

Guide to the 15 clean air plan actions

If you're looking for inspiration or a shortcut to implementing the clean air actions in your school, these tips on each of the 15 actions can help you to make progress swiftly. Additional materials, including approved health guidance regarding air pollution, can be found at the www.cleanairday.org.uk

Ways of reducing air pollution at the school entrance:

1. Stop vehicles from idling near the school entrance.
 - A letter to parents or talking with parents at the school gate are options for disseminating the message
 - If you would like to run a no-idling activity, there is a toolkit to help run the day safely and successfully on the Clean Air Day website at www.cleanairday.org.uk
2. Establish a suitable drop off point away from the main walking route.
 - Do ensure that any changes that you plan have considered the safety of children, pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. The Road Safety Knowledge Centre is a useful resource www.roadsafetyknowledgecentre.org.uk
 - Liaising with your local council may be advisable to ensure that changes do not cause problems elsewhere on the road network
3. Set a walking challenge for students.
 - The WOW Challenge run by Living Streets is a great option. It has reduced cars at the school gate by 30% in participating schools, and uses badges to incentivise students. www.livingstreets.org.uk/what-we-do/projects/wow
4. Encourage car sharing for those who need to drive.
 - There are a number of different car sharing websites, and trusted ways to get people talking about car sharing. See the Car Plus website for more details www.carplus.org.uk/what-is-shared-mobility/2plus-car-sharing
5. Hold a no car day to trigger people to try a new way to get to school.
 - People can feel that a no car day feels like losing out, or making a sacrifice. So it is very important to emphasise the benefits. Here are some ideas. Taking to the street and using your feet has these benefits:
 - Cutting harmful pollution for all children going to school
 - Avoiding pollution inside vehicles. It is a little known fact that pollution gathers inside vehicles, meaning that people in a vehicle can be exposed to 9 times more pollution than a cyclist.



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- Getting the day off to a healthy start. The NHS recommends 5 – 18 year olds get at least 1 hour of exercise every day.
- Being out on the streets opens up the chance for fun things to happen. Perhaps bumping in to a friend you haven't seen for a while, exploring a street you've not walked down before or popping in to a new shop that's just opened up.

Ways of reducing air pollution on school grounds:

1. Reduce the number of deliveries to school and make sure they arrive at quiet times.
 - Deliveries can be reduced by cutting down on ad hoc or occasional deliveries. For example, ensuring that all requirements are gathered up for one weekly stationery order, rather than departments ordering separately and triggering daily deliveries.
 - Some city-based local authorities have set up out of town consolidation centres that you may be able to benefit from. These centres take deliveries from many suppliers for non-urgent items (washroom supplies, stationery, some foods, uniforms etc) so that one vehicle can take all these items to the end destination. This is sometimes called last mile delivery.
2. Have a no idling policy on school grounds – especially for buses.
 - Getting the message across to drivers may require speaking directly with them – which can be done quite quickly during one morning drop off.
 - Signage can help to remind drivers on a regular basis
3. Upgrade to electric school vehicles and provide smarter driving training for drivers of school vehicles.
 - There are government grants available for buying electric vehicles, and installing electric vehicle charging points. Details can be found at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/travel/electric-vehicles and www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-grants-for-low-emission-vehicles
 - Smarter driving is smoother driving to maximise the amount of miles that can be driven on a tank of fuel. Tips and training can be found online www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/travel/driving-advice and www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/business/transport/subsidised-ecodriving-training
4. Ensure contractors reduce the impact of building work through limiting use of diesel generators, and suppressing dust.
 - There are three main air pollution issues associated with construction. Simply asking your building contractor's site manager how they are minimising pollution is a good start to the conversation:



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- Many building sites use diesel generators, which produce air pollution. Some sites manage to arrange for electrical generators which reduce the pollution levels.
- Dust from construction sites is classified as “Particulate Matter” which is a pollutant most associated with causing problems to the body’s cardiac system. You can ask what the site’s tactics are for suppressing dust and reducing airborne particulate matter.
- Construction sites also cause additional vehicle traffic. You can ask how the site minimises deliveries and ensures engines are switched off when possible.

5. Check that you have an efficient boiler, you may need to speak to your energy provider.

- Boilers generate pollution when gas, oil or wood chips are burnt. Ensuring that the boiler, and the whole heating system around the site is as efficient as possible, and stopping overheating will reduce how much fuel is burned by the boiler, thereby reducing pollution.

Ways of reducing students’ exposure to air pollution:

1. Train all staff on the risks of air pollution and how best to avoid it. Share knowledge through lessons and assemblies.

- The Clean Air Day school toolkit contains lesson plans for all key stages www.cleanairday.org.uk

2. Share green routes to school with students so they know the least polluted ways to travel in.

- The simple rule is that the lower the traffic levels, the less pollution will be present in the air. Air pollution monitoring experiments have shown that exposure to pollution can be cut by 20% or even 50% just by using side streets rather than walking along busy roads. The percentage just depends on how busy the main road is that is swapped for a quiet route.

3. On high pollution days, avoid polluted areas and make provisions for those with health issues to stay inside.

- The most important point to note is that for the vast majority of days in the UK, and for the vast majority of areas, it is much healthier for children to be outdoors getting exercise than to reduce their exercise and keep them indoors. This action is only for exceptional days.
- High pollution days happen around 10 – 20 days per year in UK cities.
- Air pollution forecasts and health advice can be found at the central government website uk-air.defra.gov.uk



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4. Shut out pollution. Shut windows in well ventilated rooms and use filters in air conditioning and ventilation systems.
 - Putting up a physical barrier can cut out pollution if it is air-tight, which means that closing well-sealed windows can cut exposure to a high source of pollution, such as a busy road.
 - However, do ensure that the rooms receive some fresh air supplies, such as by opening the door on to the corridor. It is important to avoid building up carbon dioxide levels, just from what we naturally breathe out.
5. Promote good health! Those with respiratory or cardiac conditions are most affected by pollution. Avoiding those health issues reduces how much students will be affected by air pollution
 - The full health impacts of air pollution on children are described here www.cleanairday.org.uk
 - Air pollution disproportionately affects children and adults who have existing health issues, with heart and lung problems being the problems most exacerbated by air pollution. Avoiding these conditions by being healthy – getting good exercise and having a healthy diet – will protect children from problems with air pollution now and in later life.

