

October 13, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In light of today's school closures, the following are tips for keeping our children and ourselves safe at home when air quality is poor.

We are recommending people stay inside as much as possible and try to keep outside air out. Keep doors and windows shut, and set any air conditioning units and car ventilation systems to "recirculate."

We are not recommending the use of surgical or dust masks to protect against smoky air – most are not effective at stopping the fine particles in wildfire smoke. Such masks can provide false reassurance regarding outdoor activity.

An N-95 mask, when properly worn – tightly sealed around the nose and mouth – may provide some protection but commercially available models don't fit well on smaller children's faces. Children also find it hard to follow proper mask wearing instructions over long periods.

Physical activity increases breathing and draws smoky air deeper into lungs, causing more irritation. We recommend children refrain for vigorous physical activity and limit time out of doors.

Children with asthma should follow their asthma action plans and keep their quick-relief medicine close at hand.

For parents looking for a safe indoor alternative to staying at home, consider your local library for quiet activity. In addition to your town or city library, the Marin County Free Library system has the following libraries open tomorrow:

Civic Center Library 10-6

Fairfax Library 12-5

Inverness Library 3-6

Marin City Library 12-5

Point Reyes Library 10-2

South Novato Library 12-5

Stinson Beach Library 10-6

Families can also consider volunteering at the Marin County Evacuation Center serving families displaced by fire through the Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership (www.cvnl.org).

For up to date information about air quality in the Bay Area go to: <http://www.baaqmd.gov>

This has been a challenging week for residents across the region, and our hearts go out to those north of us who are experiencing this disaster most directly.

Thank you for all you do to help our children thrive.

Matt

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