

Idle Free Schools Campaign Guide



Idle Free Schools supported by RAC.

THE ISSUE

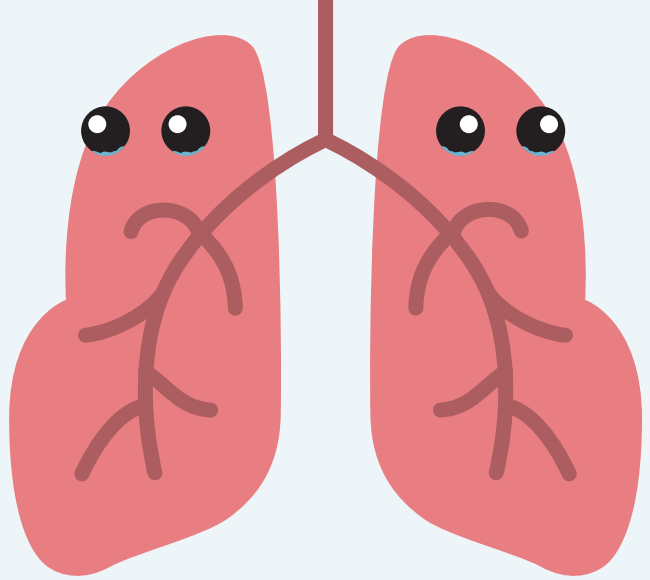
Just like cigarette smoking, it's taken science a little while to realise just how dangerous car-fumes are. Luckily for us, we now have the facts.

Vehicle emissions release air pollutants

– a mix of **carbon monoxide (CO)**, **hydrocarbons**, **nitrogen oxides (NOx e.g NO and NO₂)** and other toxins that affect the health and wellbeing of humans, animals and the environment

– including **particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀)** that can be absorbed into human lungs¹





Thousands of Australian adults die prematurely each year due to traffic emission exposure, and children are at an even higher risk of being impacted by emissions compared to adults.

Why?

Because their lungs are still developing, and they breathe more air per kilogram of body weight than adults².

What is Idle Free Schools?

Idle free schools is a campaign to raise awareness of how leaving your car on idle creates air pollution and causes harm to humans and the environment.

Why participate?

Most parents and caregivers who regularly idle around kids, wouldn't if they knew the risks. That's why education is key; the more people in the know the better.

So, to help us lower the risk for little lungs, we're asking you to help us spread the word and encourage your community to make your school an idle free zone.

This is a problem with a very simple solution, making it a great opportunity for students to help change their communities for the better.

How you can help

Positive change starts with education! So, we've put together a toolkit complete with resources and information to make it easy for you to empower your students so they can tell their school community that air quality matters.

Our kit is highly flexible – meaning it can be tailored to the needs and opportunities of every school.

Whether you use one or all of the resources, every action – big or small – can make an impact!

1 Green Vehicle Guide (2024). Vehicle emissions. Retrieved from: <https://www.greenvehicleguide.gov.au/pages/UnderstandingEmissions/VehicleEmissions>

2 University of Melbourne (Melbourne Climate Futures) (2023). Health Impacts Associated With Traffic Emissions In Australia. Retrieved from: https://www.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/4498161/Expert-Position-Statement_Vehicle-emissions_FINAL.pdf

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

ABOUT EMISSIONS, POLLUTANTS AND IMPACTS ON HEALTH

In Australia, vehicle emissions are estimated to contribute to **66,000 cases of childhood asthma annually³**.

Engine idling contributes to **asthma, heart disease and lung cancer⁴**.

Vehicle emissions at schools have been linked to **systemic inflammation, impaired cognitive development, and behavioural problems in children⁵**.

By reducing car idling, **the potential of lung irritation and inflammation can be reduced, as can the risk of developing and exacerbating asthma and other exhaust-related health problems.**

3 University of Melbourne (Melbourne Climate Futures) (2023). Health Impacts Associated With Traffic Emissions In Australia. Retrieved from: https://www.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/4498161/Expert-Position-Statement_Vehicle-emissions_FINAL.pdf

4 Department of Health (n.d). Car exhaust - reduce idling to protect your health. Retrieved from: https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Car-exhaust-idling

5 University of Melbourne (Melbourne Climate Futures) (2023). Health Impacts Associated With Traffic Emissions In Australia. Retrieved from: https://www.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/4498161/Expert-Position-Statement_Vehicle-emissions_FINAL.pdf

6 Transport Energy/Emission Research (2020). Motor Vehicle Engine Idling in Australia – a critical review and initial assessment. Retrieved from: https://www.transport-e-research.com/_files/ugd/d0bd25_2485b61095ed48f29bea980a73e74240.pdf?index=true

7 Emission Impossible (2023). The effect of speed on emissions: summary report. Retrieved from: <https://at.govt.nz/media/1992225/the-effect-of-speed-on-emissions-summary-report.pdf>

FACTS AND MYTH BUSTING

ABOUT CAR IDLING AND THE IMPACT ON YOUNG LUNGS

Myth:

Switching my car off and on again uses more fuel.

Fact:

Just 30 seconds of idling can waste more fuel than turning the engine off and on again⁶.

Myth:

Idling doesn't cause that much harm.

Fact:

Idling vehicles still emit pollutants such as carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and hydrocarbons. These contribute to climate change and worsen air quality.

Myth:

My car is brand new and doesn't emit as many pollutants as an older car.

Fact:

There is no safe level of emissions. Any vehicle that emits pollutants is harming the health of students at our school.

Myth:

Idling doesn't put out a lot of pollution.

Fact:

An idling engine can release more exhaust fumes than when you're driving along your local street⁷.

FIND OUT THE AIR QUALITY IN YOUR AREA

RAC AIR HEALTH MONITOR

By world standards, Perth experiences good air quality. However, there are often times when our air quality exceeds the threshold advised by the World Health Organisation. There's no 'safe' level of air pollution, so it is important to take action to tackle harmful emissions and minimise exposure as much as possible.

That's why RAC introduced the RAC Air Health Monitor. This is the largest air sensor network in Australia which uses hundreds of sensors to collect air pollution data that is shared with Western Australians through an online heatmap, allowing users to check their local air quality in real time.

Find out more about the RAC Air Health Monitor and check the air quality in your area at rac.com.au/airhealth



PLANNING YOUR CAMPAIGN

Campaign planning is a lot like lesson planning. To help you get started, think about the following points which will help direct your campaign.

What is a campaign?

A short burst of activity that aims to inform your community about an issue and encourage behaviour change that benefits everyone.

Who will be working on the campaign?

As those most affected by traffic emission exposure, this could be a student led initiative, and perhaps getting the Parents & Friends Association involved will help spread the word.

When will you run the campaign?

Set a timeframe for the campaign activity to build momentum and increase awareness. You could even launch the campaign at a public event like an assembly to bring everyone on board, then reinforce your message with signs around the school, posts on your school's social media accounts and newsletters to draw further attention to the issue.

How will you bring your campaign to life?

Use the tools in our kit as a starting point to plan your activity, your students can also design their own campaign materials. There's also opportunity to engage your students in additional learning activities throughout a school term or the year.



YOUR CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

We've created some materials that you can use for your campaign or get creative and design your own.

Visit rac.com.au/idlefreeeschools to download your files.



Posters

Download and print

Choose from a series of ready to print posters and insert your own school logo.

Request a set of printed posters

Submit an online form to request a series of our ready printed posters in A3 and A2 sizes.

Get creative

Ask your students to design their own campaign posters to share their messages around your school.



Large scale banners

Hire one of our large banners for free

Make an impact during your campaign and arrange the free hire of a large weather proof banner that can easily be installed along your school fence.

These banners are 2m x 1m and can be attached to school fences that are close to the car park or pick up and drop off area.



Idle Free symbol

The key symbol for your Idle Free School campaign, this can be used as a standalone or added to your campaign materials to make an impact!



Newsletters

Download our template article

Your school newsletter is a powerful channel of communication that can reach your wider school community. To save you time, we've prepared an article you can simply drop into your existing newsletter template.

Share your point of view

Share your own article detailing how exhaust fumes impact the air quality, and let your school community know how your students are getting behind the cause.



**of idling uses more fuel
than restarting the engine.**

Social media

Download and share

We've developed a series of social media tiles that share impactful stats about emissions, air pollution and healthy air.


Get creative

Ask your students to take photos or create short videos that can be shared on social media.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

To maximize the impact of your campaign and encourage positive behavioural change in your school community, engage your students in learning activities throughout a school term or the school year.

- Write a short play, film or animation that can help share your message with a variety of audiences, this can be captured on video and shared online or at an assembly attended by parents.
- Use our curriculum aligned project based learning plans as a base to develop your own class or school healthier air program and campaign.
- Ask your students to get creative designing their own campaign materials such as posters, banners, t-shirt transfer designs or maybe even keyrings.
- Develop an in school competition to increase engagement and reach of your campaign.



Feel free to add your own ideas into the mix. Whatever you think will help empower students to tell your school community that air quality matters.

You can access our online learning resources and campaign materials here:

rac.com.au/idlefree schools



Let's work together for cleaner air.



rac.com.au/idlefreeschools