



This information is taken from the California Department of Education, the California Air Resources Board, the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, the California School Boards Association, the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, and the Association of California School Administrators, and has been updated with input from the Marin County Public Health Officer and school leaders in Marin County based on experiences with recent regional wildfire events and community response.

Additional Air Quality Information & Resources

About AirNow.gov:

- AirNow.gov is a network of monitors maintained and operated by government agencies.
- It is recommended by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the California Air Resources Board, and U.S. EPA.
- AirNow monitors form a network to track regional air quality. Because pollutants like smoke mix in the atmosphere, community air quality is represented even if a monitor is not in the same neighborhood as a school.
- Sensors are regularly monitored for quality control by U.S. EPA and are accurate at all air quality levels. Personal sensors such as Purple Air often overestimate pollution levels when AQI is 150 or higher.

About Masks:

- When air is unhealthy, the best option is to reduce physical activity and stay indoors with windows and doors closed.
- Masks have limitations. Surgical gauze masks provide no protection from smoke. N95 respirator masks are designed for professional use by trained adults and are not intended for children.
- N95 masks require a tight seal to be effective. When not fitted correctly, they provide little or no protection.
- Masks can worsen breathing difficulty for sensitive breathers or cause deeper breathing, which draws particles deeper into the lungs if they are not fitted correctly.
- Masks must be kept clean and replaced frequently to be effective. If a mask is used, please refer to the mask manufacturer's recommendations on cleaning and replacement intervals.

Recommendations for Ensuring Cleaner Air at School:

- Ensure doors and windows are sealed tightly. Minimize air movement in and out of room.
- Depending on existing air filtration systems, consider turning off external air intake when air quality is poor. If high efficiency air filtration systems are in place, air intake may be used, and filters checked frequently.
- If portable filters are available and utilized, make sure they are sized correctly for the room.

Considerations for School Districts from CDE: Before You Make a Decision to Close a School

Outdoor air quality is one factor local educational agencies (LEAs) need to consider when making a school closure decision. LEAs should consider the factors below, in addition to any other relevant local conditions or concerns, when deciding to close school.

Health and Safety:

- **Indoor air quality.** Ventilation and filtration systems at schools may offer a higher level of protection than residential systems.
- **Supervision.** The school environment provides appropriate student supervision by trained and caring adults who can ensure students remain indoors.
- **Student support services.** School may be the primary place where students receive needed health and counseling services.
- **Nutrition services.** Schools serve healthy meals to a significant proportion of students. If school is closed, it is a substantial challenge at best for LEAs to feed students.
- National School Lunch Program Meal Reimbursement During Disaster: Education Code 49505 allows for the LEAs to submit an application for meal reimbursement during a disaster. The disaster would require a state or federal declaration for the county affected by the disaster.

The application is available on the California Department of Education website at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/lr/nu/sn/documents/disastermealapp.doc>

Using an Equity Lens:

- Socioeconomically disadvantaged families may not have options for alternate child care.
- Working parents and guardians are disproportionately affected by school closure and could suffer significant professional or economic consequences as a result.
- Students receiving free or reduced-price meals may not have a reliable alternate source of healthy food.
- Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) may not have access to needed services during school closure.
- Schools provide safe and supportive environments for their students; our most vulnerable students rely on them most.

Instructional Time:

- Instructional time is foundational to students' academic achievement. LEAs should consider adding instructional days or minutes to the school calendar when time is lost due to school closure.
- LEAs that have a foreseeable loss of instructional time due to a history of school closures should consider adding "built-in emergency" days to the annual school calendar.
- Information on requesting credit for lost attendance and instructional time during an emergency is available on the California Department of Education's website at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/pa/j13a.asp>.

Guidance for Families When Schools are Closed:

- Stay indoors.
- Keep doors and windows closed.
- Consult a Physician if you have concerns about your child's health.