NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

August 20, 2025

CUSTODIAL CIRCULAR NO. 26.002

NOTE: All Circulars are to be kept in a permanent file.

TO ALL CUSTODIAN ENGINEERS

TEMPERATURE MITIGATION AND VENTILATION STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT-OCCUPIED SPACES DURING EXTREME HEAT CONDITIONS

A recent law passed in New York State mandates that, effective September 1, 2025, all occupiable educational and support services spaces must maintain temperatures below 88°F during school hours. If the indoor temperature reaches or exceeds this limit, students and staff must be relocated to a cooler space within the building, where practicable. Kitchen areas used for food preparation are excluded from this requirement. This policy refers to Assembly Bill A9011-A and Senate Bill S3397-A, whose text (including the threshold temperatures of 82 °F and 88 °F) is now codified and amended under Assembly Bill A752 (2025–2026 session): https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2025/A752

When indoor temperatures in occupiable educational and support services spaces reach 82°F, it is essential to implement the heat mitigation measures listed below:

- Turn off overhead lights if natural daylight is sufficient.
- Use pedestal or box fans to increase airflow.
- Lower blinds or shades to block solar heat gain.
- Provide frequent hydration breaks for students and staff.
- Deploy portable air conditioning units where available. Contact your Deputy Director of Facilities to determine the feasibility of portable AC deployment.

Custodian engineers must also use an Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) monitor to take temperature readings in any occupiable educational or support services space where an extreme heat complaint is reported. The complaint and corresponding readings must be recorded in DSF's HVAC Inspection Compliance Tracking Management System.

TEMPERATURE AND AIR QUALITY MONITORING

Placement and Use of Monitoring Devices:

Air quality monitors must be stored in a clearly labeled, easily accessible location and kept calibrated. These tools must be available during school hours.

Temperature should be measured from the center of the room, three feet above the floor, and out of direct sunlight for accurate readings.

Use monitors whenever requested or in response to a concern. Additional handheld monitors can be ordered via FAMIS (item number: 319764346 or 319764338). Maintain an adequate supply for deployment.

If a space's CO_2 level exceeds 1000 PPM, or the temperature reaches 88°F, the custodian engineer must report the condition immediately. Final determination regarding room closure rests with the school principal. Re-occupancy is allowed only after mitigation measures have been taken and the temperature is below 88°F.

All elevated readings and corrective actions must be documented in the Ventilation Database.

IDENTIFYING AND USING COOLER RELOCATION AREAS

In collaboration with school administration, develop a plan that identifies climate-controlled backup spaces for temporary relocation during extreme heat conditions.

If a space becomes unfit for occupancy, notify both the school principal and your Deputy Director of Facilities immediately.

Custodian engineers must maintain open communication with school principals, particularly when temperatures approach 82°F. This ensures timely and coordinated responses.

OPERATING GUIDELINES FOR TEMPERATURE MANAGEMENT AND AIR QUALITY

1. **Operation and Preventive Maintenance of Ventilation Systems**

All HVAC equipment—including exhaust fans, blowers, air handling units, rooftop units, and univents—must be powered on at least one hour before school starts and remain in operation until after the school day ends.

When window AC units are the primary method of temperature control, custodian engineers must ensure they operate reliably. This includes checking temperature settings, cleaning or replacing filters, clearing coils, ensuring drainage, and inspecting cords and plugs for wear or damage.

Perform daily ventilation inspections and document findings in the building's PO7 log. Watch for irregular sounds, visible wear, and any performance issues affecting airflow or temperature control.

Conduct routine maintenance: replace belts, lubricate components, adjust dampers, and clean coils. Coils must be cleaned at least once per season (fall, winter, spring, summer), or more frequently in dusty or high-traffic areas.

Inspect air filters monthly and replace them based on manufacturer guidelines or when visibly dirty. High-traffic areas may need more frequent changes.

Report any operational issues to your Deputy Director of Facilities immediately.

2. **Reporting and Documenting Overheated Conditions**

Any occupiable educational or support services space with a recorded temperature above 82°F must be logged in the DSF HVAC Ventilation Database, along with detailed notes on mitigation actions taken.

Update the database regularly if there are changes to system performance or operational status.

3. **Maximizing Window-Based Ventilation**

Use operable windows to enhance natural airflow when mechanical systems are insufficient.

Lower sash windows must be fitted with 6" stops to prevent overextension. If window balances are faulty, install DSF-supplied chocks and required signage.

Submit requests for additional chocks to your Deputy Director of Facilities.

Ensure air intake and exhaust points—especially univents and ceiling or wall registers—are not blocked by furniture or classroom materials.

This legislation reinforces the critical role of custodian engineers in maintaining safe learning environments. Prompt response and strong collaboration with school leadership and your Deputy Director of Facilities are expected when high temperatures are anticipated.

For questions or clarification, please contact your Deputy Director of Facilities.