

# Health & Safety update: making putty (or slime) in class

**We've recently received a number of queries regarding the use of eye wash or contact lens solution to make slime in class.**

Guidance has changed since we published our Bulletin article on 'Putty Investigations' in spring 2010 (Primary Bulletin no. 51) [1]. There we provided a list of ingredients for making putty or slime. The ingredients included borax crystals which at the time could be purchased from a pharmacy or a school chemical supplier but in line with current health and safety advice, we now recommend that you **DO NOT** use borax in this form. The solution made from the borax is not harmful but the solid form should **NOT** be handled by children.



Figure 2 - Slime with shaving foam added.

If you would still like to make slime in school you can use some brands of eye wash. If the ingredients list on the eye wash does not include *boric acid* then the product will not be suitable for use in making slime. While it is safe to use this ingredient in solution, over time, as the slime mix dries out, it presents a potential hazard. Therefore if you make this in class we would recommend that the children do not take the slime home and that it is disposed of as soon as the class investigations are complete.

Following a recent article by CLEAPSS [2], we tested and adapted a range of recipes for slime and found the following to work best:

- White washable PVA glue (1 dessert spoon).
- Bicarbonate of soda ( $\frac{1}{4}$  dessert spoon).
- Eye wash (15 drops).
- Shaving foam (optional; 1 squirt).



Figure 1 - Materials required for making putty (slime).

Put the PVA into a suitable container and add the bicarbonate of soda. Mix well before adding the eye wash and continue mixing. The shaving foam increases the volume of slime that is made (see Figure 2).

## References

- [1] SSERC Primary Bulletin No. 51 [http://www.sserc.org.uk/images/Primary\\_Bulletins/51/PB\\_51.pdf](http://www.sserc.org.uk/images/Primary_Bulletins/51/PB_51.pdf) (accessed 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017).
- [2] CLEAPSS - An organisation that provides health and safety advice to schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.