Painting and Drawing with Toxic Materials

Activity scope
This document relates to student participation in Painting and Drawing where toxic materials are involved as a curriculum activity (i.e. the certain pigments, solvents, glues, cements, painting surfaces and air-brush materials and equipment).

Minimum activity specific qualifications for supervisors
- For a registered Art teacher or a leader other than a registered teacher – competence in painting and drawing with the identified materials, their potential hazards, and the use of the relevant equipment.

Minimum activity specific equipment/facilities
- It is recommended that water-based rather than solvent-based paints be used whenever possible.
- Ensure the room is adequately ventilated, and drying racks are in well-ventilated areas or outside areas so that solvents released on drying are not circulated in the classroom.
- When air-brushing, it is recommended that either an electric air compressor or a cylinder of compressed air be used for the air source. It is recommended that compressors for air-brushes be installed outside the art room.
- Eyewash facilities should be available when solvents and toxic pigments are used.
- Personal protective equipment, such as gloves and masks, should be used as necessary and appropriate footwear should be worn.

Activity specific hazards/risk and suggested control measures
- Ensure materials are disposed of appropriately (e.g. paint and turps must not be poured down sinks).
- Minimise the use of solvents wherever possible. Clean brushes and equipment quickly, and clean spillages immediately.
- Ensure that compressed air is not directed towards a student or others.
- Establish safety zones to ensure that students, when using air-brushing equipment, have an adequate work area that other students will not enter.
- Provide comprehensive instruction on the:
  - toxicity, mixing and use of toxic pigments
  - use of solvents to either clean equipment or mix with pigments
  - safe use of air-brushing equipment and materials (only non-toxic water-based acrylics or water-based inks should be used for air-brushing).

Important links
- Chemical Hazards in the Curriculum
- Spray Painting