

Schools protect students against rising air pollution

HAZARDOUS Students asked to wear masks, strenuous outdoor activities shifted to afternoons



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NEW DELHI: Schools in the National Capital have started taking preventive measures like encouraging students to wear masks, restricting outdoor activities on selective days and promoting car-pooling to protect students against pollution.

At DPS RK Puram students are being advised to wear masks while

coming to schools. "We encourage students to wear mask when they come to school. We have asked parents to use school bus and do car pooling for sending their kids to school," said Dr Saini, principal, DPS RK Puram.

Last Monday China had issued a smog "red alert" as air quality figures reached dangerous level of 256

Ironically as per the US Embassy Delhi had an AQI of 286 on the same day. Yet, no alert was sounded.

A study conducted by Greenpeace between January and February in five city schools had shown particulate matter (PM 2.5) inside the schools at 'very unhealthy' level. The concentration of particulate matter was more in the corridors, than in classrooms.

The Shri Ram School (TSRS) has decided to restrict strenuous outdoor

activity on days air quality reaches hazardous levels. "On the basis of objective data we will restrict strenuous outdoor activities on days when the air is hazardous," said Manika Sharma, director of TSRS.

The school has also started a traffic control committee to manage traffic outside its main gate. The members of the committee are given special masks so that they are protected from pollutants.

Tania Joshi, principal of Indian School, said since the school is located near the BRT corridor, the concentration of the pollutants is much higher in the school.

"We have been focusing on creating awareness. Our children have been going to communities around Sadiq Nagar and raising awareness about pollution," said Joshi.

Rima Ailawadi, principal of GD Goenka Model Town, agreed that the number of students reporting bronchitis was on the rise.

"Creating awareness is the best that we can do. Strict implementation of anti-pollution rules is the need of the hour," said Ailawadi.

Vasant Valley School, for instance, is thinking about equipping classrooms with air-purifiers to improve the quality of air students breathe. "We have held talks with experts about installing air-purifiers in classrooms," confirmed Rekha Bakshi, head of junior school. Birla Vidya Niketan is organizing a Car Free Day on December 15 and has advised students to use public transport or opt for car pooling, principal Minakshi Kushwaha said.



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