

Can mould be harmful to our health?

While most moulds occur naturally in the environment and are generally harmless, exposure to some types can have health implications for certain people.

Guidance from health authorities advises that those with pre-existing asthma or weakened immune systems are at the greatest risk of being affected by mould. Most people who experience adverse effects associated with mouldy buildings fully recover following removal and clean-up of the mould contamination.

Anyone with concerns regarding their health should visit their local GP.

Remember...

While not all mould is harmful, if you do have concerns about mould, please arrange testing and contact your property advisor for support.

Property Contacts:

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Auckland: property.north@education.govt.nz

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cs.regionalpropertyteam@education.govt.nz

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Further Information

[Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's Building Performance](#)

[Mould in damp buildings – Building Performance](#)

Remedies: [mould](#) | [BRANZ Renovate](#)

[Weathertightness remediation](#)



Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga
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Mould

A Guide for
mould mitigation
and management

Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

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Your responsibility

The Ministry of Education supports schools to manage health and safety risks and hazards on school sites. However, as the joint [PCBU](#), the school has the primary responsibility for the health and safety of staff, ākonga and visitors. This primary duty of care is a broad overarching duty which includes having practices in place to provide and maintain a work environment that is without risks to health and safety.

Certain types of mould produce toxic compounds so pose a risk to health and safety. It is important that schools take appropriate steps to minimise, monitor and manage mould within their property.

About mould

Mould is a living organism that grows where high humidity is combined with damp or wet conditions. It can grow on walls, ceilings, curtains, carpets, around windows and in kitchens or bathrooms.

New Zealand inherently has a climate that contributes to mould growth. Climate change is producing heavier, more frequent rainfall across Aotearoa which could lead to some of our schools becoming damper and more susceptible to developing mould, particularly in winter.

Given these factors it is not always possible to eliminate mould, but it can be managed.

How can I prevent mould in my school?

Mould and fungi can grow more easily during winter months with the elevated moisture levels in the air, so cleaning more frequently during the wet months is recommended.

Suggested cleaning regime

Every school holidays, book in a special clean of windows, joinery, window and door frames. If there is mould on the ceilings, this should be cleaned too. Should it reoccur, please contact your Property Advisor as this may indicate a roof leak. In the wetter months it is recommended an additional clean be added to your regime.

Mould Clean Performed	
Term 1 Holiday Break	✓
Term 2 Holiday Break	✓
Term 3 Holiday Break	✓
Mid-way through Term 3	✓
Term 4 Holiday Break	✓

Mould and fungi can be prevented from accumulating on interior surfaces by:

- keeping the gutters clear, and ensuring there are no plumbing/drainage leaks
- opening windows whenever possible or by using dehumidifiers to reduce moisture build up
- regularly checking interior surfaces for mould and removing any as soon as possible, ideally while it is still wet
- regularly cleaning joinery, window and door frames and any other surfaces that get wet or show signs of condensation.

How do we remove mould?

Spores are released more easily when mouldy materials dry out, so it's important to clean up any mouldy areas while they are still wet.

A suggested method

You can remove mould with a commercial mould cleaner or hypochlorite bleach. Combine one and a half cups of household bleach to four litres of water, wipe on any mouldy areas and leave for 10 minutes before rinsing and drying.

When removing mould make sure you wear rubber gloves, a face mask and safety goggles, and that the room is well ventilated, but not windy (spores can be blown into other areas).

Materials such as carpets and curtains may be difficult to thoroughly clean and may need to be removed or disposed of. Please wrap any affected materials in biodegradable bags or plastic before discarding.

What should we do if we find extensive mould in my school?

Some examples of extensive mould:



Contact your Property Advisor to support you, and arrange testing of the site. An online search using the keywords 'mould testing [your region]' will provide a list of organisations able to perform these tests. Taking photos of the area to show the size of the mould coverage is also recommended.