

Air Quality Policy

Rationale

Wildfire smoke and other weather and climate events can pose a health risk, particularly in vulnerable populations, including children, and those with respiratory or heart conditions. The policy provides guidelines for modifying and cancelling regular school activities and field trips during air quality events of moderate and high risk.

Procedure

School leadership will monitor the current and projected [air quality index](#) to determine the level of health risk. Class teachers will make themselves aware of any children who may be at elevated risk and be ready to make adaptations for them, and ensure that any emergency medications, such as inhalers, are on hand.

Moderate Health Risk (4-6)

- No change to recess
- Monitor classes for signs of irritation, such as coughing or sore throats, and adapt as necessary.

High Risk (7 – 10)

- No change to recess, but if children are running too hard, get them to take breaks
- Reduce the intensity of physical activity outdoors
- If on trips, adapt routes to decrease distance and elevation or consider staying at base camp.
- At risk students can sit out activities as needed

Very High Risk (10+)

- Move recess, and physical activities indoors
- Cancel hiking and outdoor trips, including those in progress.

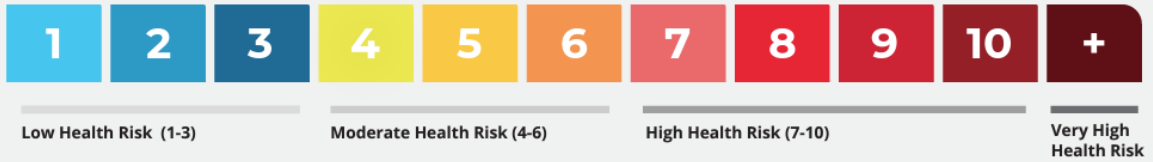
Refer to the chart below for more information.

Government of Canada Air Quality Health Index:

https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/index_e.html

The Air Quality Health Index

The AQHI measures the air quality in relation to your health on a scale from 1 to 10 (the higher the number, the greater the health risk), with a category that describes the level of health risk (e.g. Low, Moderate, High, or Very High Health Risk).



There are health messages for both the general population and the 'at risk' population, providing suggestions on how you might adjust your activity levels depending on your individual health risk from air pollution.*

| Health Risk | Air Quality Health Index | Health Messages: At Risk Population | Health Messages: General Population |
|-------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| Low | 1 - 3 | Enjoy your usual outdoor activities. | Ideal air quality for outdoor activities. |
| Moderate | 4 - 6 | Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you are experiencing symptoms. | No need to modify your usual outdoor activities unless you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation. |
| High | 7 - 10 | Reduce or reschedule strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also take it easy. | Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation. |
| Very High | Above 10 | Avoid strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also avoid outdoor physical exertion. | Reduce or reschedule strenuous activities outdoors, especially if you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation. |

* People with heart or breathing problems are at greater risk. Follow your doctor's usual advice about exercising and managing your condition.
Adapted from: www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/air-quality-health-index/understanding-messages.html