Guidance Concerning Air Quality

Given the fires in the surrounding regions, air quality in San Mateo County has ranged from good (green or <50 on the Air Quality Index - AQI) to unhealthy for sensitive groups (orange or 101-150 on the AQI). This changing situation could persist for the next few days and possibly longer.

This document includes access to information to help you track air quality and prepare your children and family for days when air quality is not good.

AQI SCALE KEY:



Keep Track of Air Quality

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District website (BAAQMD) has local information and projections.

EPA's AirNow website provides a quick update on air quality.

These official BAAQMD and AirNow sites rely on professional quality monitors that are regularly maintained, independently audited, and have high standards for quality assurance and quality control.

Adjust Activity Based on Air Quality

Air Quality and Outdoor Activity Guidance for Schools

This document provides flags for all of the EPA Air Quality levels as well as information on the types of outdoor activity and exposure that are appropriate for each level. While this is aimed at schools, it provides helpful information on activities that are appropriate for each air quality level.

School Air Quality Activity Recommendations

This document, developed with content from the California Department of Education, is geared toward schools. However, it provides families with insight into how schools might address differing levels of air quality.

Sensitive Groups

Children with certain medical conditions may be impacted by air quality in the moderate (yellow – 51-100) and unhealthy for sensitive groups (orange – 101-150) levels. Parents/guardians of these children should notify their schools.

School Response

When air quality dips to very unhealthy levels (purple – 201-300), many schools will practice the Shelter in Place protocol, which includes keeping all activities indoors, limiting physical activity, and minimizing the opening and closing of doors. Regular classroom instruction continues during Shelter in Place.

The Coalition for Safe Schools and Communities believes that schools are the best place for students to be when air quality is poor as they are well-supervised, can be kept indoors, and are able to continue to learn. However, if air quality becomes hazardous (maroon – 301-500) and schools do not have the ability to keep outdoor air from easily entering the school, then a school may decide to close. Schools make this decision based on their own local factors.

SAN MATEO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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