

Art Material Consideration

Art materials may contain hazardous substances that can affect the health of students and teachers. Students are more susceptible than adults to toxic substances that may be inhaled, ingested, or absorbed. It is very important that students only work with materials and processes that are safe. The following information includes materials to avoid in the art class, as well as suggestions for safe substitutes.

AVOID	USE
Powered tempura paint (contains dust and may contain toxic pigments)	Liquid or disc tempura paint; if you have powered tempura paint, mixing away from students and use a mask
Instant papier mache (creates dust and may contain harmful toxins like asbestos)	Make papier mache from newspapers and library or white paste
Chalk pastels, chalks (create dust)	Oil pastels, dustless chalk
Solvents (turpentine) or solvent containing toxic materials (Alkyd paints, rubber cement)	Water-based products only (vegetable oil)
Aerosol sprays	Water-based paints applied with brushes or spatter techniques
Epoxy, airplane glue, and other solvent-based adhesives	White glue
Permanent markers	Water-based markers
Cold water dyes or commercial dyes	Vegetable dyes (onion skins, purple cabbage, etc.)
Construction paper (may contain toxic dyes and may be treated with fungicides)	Choose non-toxic materials; avoid wetting the paper or chewing on it

Basic Safety Rules

For the most part, safety in the art class is simply a matter of common sense. Some rules are listed below.

1. Become familiar with students' allergies and special needs.
2. Become familiar with supplies and read packaging information.
3. Read labels to determine whether materials are hazardous. Use non-toxic materials whenever possible.
4. Dispose of unlabeled containers. Keep liquids in tightly covered, clearly marked containers.
5. Store materials safely. Keep lids on all liquids and powders.
6. Do not permit food in the art class.
7. Do not apply fixative or spray paints in the students' presence. Apply only if absolutely necessary, in a well-ventilated area.
8. Use adequate ventilation.
9. Have students wear protective clothing.
10. Do not allow students to use the paper cutter.
11. Only elementary level students should be allowed to use sharp knives, carving tools, or handheld power tools. The safe use of sharp tools must be demonstrated before any student is permitted to use one, and even then, students must be carefully supervised. Students should wear goggles when using these tools.
12. Do not let clay particles spread in the atmosphere. Clean tables with damp sponges and floors with damp mops. Do not sand clay pieces.
13. Sponge or mop any liquid spills (paint, ink, etc.) immediately.
14. Have every student wash their hands after art class.
15. Talk to students frequently about safety concerns.
16. Post signs in the classroom reinforcing safety rules and, when necessary, provide verbal warning.
17. Make sure to include safety procedures in classroom instruction when appropriate and provide reminders.
18. Always model appropriate procedures and wear necessary protective gear (e.g., gloves, aprons, safety glasses, etc.).
19. Keep abreast of public notices on art material hazards.

Special needs students deserve more consideration. A student who has to work very close to his/her work is likely to inhale fumes or dust. Students on medication should not be exposed to some materials. It is best to check with parents/guardians.