

# Folsom School Outdoor Air Quality Awareness Program

4-1-16

## Description of Implementation:

Folsom School is concerned about the Air Quality surrounding the school, and therefore, has implemented an Outside Air Quality awareness program according to the guidelines within the AirNow.gov program.

This program includes:

1. The identification of the surrounding outdoor air quality based on data from the AirNow.gov website. This data is available on the main Folsom School website and the Science Teacher's website.
2. The display of color-coded flags on school grounds based on the protocol from the "Environmental Protection Agency School Flag Program Coordinator Handbook" <http://www3.epa.gov/airnow/flag/handbook-2015.pdf> (Handbook and flag color also available on Folsom School website).
3. A simple protocol for altering student activities based on certain air quality categories. This is outlined in the section below.

## School Protocol for "Unhealthy" Outdoor Air Days:

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Air Quality Flag Program, there are five categories of air quality by which to create protocol for outdoor activities, such as physical education, recess, and outdoor extracurricular sports. Data for the program is gathered from cities and suburbs around the country, and distributed through email, desktop widgets, or texts from AirNow.gov. Each day, students who are

part of the “Safety Partol” will check the link on the School website to AirNow.gov and will choose and fly the appropriate flag pertaining to the air quality for the day. All outdoor activities, including recess, outdoor class sessions, sports meets, and physical education classes will check the status of the flag to determine the acceptable and recommended activity protocol. Below is the protocol for Folsom School, based on recommendations from AirNow.gov, on different Air Quality Days (AQD’s):

- **“Green” indicates an air quality of good.** No action is to be taken. Outdoor activities can occur as usual.
  - Great day to be active outside!
  - Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no threat.
  
- **“Yellow” means air quality is acceptable.** No action needs to be taken. Outdoor activities can occur as usual but staff members should be aware of any changing conditions.
  - Good day to be active outside!  
Students who are unusually sensitive to air pollution could have symptoms.
  - Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants, there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are usually sensitive to air pollution.
  
- **“Orange” means air quality is unhealthy for sensitive groups- those with asthma, young children, or older adults.** For groups of students who have asthma, special considerations should be given for alternate activities or reduced vigor in activities to prevent health issues.

- It's OK to be active outside, especially for **short activities** such as recess and physical education (PE).
- For **longer activities** such as athletic practice, take more breaks and do less intense activities.
- Watch for symptoms and take action as needed.  
Students with asthma should follow their asthma action plans (from their doctor) and keep their quick-relief medicine handy.
  
- **“Red” means air quality is unhealthy.**
  - For **all outdoor activities**, take more breaks and do less intense activities.
  - Consider moving **longer or more intense activities** indoors or rescheduling them to another day or time.
  - Watch for symptoms and take action as needed.
  - Students with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and keep their quick-relief medicine handy.
  - For **all outdoor activities**, take more breaks and do less intense activities.
  - Everyone may begin to experience health affects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
  
- **“Purple” means air quality is very unhealthy.**
  - Move **all activities** indoors or reschedule them to another day.
  - Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.

### *Samples of School Community Education Materials*

Education of the community, parents, staff, and most importantly, the students, is imperative for any program to succeed. Therefore, Folsom School will be completing the following tasks during this program:

- A flyer, explaining the reason and guidelines of the Outdoor Air Quality Awareness Program, will be distributed to all students and staff. This flyer will point parents to the main Folsom School website for access to the resources listed below.
  
- Various Educational materials have been posted Folsom School's main website, as well as the Science Teacher's website and include:
  - A link to AirNow.gov, the website hosted by the Environmental Protection Agency, which lists and explains air quality for the entire United States. Visitors to the site can also subscribe to the website to receive air quality condition data via email, text message, or desktop widget.
  - A spatial link to AirNow.gov giving quick air quality forecasts, current conditions, and archived data of the closest geographical area to our school.
  - EPA publication link: "Air Quality and Outdoor Activity Guidance for Schools". This publication explains and justifies Folsom School's actions taken during various air quality conditions.
  - Email links to teachers and staff responsible for the Folsom School Outdoor Air Quality Program to answer any questions members of the community may have.