

# St Joseph's Institution International School Malaysia

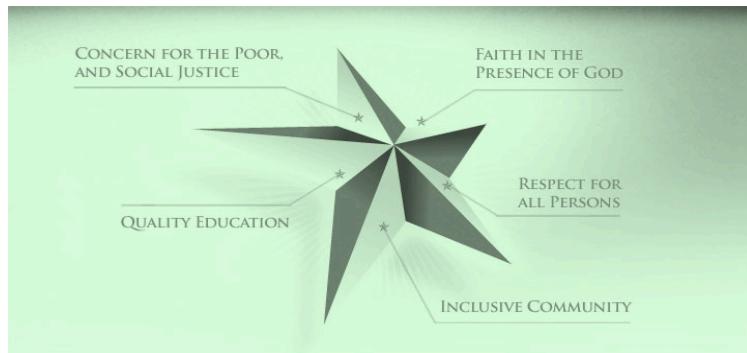
***Enabling youth to learn and to learn how to live, empowering them to become people of integrity and people for others.***



## Haze Policy (For Parents)

Policy Written:	September 2019
Policy Reviewed:	June 2024
Date of Next Review:	June 2026
Revised By:	Gary Cairns (Head of School), Farzleen Nadzirah (Operations and Facilities Coordinator)
Signed By:	 Gary Cairns, Head of School

**This policy is written in the spirit of putting into practice our Lasallian core values**



### Overview

Each year Malaysia can be affected by smoke haze from forest fires in the region. This usually occurs during the period of May to October. The prevailing winds blow the smoke from the fires in Malaysia's direction and this can negatively impact the health of our students and staff, (see **Appendix 1** for effects of smoke haze). Malaysia uses an integrated air quality reporting index, known as the Pollutant Standards Index (PSI). The PSI reflects a total of six pollutants. These are:

1. Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub>)
2. Fine Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)
3. Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>)
4. Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>)
5. Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>)
6. Carbon Monoxide(CO)

The National Environment Agency (NEA) publishes the hourly PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations. These readings are also averaged for the 3-hour PSI and the 24-hour PSI readings.

Information on the Haze Levels can be found from the government at:

<https://apims.doe.gov.my/home.html>

### Incorporating Air Quality Information into School Life

- At SJIS we are very mindful of the health of all the students and staff. Responsibility for this rests with parents, teachers, the nurse and leadership.
- Parents ensure that the nurse is aware of any respiratory conditions that affect their students. The School Nurse ensures that the student medical database is up to date so that teachers are aware of students in their classes who have respiratory conditions, e.g. asthma.

### The School and Governors will...

- Make teachers aware of the guidelines for minimising their health risks on days of smoke haze.
- Monitor the 3-hour PSI levels and implement the appropriate response, (**Appendix 2**).
- Provide staff with up to date medical information on students in their care.
- Communicate expediently with the parents.

### **School Response to Different Air Quality Levels (See Appendix 2)**

#### **For 3-Hourly API, Readings Between 1 and 50**

We monitor the NEA readings, but there is no impact on outside sport and play.

#### **For 3-Hourly API Readings Between 51 and 100**

The Senior Leadership Team and Head of Physical Education are kept aware of the government readings every 3 hours. At this PSI level, added precautions are taken, including ensuring that teachers advise students to:

- Take more drink breaks
- Go to the nurse if they have any breathing issues
- Not participate in strenuous exercise if feeling unwell

#### **The Teaching staff will...**

- Monitor students with known medical issues such as asthma and cardiac conditions. These students may go to the library at break and lunch.
- Advise students to drink more water and if affected to remain indoors during breaks. (Haze may cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat in healthy individuals.)
- Swap outside duties if a staff member with a known medical condition is affected by haze.

#### **The Leadership Team will...**

- Provide reminders to staff about measures to be taken.
- Ensure the policy is implemented effectively.

#### **Parents may...**

Provide masks for their children to wear in school and are able to keep their children at home if they would prefer to do so.

#### **For 3-Hourly API Readings Between 101 and 199**

- The Senior Leadership Team continues to monitor the PSI levels on-site (every 2 hours) and the following occurs:
  - All outdoor activities to cease
  - Sports to be relocated to gym or cancelled
  - Students to remain inside during break and lunch with the air conditioning running
  - Additional guidance from the Ministry of Education, specific to a current haze incident is followed.

#### **For 3-Hourly API Readings Above 200**

- School closure is to occur immediately if the API as per MoE circular dated October 3rd 2023.
- A letter will be sent to parents by 6.00pm on the day before school closure is being considered (subject to guidance from the MoE). This will be based on the monitoring of both current haze readings, as well as trends.
- Parents will be informed by the Head of School of school closure by 6am on the relevant day, based on the 5am haze reading.
- Staff will be informed before parents by the school leadership team or School Governors.

#### **Other policies /documents relevant and to be read in conjunction with this Policy:**

First Aid Policy policy	Health and Safety policy
Staff Handbook ES and HS	Evacuation and Thunder and Lightning Policy

### Appendix 1 - Information on the Effects of Smoke Haze

Health impacts are related to concentrations as well as the duration of exposure, in addition to the health status of the individual. The 24-hour measurements are a reflection of the total exposure of an individual to PM levels. The health advisories adopted by NEA are based on 24-hour PSI and 24-hours PM<sub>2.5</sub> measurements as scientific and epidemiological studies on the health effects of particulate matter have been based on these measurements.

The 3-hour PSI is an indicative index. It is the state of the air quality at a particular time. While there have been few studies done on the health effects of exposure to short-term spikes in PM levels, it is this reading that is most relevant to us at school. We will use the 3-hour PSI index so spikes in PM level will see us take action in line with our policy.

The main pollutant of concern to health during a smoke haze is the fine particulate matter or PM<sub>10</sub> particulate (of size 10 micron and below). The health effect depends on the severity of the smoke haze as described by the PSI (Pollutant Standards Index) reading. At PSI of 101 and above, the air quality is deemed unhealthy.

Respiratory masks, such as N95 masks, are designed to keep out the fine particulate matter and hence protect the wearers from breathing in the smoke haze particles in the air. The mask should be changed when it gets soiled or distorted in shape. Surgical masks and paper masks do not provide adequate protection from the haze particles.

Haze particles can affect the heart and lungs, especially in people who already have chronic heart and lung disease e.g. asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and heart failure.

There may be up to 1-3 day time lag between exposure to haze and health effects and symptoms. N95 masks are not needed for short exposure like commuting from home to school or work, travel from bus-stop to shopping mall. N95 masks are also not needed in an indoor environment.

A healthy person who has to be outdoors for several hours when the air quality is in the hazardous range (PSI >300) may reduce exposure by wearing an N95 mask.

People with chronic lung or heart disease, elderly, and pregnant women should avoid or minimise outdoor activity when the air quality is unhealthy (PSI>200). If they have to be outdoors for several hours, they may reduce exposure by wearing an N95 mask.

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### Appendix 2 - School Response to Different Air Quality Levels

3-Hour PSI	General School Action	Specific Action - Students with Chronic Lung Disease (inc. Asthma) and Heart Disease
<b>≤ 50</b> (Good/Moderate)	Normal activities.	Normal activities.
<b>51-100</b> (Good/Moderate) (On-site monitoring - 3hr)	Students are to be advised to drink more water.	Students with susceptible conditions are monitored and advised to drink more water. If necessary, all breaks are to be indoors.
<b>101-199</b> (Unhealthy) (On-site monitoring - 2hr)	NO outdoor activities.  All breaks to be indoors.	
<b>200 +</b> (Very Unhealthy) (On-site monitoring - 1hr)	School must close immediately (as per government circular dated October 3rd 2023)	

\* When the PSI reading of PM<sub>2.5</sub> is above 200, the MOE / MOH Specific Incident Guidance is followed.