



AIR QUALITY GUIDELINES

Statement of Context and Purpose

There are times in the year when we may experience poor air quality in Victoria, and we know this can be an issue of importance for many of our students, staff and parents/carers. At Huntingtower, we will strive to make every effort to ensure we provide a safe environment for our students. At these times Huntingtower will check the Air Quality Index (AQI) and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) websites on a regular basis to guide our practice and decision-making process.

Application

These guidelines typically apply to all staff, students, contractors and visitors to the School. They aim to provide information and recommendations to help protect the health and well-being of everyone exposed to poor air quality conditions on campus.

Monitoring Air Quality

During reported days of concern the air quality will be checked and the School will follow the recommendations on the AQI and/or EPA websites. Decisions will be made regarding any normal outdoor play and activities. Cancellation of sporting events, training sessions and planned excursions may cause inconvenience to the School and its community members. Parents/carers, staff and students will be notified as soon as possible in regard to program changes.

Thunderstorm Asthma

Thunderstorm asthma can impact individuals with asthma or hay fever, particularly those who experience wheezing or coughing with their hay fever. On a day of high risk the relevant authorities will issue up-to-date advice and warnings on the [VicEmergency](#) warning platform. School staff should be aware of asthma symptoms and familiarise themselves with the four steps of asthma first aid. The School provides training on these protocols to ensure staff are prepared.

All people at increased risk of thunderstorm asthma and those who have duty of care for them should:

- Check the thunderstorm asthma forecast daily
- If possible, keep individuals prone to asthma indoors during thunderstorms from October to December, especially during gusty winds that precede storms. (Those at risk should close doors and windows and set air conditioners to recirculate)
- Ensure they have an up-to-date asthma action plan and practical knowledge of asthma first aid.
- Keep reliever medication readily accessible.

Air Quality Categories

The table below shows how Huntingtower will modify outdoor activity based on the EPA's air quality categories.

Air Quality Category	Outdoor Activity Guidance
Good	It's a good time to be outside
Fair	It's okay to be outside but watch for changes in air quality
Poor	- Shorter and less strenuous activities such as recess are okay to hold outside - Longer activities such as physical education or sports training should be avoided outdoors. Watch for symptoms and take action as needed - Anyone with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and keep their quick-relief medicine handy
Very Poor	- Move all activities indoors or reschedule them to another day - Avoid being outdoors - Excessive smoke levels can not only aggravate existing lung conditions, but may also irritate eyes, coughing or wheezing - Anyone with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and keep their quick-relief medicine handy
Extremely Poor	- All outdoor activity cancelled - Avoid being outdoors - Reschedule all physical activities to another day - Excessive smoke levels can not only aggravate existing lung conditions, but may also irritate eyes, coughing or wheezing - Anyone with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and keep their quick-relief medicine handy - Anyone with concerns about their health should seek medical advice

Ways the School has prepared

The School has put the following in place to respond to air quality issues:

- Developed an air quality protocol that links in with the School emergency response plan to include the following:
 - Monitor air quality websites to be aware of current conditions
 - Understand the air quality levels that are not acceptable
 - Alert staff to the Air Quality Policy
 - Notification processes to parents and staff should the air quality be deemed poor to hazardous
 - An evacuation plan, including a section of the School that students can go to in hazardous air quality conditions –windows and doors can be closed to provide clean air shelters
- Staff have been educated and trained on the symptoms and severity of asthma
- Teachers have been made aware of the students in their class who have respiratory conditions
- Asthma Action Plans have been provided to the School by parents with all relevant medications. The School has reliever medication and spacers available in first aid kits
- Where possible, the School has installed air-conditioning filters to help the air within the room (recycling air within the room not air outside)
- The School will adjust the daily school routines i.e. break times indoors rather than outside. This may include adjustments to regular PE lessons and before and after school care activities
- When students are utilising public transport and being escorted by school staff, ensure both teachers and students have a clean air waiting area

8. Students will be encouraged to use a clean air waiting area after school to ensure they are not waiting for pickup outdoors in poor air
9. In poor air quality, plans for sports carnivals, excursions etc will be adjusted, rescheduled, or cancelled if poor- hazardous conditions
10. The School emergency response plan will be regularly reviewed and adjust for effectiveness

Related Documentation

- Emergency Management Plan
- Critical Incident Management Plan
- Incidents and Warnings - VicEmergency
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic)

Communication

These guidelines are available to staff, parents and the school community via the School's website. In addition, relevant aspects of these guidelines may be raised at staff and parent meetings.

Evaluation

The Principal is primarily responsible for monitoring Huntingtower's overall compliance with these guidelines, which will be reviewed as part of Huntingtower's policy review cycle (and otherwise as and when required).

Authorisation

This Policy was authorised by the Principal February 2020

Reviewed March, November 2024

Date of next review: March 2026