

York separate board to test all portables

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By Gail Swainson

YORK REGION BUREAU

The York Region separate school board is testing portions of walls in all 373 of its portables for the presence of a potentially harmful mould.

'`We have begun an immediate investigation of this new phenomena,'
' said board spokesperson Chris Cable.

The stachybotrys atra mould has been linked to health problems and a new U.S. study says exposure may also cause learning difficulties in some children. The black spores grow in damp places beneath ceiling tiles and in walls and floors.

The mould has been found in portable classrooms across Greater Toronto, but seems to be more of a problem in Halton and Peel, where structures are older than those found in York.

Cable said tests in the York board's portables uncovered a potential dampness problem at the base of the walls, leading to further testing.

If spores are detected, or conditions exist that could lead to the growth of the mould, the drywall, insulation and vapour barrier will be replaced immediately, Cable said.

During testing last summer, it was discovered that 100 of the 373 portables had either major structural damage or obvious leaks or discolouration.

Of these, one of the portables also harboured the atra mould and it was removed, Cable said.

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