

Dear Families,

The safety and security of our students is of the utmost importance, and it is our desire that students throughout the county have a safe place and refuge from the current air quality. Students are safer and better served indoors within our schools, childcare homes and centers, and preschools.

At this time, schools in Santa Clara County are not closing. The SCCOE is providing this guidance after consultation with Santa Clara County School Districts, and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department.

We will be monitoring air quality through [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov) and informing schools and after-school programs of the guidelines and recommend that families also stay informed, and be mindful of health concerns. If you or your child is particularly susceptible to respiratory or heart trouble, please follow medical guidelines first.

Due to the unhealthy air quality, the following recommendations have been made:

- Stay indoors and reschedule, cancel or relocate to an indoors facilities any previously planned or scheduled outdoor activities.
- Avoid prolonged or heavy exertion.

We are asking that outdoor and strenuous activity be limited.

Please use [precautions](#) as recommended by Santa Clara County Public Health located here:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/phd/Pages/wildfire-smoke-11-09-18.aspx>

The Environmental Protection Agency makes the following [recommendations](#) for outdoor activity located here: <https://www3.epa.gov/airnow/flag/school-chart-2014.pdf>

Following the recommendations from the Food and Drug Administration, [N-95 respirators](#) are not recommended for use for children as they may not fit properly:

<https://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/GeneralHospitalDevicesandSupplies/PersonalProtectiveEquipment/ucm055977.htm#s3>

#### **Why aren't schools distributing air masks to students?**

Schools have been advised by public health officials that the only mask that can safely protect from particulate matter such as that found in wildfire smoke is an N95 respirator. However, these masks are meant to be worn by those with occupational exposure and are not designed for children. Also, without having had a "fit test" while wearing this mask, individual users cannot be sure that it fits well enough to provide the expected protection.

#### **Does my child have to go to school?**

If parents disagree with their district's decision, they may choose to keep their children at home. Ultimately, parents know what is best for their child based on his or her health needs.

#### **If I keep my child home because of health concerns, will the absence be excused?**

This is a district-by-district decision. Please consult with your school or district to determine their policies regarding absences.

Additional Resources:

[EPA Air Quality and Outdoor Activity Guidance for Schools](#)

[Santa Clara County Public Health Advisory: November 9, 2018](#)

Air Quality Guidelines attached

Sincerely,