GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION: SCHOOL BRANCH
OLD SECRETARIAT DELHI-110054

No.DE.23(455)/Sch.Br./NGO Misc./ 32-1

Dated 11/03/14

CIRCULAR

Subject:- Enjoy Holi – But be Careful of Mishaps

Please find enclosed the letter received from Secretary General, National Society for the Prevention of Blindness-India regarding a write-up which deals with the issues relating to eye sight and visions on the eve of Holi festival and the precautions to be taken thereof. All the HOSs of Govt./Govt.Aided/Unaided recognised schools are directed to display the message in their respective schools for information of the students.

Encl:- As above

(Dr. (Mrs) Sunita Kaushik)
Addl. DE (School)

All HOSs of Schools through DEL-E

No.DE.23(455)/Sch.Br/NGO Misc./ 32-1

Dated 10/03/14

Copy to:-
1. PS to Secretary (Education)
2. PS to Director (Education)
3. All DDEs/EOS/DEOs for necessary action.
4. OS(IT) to please paste it on the website
5. Guard File

DEO (School)
February 14, 2014

Ref No. NSPB-2014/F. No. 28/46

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are enclosing along with a write-up which deals with the issues relating to eye sight and visions on the eve of Holi festival and the precautions to be taken.

Since young children are the most likely to be affected during the period of Holi, we request you to kindly display this message in your institution and also to their parents.

Thanking you,

For National Society for the Prevention of Blindness-India

(S.K. Nair)
SECRETARY GENERAL
ENJOY HOLI – BUT BE CAREFUL OF MISHAPS

Holi is a festival of colours and it is celebrated in the entire country. In Holi, we use different kinds of colours. These may be dry or in the form of paste. The dry colours are red (gulal), blue, yellow, green and purple. These are applied over the face and surrounding areas including scalp. All these colours, which are available in the market or obtained from industries involved in manufacturing of industrial dyes and therefore they have harmful effect on various parts of the body.

Our attempt should be to make Holi colourful and avoid mishaps. Therefore, we should make all attempts to use proper colours because it is these colours, which can cause immense harm to all of us. These can vary from skin allergy to impairment of eyesight. These colour hazards can turn joyful Holi into a sordid affair.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colors</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gulal</td>
<td>Lead chromate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Cobalt nitrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Metanil yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Metachile Green or Nickel Sulphate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Chromium iodide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Has carcinogenic
- can lead to cancer.
Besides the harmful effects of these chemicals e.g. these colours are often mixed with sand, mica, glass, talc and starch. These irritants can cause:

1. Sand - can cause irritation and if rub vigorously can cause removal of superficial layers of cornea and foreign body sensation.
2. Mica - can also cause mechanical irritation and removal of superficial layers of cornea.
3. Glass-Powder - can cause laceration and conjunctiva and also of skin of the face.
4. Talc - it can cause allergy and irritation.

At some places people use wet colours or colour pastes to apply on the face and other parts of the body. Most of these colour paste are mixture of industrial dyes with engine oil. These pastes cause deleterious effect on different parts of body because of the harmful effects of the main ingredients in these colours. The black colour is lead oxide and can cause renal failure. The green colour is copper sulphate and cause temporary blindness. The silver colour is aluminium bromide and is said to be carcinogenic. The blue colour can cause dermatitis. Red colour is mercury and is highly toxic.

The main intention of listing all these colours and their effects is to inform the citizens regarding the ill effects of these colours and, therefore, we should take preventive measures.
Besides the application of these colours now there is a fashion of using colour filled balloons and colour filled pichkaris. Both these can cause mechanical injury to the eyes when thrown from a distance and with a force. Damage to the different parts of the eyes has been reported in our Emergency Services. It has been observed that during Holi season, there is a significant rise in the number of eye injuries. Almost 7 out of 10 cases coming to our eye casualty are because of festival injuries.

As is said that prevention is better than cure, following are the preventive steps:

1. First of all it is better to use natural colours. There are several colours which can be made out of vegetable matters like Saffron from Kesar, Yellow from Turmeric, Green from Henna, Red from Beetroot and Blue from Indigo. The best colour for Holi can be obtained from Tesu flowers by soaking them in water. There is no chemical involved in these colours. So these can be safely used.

2. If natural colours are not available, synthetic colours can be purchased from the market but one should go for the branded one. Normally these are little expensive but less toxic.

3. As far as possible don't allow children to throw water filled balloons on passersby and moving vehicles.

4. Don't use mud, cow-dung or muddy water as they contain germs and therefore are dangerous for the injured skin.
5. As far as possible, dry colours should be used so that the toxic effect is minimal.

6. Don't apply the colour inside the eyes, nostril or the hair as this may damage the superficial layer of these areas.

WHAT TO DO

1. If the colour or any foreign particle goes inside the eyes, wash the eye with clean water immediately and cover the eye with clean cloth or eye pad and immediately visit an eye specialist as there is a possibility of injury to your eyes. Certain harmful chemicals in the eyes could lead to loss of vision. Don't use any ointment/drops without consulting an eye specialist.

Please visit the nearest Doctor/Physician/Ophthalmologist. If the Doctor/Physician/Ophthalmologist is able to diagnose and treat you without much loss of time, chances of early recovery is better.