



# AIR QUALITY INFORMATION FOR OUR SCHOOLS

## Wildland Fires and Smoke Exposure

### How does smoke in the air affect my health?

How smoke conditions may affect your health is determined by a number of factors, such as the length of time you are exposed, how much air you breathe in, your health status and the concentration of smoke in the air.



### Who is most at risk?

Young children, the elderly and people with heart or lung conditions, like asthma, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and congestive heart failure are more sensitive to the adverse effects of exposure to smoke. People participating in sports or strenuous work outdoors may also be more susceptible since they are breathing air deeply and rapidly. Risks increase when smoke becomes heavier and as the length of time a person is exposed increases.

## Wildland Fires and Smoke During School Hours

When dealing with wildfire smoke, schools play a crucial role in protecting students and staff from the harmful effects. Here are some recommended actions schools can take:

### Monitor air quality to modify outdoor activities

Familiarize yourself with the [AQHI categories](#) and what they mean for health: (e.g. “Good (Low Risk),” “Moderate (Risk),” “Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (High Risk),” “Unhealthy (Very High Risk)”).

- **Good:** Continue normal activities.
- **Moderate:** Continue normal activities, monitor AQHI.
- **Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups/Unhealthy:** Limit outdoor time by reducing and avoiding outdoor activities. Reschedule recess, physical education and sports practices. Plan for alternative activities that do not require physical exertion when air quality is poor.



### Improve indoor air quality

Keep windows closed to prevent outdoor air from entering the building or use air purifiers.

### Ensure student health and safety

Monitoring health symptoms (coughing, sore eyes or difficulty breathing) and having a plan in place for sensitive individuals.

### Communicate with parents and staff

Staff should communicate any changes to school activities or schedules.