



What Is the Healthy Schools Act?

The Healthy Schools Act establishes your right to know about pesticides used in California's public schools.

Why was the Healthy Schools Act necessary?

- **School pesticide use is widespread:** Eleven of thirteen of California's most populous school districts use known or probable carcinogens, reproductive or developmental toxins, hormone-mimicking chemicals, nerve toxins, or acutely poisonous pesticides.
- **No restrictions on school pesticide use:** Use of pesticides that can cause serious health effects faces no special restrictions in California schools—unless an individual school district takes action to protect its students and staff.
- **No system of tracking or notification about school pesticide use:** Before the Healthy Schools Act, it was easier to find out about pesticide use for an acre of cabbage than for a classroom of children. School districts were not required to notify parents about use or keep track of application in any systematic way. A request for information about pesticide use might yield no response or a huge stack of indecipherable purchasing orders.

The Healthy Schools Act becomes law

After activists waged a three-year campaign to highlight the widespread threat to our children's health, Governor Gray Davis signed the Healthy Schools Act into law in September 2000.

The law requires school districts to:

- notify parents annually about what pesticides the district intends to use in their children's schools and on school grounds during the following year;
- provide parents the option to register to be notified 72 hours in advance of all pesticide applications;
- post notice at all entry points of an area treated with pesticides 24 hours before and 72 hours after application;
- maintain records of all pesticide use for four years in an accessible format available upon request.

The law requires the state Department of Pesticide Regulation to:

- provide training for interested school district personnel in least-toxic integrated pest management techniques;
- distribute a manual to all schools in least-toxic integrated pest management;
- maintain a website (<http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/schoolipm>) with information to help schools comply with the law and implement least-toxic pest management.

The preferred method: What Is least-toxic Integrated Pest Management?

The Healthy Schools Act establishes least-toxic Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as the state's preferred method of school pest control. It defines this approach as a pest management strategy focusing on long-term prevention or suppression of pest problems through combinations of techniques that minimize risk to people, property, and the environment. For more information about IPM, see the Alternatives to Pesticides factsheet in this Pesticide Action Kit.

Frequently asked questions about the Healthy Schools Act

- **Who is responsible for implementation of the Healthy Schools Act?**

All public school districts must provide notification, option to register, posting, and record-keeping (see above).

California's Department of Pesticide Regulation must provide for training and least-toxic pest control manuals for interested school districts, and for maintaining the school IPM website.

- **Who pays for implementation of the Act?** The Healthy Schools Act is a state mandated program, whose costs to school districts will be reimbursed by the state.
- **When will the Act take effect?** The Department of Pesticide Regulation is required to promote and facilitate implementation of the Healthy Schools Act starting January 1, 2001. Thereafter, posting on treated areas is mandatory. School districts must provide the

first annual notification (with the option to register) at the beginning of the 2001–02 school year.

- **How do parents learn about pesticide health effects?**

Parents and school staff can access the Healthy Schools Campaign website at www.cahealthyschools.org for information on the health effects of pesticides their school proposes to use. The site also provides materials

on how to persuade a school district to adopt a policy protecting kids from pesticide use and other resources. This Pesticide Action Kit includes many sources of information as well.

Please contact the Healthy Schools Campaign at 888-CPR-4880 with specific questions about implementation of or compliance with the law.

For more information on school pest control that protects children's health, contact the Healthy Schools Campaign at 888-CPR-4880 or <http://www.calhealthyschools.org>.