



SCHOOL BOARD OF POLK COUNTY

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F&O Memo: 3905

August 2, 2007

To: Principals, Directors, Assistant Superintendents

From: *Gail* Gail F. McKinzie, Ph.D., Superintendent
Bob Bob Williams, Assistant Superintendent, Facilities and Operations

Subject: Environmental, Health and Safety Concerns

We have a fundamental responsibility to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and health of our students and staff. For that reason, we are re-emphasizing the previous bans in classrooms and classroom areas of:

- Candles, oil lamps and all open flames
- Area rugs, pillows, stuffed animals and fabric covered furniture
- Animals
- Potted plants
- Personal appliances

Any products that produces an open flame is prohibited due to the potential fire hazard. Fumes generated by aroma candles can produce aerosols that can irritate individuals with respiratory problems or allergies. These products are prohibited in all School Board buildings.

Personal furniture, carpeting, area rugs, large pillows and similar products with fabric surfaces that are not provided by the School Board are not allowed. These type products can harbor allergens, bacteria and fungi and can be a fire hazard as we have seen at a fire in one of our high schools.

Other than science labs or as a part of the agriculture curriculum, animals should not be in the classrooms. Animals may harbor human pathogens and parasites, and can inadvertently cause injury by biting or scratching a student.

Potted plants have frequently been identified as the source of mold growth, which can cause problems for individuals with respiratory problems or allergies. Extreme care should be taken with potted plants in offices to ensure that they are not over watered as the wet soil encourages mold growth.

Polk County Schools-
an equal opportunity
institution for education
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The mission of Polk County Public Schools is to ensure rigorous, relevant learning experiences for our students that result in high achievement.

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Space heaters, food mixers, hot plates, household-type refrigerators, microwaves units and other appliances that are installed on circuits not designed for the electrical loads, will cause breakers to trip which interrupts electrical needs in the classrooms. Electrical interruptions can cause computer hard drives to crash and data to be lost. Improperly attached appliances can create a life hazard through shock or fire. We have had two school fires caused by home electrical appliances that were left on after the end of the school day.

Since our classrooms, other than those for Family and Consumer Science and Industrial Education, are designed and wired only for classroom functions, we are requesting that the school administration ensure that we are not in violation and see that all appliances are removed from the classrooms and classroom areas. Work orders should be submitted to install the proper branch circuits in lounges or other designated areas for appliances such as microwaves.

We appreciate your cooperation to ensure the safety and health of our students.

Thank you.