the air quality flag program

What is the Air Quality Flag Program for schools?

The Air Quality Flag Program for schools encourages outdoor activity when the air quality is good, and provides school communities with ideas on how to remain active if the air quality is poor.

The Air Quality Flag Program for schools is the first of its kind in Canada, and will be piloted in communities across British Columbia.

The flag program is based on reporting through the Air Quality Health Index or AQHI. Flag colours correspond with the health risk categories in the AQHI: blue for low health risk – a good air day; grey for moderate risk – an OK air day; brown for high risk – some people may experience symptoms if they are getting active and red for very high risk – meaning there is a lot of air pollution and everyone should take it easy outside.

Participating takes only a few minutes each day and encourages students, staff and parents to think more about air, its connection to health, and how to be better stewards of air.

The Air Quality Flag Program is entirely accessible online, and participating schools receive their own, dedicated web page to raise a flag each day. Additionally, up to 10 schools receive free flags and flag poles to use at their school each day, which can be located and flown just outside the school entrance. These onsite flags would be used throughout the pilot and may be kept by the schools when the program is complete.

What is the Air Quality Health Index?

The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is a scale from 1 to 10 that tells people what kind of air day it is in their community on a daily basis. The AQHI also has accompanying health messages based on the daily air quality for the general public and people who are more at risk to the negative impacts of air pollution. It is reported in real time at www.airhealth.ca

Blue Day			Gray Day			Brown Day				Red Day
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	+
Low Risk			Moderate Risk			High Risk				Very High Risk

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Did you know? Children are more at risk to air pollution: they have less-developed respiratory and defense systems. Because of their size, they inhale more air per kilogram of body weight than adults. Children also spend more time outdoors being physically active, which can increase their exposure to air pollution.

Program Resources

The Air Quality Flag Program for schools includes the following resources hosted at www.airqualityflags.ca

- Air Quality Flag video
- Air Quality Flag handbook
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Air Quality Terminology
- Individual air quality web pages for participating schools
- Air Quality Flag Bearer schedule for classrooms
- Poster
- Parent Letter
- Blog

For more information, please contact Glynn Brothen, Air Quality Flag Program Coordinator, at glynn@airshiftgroup.com or phone 250.372.5900 ext 1.