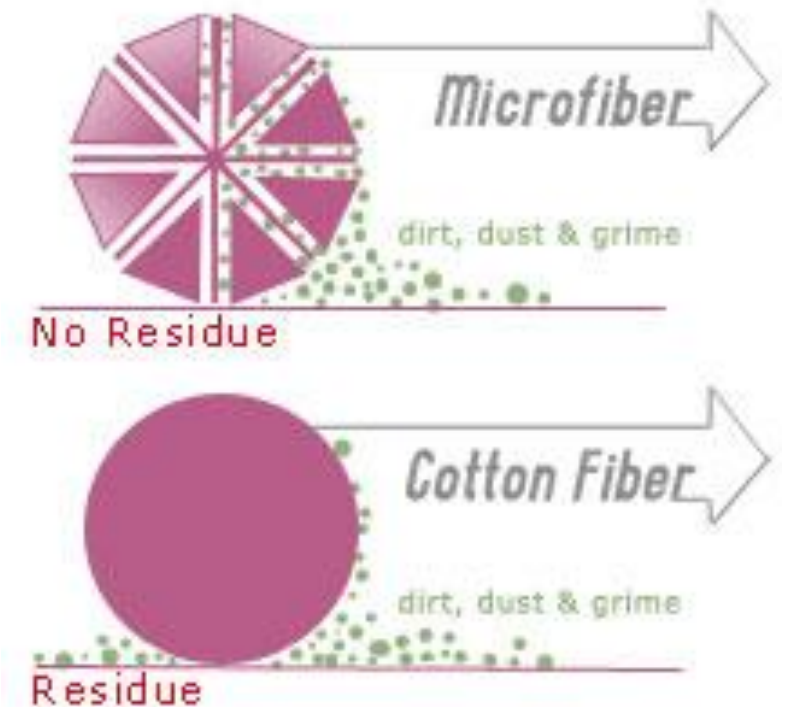
# Cleaning for Health: The Basics

- Keep the dirt out
- Use less-toxic, third-party certified, cleaning products and hand soaps
- Update and maintain equipment
- Sanitize/disinfect only high-risk areas and areas regulated for early education
- Breathe easier – clean doesn't have an odor



# Start with General Surface Cleaning

- General surface cleaning physically removes viruses, fungi, and bacteria and conditions they need to survive (e.g. organic matter)
- Accomplished with **water, detergent,** and **abrasion** of the surface
- **Microfiber** can enhance this process by removing up to 99% of microbes<sup>1</sup>



# Using Microfiber<sup>2</sup>

- **Requires less chemical:** reduces need for disinfectants for most cleaning tasks since the fiber removes a high % of organic matter
- **Controls cross-contamination:** by color coding & changing mop pads after each room
- **Prevents aerosolization of dust:** the fibers have a static electric charge that attracts dust and holds it when dry dusting (dust can transmit microbes)



# Equipment Makes a Difference

- Dirt-grabbing **walk-off mats** inside and outside entrances, recommended 15' – 20'
- **Microfiber cloths and mops** that pick up dirt while using a reduced amount of chemicals
- High-filtration **vacuum**



# Chemical Dilution Systems

- Important for portion control of the cleaning products
- Benefit: reduce storage space needed
- Required by third-party certification





# Key Elements for Implementing a Green Cleaning Program

- Establish a committee with different school stakeholders
- Inventory and evaluate current products used
- Identify/pilot test safer products
- Train staff with new products
- Track success
- Reward participating staff
- Adopt policy



# Cleaning for Health Policy

- Create a goal statement such as:

*The Superintendent or designee shall promote green school practices that conserve natural resources, reduce the impact of district operations on the environment, and protect the health of students, staff, and the community.*

- Santa Barbara Unified School District (2011)

- State your **criteria for purchases** such as products from the state of MA's "Environmentally Preferable Products" procurement program.
- **Identify all areas of the school and all programs** that will be affected by the policy such as cafeteria/food preparation places and out-of-school time programs.
- Consider adopting approved and asthma-friendly products required for sanitizing and disinfecting as a **bleach substitute**.
- **Offer all school and program staff their own green cleaner** to avoid use of bleach wipes or other non-approved products that can be an asthma trigger.

# Sources

<sup>1</sup>*Using Microfiber Mops in Hospitals*, The Environmental Protection Agency  
<https://www3.epa.gov/region9/waste/p2/projects/hospital/mops.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Microfiber for Child Care Centers, Informed Green Solutions, Inc.  
[https://projects.ipmcenters.org/Northeastern/FundedProjects/ReportFiles/2367218\\_504000.PDF](https://projects.ipmcenters.org/Northeastern/FundedProjects/ReportFiles/2367218_504000.PDF)