

Joseph Pennell School: Asbestos Hazard Report

The Philadelphia Regional Center for Children's Environmental Health has partnered with the Healthy Schools Initiative to analyze and report on public information regarding asbestos conditions in schools made available on the School District of Philadelphia's website.

This report is meant to communicate to parents, teachers, and staff the exposure risk at their school and help prioritize the removal of asbestos in high-risk exposure locations.

Our analysis is based on publicly available reports. We have not conducted inspections or verified the reports.

Key Findings:

- 39 teacher / student occupied spaces have asbestos containing material (ACM)
- 1 space had damaged ACM
- 15 spaces contained friable ACM
- **No damaged** materials were scheduled to be abated

Our Recommendations:

- The School District has not scheduled the abatement for the one damaged ACM identified in a custodial space during their latest inspection in May 2025. The School District did not abate damaged friable asbestos-containing pipe insulation within a sealed-off pipe shaft area in the attic (see Table 1). We recommend that this material be monitored frequently.



What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a fibrous material that is resistant to heat, water, and corrosion.

See this link for a comprehensive list: <https://prcceb.upenn.edu/asbestos>

Asbestos was used in materials in schools, including:

- Ceiling Tiles
- Floor Tiles
- Pipe Insulation
- Cement
- Paint and Caulk
- Soundproofing
- Fireproofing
- Plaster Materials

What are the health effects of asbestos?

No immediate health impacts are expected from asbestos exposure in schools. However, breathing asbestos fibers in schools may increase the risk of developing cancer many years from now.

Children are very active, breathing more air while running and playing. Children take more breaths per minute than adults and are lower to the ground where asbestos fibers may settle. This puts them at an increased risk for asbestos exposure.

Are all asbestos containing materials of equal risk?

Some asbestos containing materials like ceiling and floor tiles have asbestos fibers imbedded in other materials. As long as they are not broken or damaged the asbestos fibers are not released into the air.

Some asbestos containing materials like insulation on pipe remains fibrous and can easily be released in the air when damaged.

How are damaged asbestos containing materials managed?

Asbestos can be removed. Sometimes damaged materials are managed in place by patching, encapsulating (using a specially formulated paint-like coating) or building an enclosure around damaged and/or accessible materials. All of these are forms of abatement.

The Environmental Protection Agency requires all remaining asbestos containing material to be inspected by the school district every six months. This is documented in an Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act Report (AHERA Report).

Important Terms

Get to know these terms to make the most out of this report.

Damaged Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) can release asbestos fibers into the air.

Friable Materials can be reduced to a powder by applying hand pressure. **DO NOT TOUCH!**

Non-Friable materials are not easily damaged.

Significantly damaged materials are more than 10% damaged.

Abated ACM means repaired, removed, or reduced risk of exposure.

Detailed Review for Joseph Pennell School

This school has 42 spaces with asbestos containing materials. 39 of them are in teacher / student occupied spaces. The School District last inspected ACM in May 2025 and published the AHERA report in May 2025. No damaged ACM was found in teacher / student occupied spaces, and damaged ACM was found in one custodial space. Since then, no abatement has been scheduled for the damaged ACM.



We recommend that the school district frequently monitor the friable asbestos-containing pipe insulation found in the attic near room 305 hallway for ongoing damage. Per the AHERA inspection completed in May 2025, the material is present within sealed-off pipe shaft areas.

If abatement is scheduled, we recommend that the School District completely remove the friable ACM that have been repeatedly damaged in the past instead of encapsulation, as listed in Table 1. At the time of this report, no abatement has been scheduled, but it could be scheduled at a later date. A list of all the ACM in the school and their damage/abatement schedule can be found in the tables at the end of this report.

Information Reviewed to Make this Report:

The 2024/25 AHERA report from the School District of Philadelphia, and asbestos abatement notifications from the Air Management Services Online Portal.

Not included in this report are planned repairs to damaged asbestos materials that have not been uploaded to the Air Management Services website or any updated after August 25, 2025. To see the most current information, scan these QR Codes. After scanning, search for your school.



Report what you see!

Parents and teachers should report hazardous conditions in schools on the Healthy Schools app.

Scan here to
download the app:



School Districts of Philadelphia Asbestos Reports:



AHERA Reports are documents generated from EPA required asbestos inspections

Office of the Controller Asbestos Project:



Asbestos abatement notification forms

Questions?

Find more resources on our website!

- Photo gallery of different types of damaged asbestos containing materials
- Guide to how we classify materials in schools
- Our analysis and reporting methodology
- What we do with the information in this report

prcceh.upenn.edu/asbestos



Email us at prcceh@penntestmed.upenn.edu or call 215-573-9076

Table 1: Friable Asbestos Containing Materials Identified

NOTE: Friable materials can be reduced to a powder by applying hand pressure.
Do not touch it! Damaged and significantly damaged friable materials readily release harmful asbestos fibers into the air.

Location	Material Name	Reported as Damaged or Significantly Damaged? (Blank = No)	Abatement scheduled since the inspection? (Blank = No)
Pipe Shaft in Hallway outside Main Office	Pipe Insulation >6 inches		
Storage Room adjacent to Classroom 201	Paint associated with Window Frame		
Storage Room adjacent to Classroom 201	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Storage Room Restroom adjacent to Classroom 201	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Pipe Shaft in Hallway outside Classroom 205	Pipe Insulation >6 inches		
Girl's Restroom	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Girl's Restroom Service Closet	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Boy's Restroom	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Boy's Restroom Service Closet	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Counselor's Office 205A	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Counselor's Office 205A Telecommunication Equipment Room	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Pipe Shaft in Hallway outside Classroom 305	Pipe Insulation >6 inches		
Attic near Room 305 Hallway	Pipe Insulation 2-6 inch	Damaged. Previously reported damaged in Nov 2012.	

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Auditorium	Heat Shield Insulation associated with Radiator		
Hallway outside Auditorium	Heat Shield Insulation associated with Radiator		
Vestibule between Hallway outside Auditorium and Exterior Entrance behind Auditorium	Heat Shield Insulation associated with Radiator		
Classroom 2	Expansion Seam Caulking		
Classroom 2	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Classroom 2 Restroom	Expansion Seam Caulking		
Classroom 2 Restroom	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Classroom 2 Storage Closet	Expansion Seam Caulking		
Classroom 2 Storage Closet	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Classroom 2 Water Heater Closet	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Classroom 1	Expansion Seam Caulking		
Classroom 1	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Classroom 1 Storage Closet	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Classroom 1 Restroom	Expansion Seam Caulking		
Classroom 1 Restroom	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Pipe Chase in Classroom 1	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Classroom 1 Water Heater Closet	Expansion Seam Caulking		
Classroom 1 Water Heater Closet	Sheetrock/Joint Compound Wall		
Portable Kitchen	Expansion Seam Caulking		
Vestibule at Entrance to Building	Expansion Seam Caulking		

Table 2: Non-Friable Asbestos Containing Materials Identified

NOTE: Significantly Damaged non-friable materials (damage \geq 10% of the material) can release harmful asbestos fibers into the air.

Location	Material Name	Reported as Damaged or Significantly Damaged? (Blank = No)	Abatement scheduled since the inspection? (Blank = No)
Nurse's Office Closet near Entrance	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Nurse's Office Closet near Entrance	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		
Nurse's Office Closet near Entrance	Floor Tile VAT 9" x 9"		
Counselor's Office 101	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Counselor's Office 101	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Counselor's Office 101	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		
Nurse's Office	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Nurse's Office	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		
Nurse's Office	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Nurse's Office	Floor Tile VAT 9" x 9"		
Nurse's Office Closet adjacent to Windows	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Nurse's Office Closet adjacent to Windows	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		
Nurse's Office Closet adjacent to Windows	Floor Tile VAT 9" x 9"		
Conference Room 104A	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 105	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
IMC	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Principal's Office	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Principal's Office	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		

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Vestibule between Principal's Office and Principal's Office Restroom	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Vestibule between Principal's Office and Principal's Office Restroom	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		
Classroom 203	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 204	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 205	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 206	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 209	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 210	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 211	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 301	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 302	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 303	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 304	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 305	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 306	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 307	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 308	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 309	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 310	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Classroom 311	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Office 305A	Glue Dots associated with Blackboard		
Fan Room	Transite associated with Electrical Panel		
Auditorium	Transite associated with Fuse Box		
Auditorium	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Auditorium	ACM Unit Ventilator		
Auditorium	Floor Tile VAT 9" x 9"		
Auditorium	Floor Tile VAT 9" x 9"		
Auditorium	Floor Tile VAT 9" x 9"		
Auditorium Stage	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Auditorium Stage	Floor Tile VAT 9" x 9"		
Auditorium Stage	Floor Tile VAT 9" x 9"		
Auditorium Stage	Floor Tile VAT 9" x 9"		
Hallway outside Auditorium	Floor Tile VAT 9" x 9"		
Hallway outside Auditorium	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Classroom 2	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Classroom 2	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		
Classroom 2	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		
Classroom 2 Restroom	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Classroom 2 Storage Closet	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Classroom 2 Storage Closet	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		
Classroom 2 Water Heater Closet	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Classroom 2 Water Heater Closet	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		
Classroom 1	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Classroom 1	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		
Classroom 1 Storage Closet	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Classroom 1 Storage Closet	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		
Classroom 1 Water Heater Closet	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Classroom 1 Water Heater Closet	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		
Vestibule at Entrance to Building	Mastic associated with Floor Tile		
Vestibule at Entrance to Building	Floor Tile VAT 12" x 12"		