

SCHOOLS & IDLING

PLEDGING TO BE IDLE FREE



SCHOOLS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM THE HEALTH HAZARDS OF IDLING ENGINES. HERE ARE WAYS THAT YOUR SCHOOL CAN START IMPLEMENTING ITS OWN IDLE REDUCTION PLAN.



TALK ABOUT ENGINE IDLING WITH OTHERS

Make students, parents and bus drivers aware that:

- Exhaust fumes contain pollutants that cause cancer, birth defects, asthma, low fertility, and other serious illnesses.
- Children are particularly vulnerable to the pollutants in exhaust.
- Occupants inside an idling vehicle are breathing in a much higher concentration of exhaust than a car in motion.
- Ground-level pollutants around a concentrated amount of idling vehicles—such as outside the school during pick up—increases the risk even more.

CREATE AN IDLE REDUCTION POLICY

Set specific guidelines that let others know what they should do.

- Make an announcement that the school is an idle free zone. Instruct drivers of all types to turn off their engines while waiting in their vehicles.
- Detail the specifics of the policy and how your school will implement the plan.

- Post reminders to turn engines off around drop off and pick up points.
- Enlist monitors to identify drivers who idle and develop appropriate methods for encouraging them to turn their engines off.
- Inform transportation providers about this important health policy. Enlist support from drivers and management.

ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

Develop methods to help sustain an idle free school zone:

- Incentivize participation by recognizing those who turn their engines off.
- Educate students about how the school's idle free policy protects them, their community, and the environment. Encourage them to get involved in the fight for cleaner air.
- Communicate with the school community about ongoing idle reduction efforts and continue to encourage them to turn their engines off.
- Document idling guidelines in school policy literature. Provide school policies to all new and returning families.

GETTING STARTED

Resources are available to help announce, implement and sustain your idle reduction program.

- Take the *Pledge to be Idle Free*. Gather at a school assembly, PTA meeting, or other event to demonstrate your school's commitment with a pledge-signing ceremony.
- Share information from the *Idle Reduction Fact Sheet* with students so that they can start a conversation at home about the impact of idling.
- Distribute *Idle Reduction and You* to parents so they can start recognizing opportunities for reducing engine idling in their lives.
- Develop a *social media plan* to help spread the word in a viral-friendly way.
- Hang *Idle Free Zone* signs in the school's parking and driveway areas.
- Post *Idling's Impact on Maryland Communities* in your lobby or other common areas.
- Share your idle reduction efforts with *Maryland Department of the Environment* and use #idlefreeMD.



Maryland
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mde.maryland.gov/idlefreeMD

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For more information, contact mde.idlefreemd@maryland.gov