



Anti-Idling Toolkit

Implementation Guide

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Background Information

What is Idling?

Idling happens when a vehicle's engine is running, but the car isn't moving—like when you're waiting in the school pickup line or stopping for a few minutes with the engine still on. Even a few minutes of idling can release harmful exhaust into the air, wasting fuel and contributing to pollution right where children live, learn, and play.

Turning your engine off when parked or waiting (for more than 10 seconds) is one of the easiest ways to reduce emissions and protect community health.

- **Health Impacts:** Higher exposure to ultrafine particulate matter (UFP) - tiny particles from diesel and gasoline emissions that can deeply penetrate the lungs. Because children's lungs are still developing, this exposure increases their risk of respiratory illness, heart disease, and even long-term impacts like reduced lung function.
- **Environmental Impact:** When vehicles idle, they release unnecessary carbon dioxide (CO₂)—a major greenhouse gas that traps heat in the atmosphere. Over time, this contributes to global warming and climate change.
- **Financial Benefits:** Idling wastes fuel, meaning you get [“zero miles per gallon.”](#) It also causes extra wear and tear on your engine, leading to more frequent maintenance and higher repair costs. Turning off your engine saves money and helps the environment.

What is an Idle-Free School?

An *idle-free school* is a place where parents, staff, and bus drivers work together to reduce unnecessary vehicle idling on school property. By committing to being idle-free, schools take a proactive step toward cleaner air, a safer environment, and a healthier start for every student.

Why is this Important for Students?

Every day, thousands of children travel to and from school, often exposed to harmful air pollution along the way. Schools are unique community hubs where small changes can create big impacts. By addressing idling and promoting active travel, we can reduce

harmful exposures, improve community health, and build safer, cleaner school environments.

Anti-Idling Signs and School Safety

Anti-idling signs promote active and safe routes for students travelling to school, supporting health, safety, and environmental goals:



Core Messages

Key messages for the campaign:

1. Turn your car off

If you'll be waiting for more than 10 seconds, switch off your engine. You'll save fuel, protect the air children breathe, and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Every minute your car idles adds pollution directly where kids walk and play.

2. Move away from the curb

After drop-off or pick-up, pull forward or park farther away to keep traffic flowing and reduce congestion around school entrances. This helps improve air quality at the curb—right where students are most exposed.

3. Walk part of the way

Try parking a block or two away and walking with your child. It reduces vehicle emissions near the school, adds a few minutes of exercise to your day, and helps ease traffic for everyone.

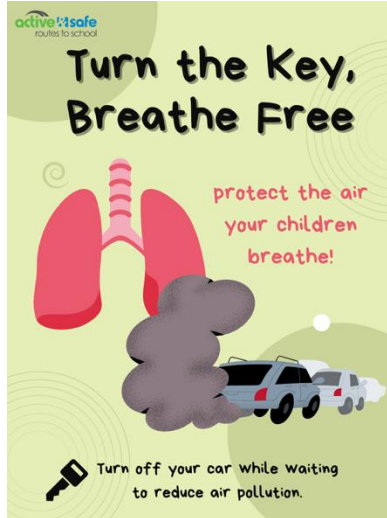
Promotions

Promotional Posters

Schools can display posters to raise awareness about the importance of reducing idling on school property and in high-traffic areas such as:

- Entrances
- Hallways
- Bulletin boards
- Classrooms

Examples of ready-to-use posters are attached below, but students are also encouraged to create their own. Student-made posters can highlight messages about turning off engines, keeping school air clean, and protecting the health of their classmates and community.



Newsletters

Newsletters are a fantastic way to introduce and share important information on anti-idling with students, parents, and the school community. Here is an example of a short, ready-to-use snippet that schools can utilize as a template:

Attention all TVDSB and LDCSB schools! Did you know that just one minute of idling wastes fuel and adds harmful pollution to the air we breathe? Every day, idling cars and buses contribute to poor air quality around our school. This year, we're taking action to reduce pollution and create healthier school zones. We're asking parents, staff, students, and guardians to turn off engines while waiting, park five minutes away and walk, or walk or roll the whole way. Together, we can protect student health, save fuel, and fight climate change by cutting emissions, making our schools cleaner, safer, and more sustainable.

Learn more by visiting us on our website at <http://activesaferoutes.ca/>



School Announcements

School announcements are great for sharing quick and engaging reminders about anti-idling. Here are some simple examples of announcements that can be made during morning announcements over the PA system:

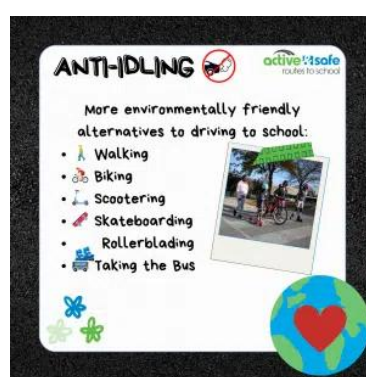
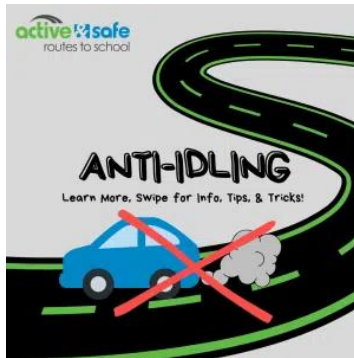
“Good morning! We all want to breathe cleaner air, right? You can help by asking your family to turn off the car instead of letting it idle when dropping you off. Less idling means less pollution, cleaner air, and a healthier school environment for everyone!”

“Let’s take a deep breath of fresh air! Our school is part of the Anti-Idling Campaign. That means we’re working to reduce car pollution around the school. Remind your parents and guardians to shut off the car when waiting, or even better, walk or wheel to school when you can!”

Let’s be idle-free! When you see your family idling in the car, kindly remind them: ‘Hey, let’s turn it off!’ It saves fuel, keeps the air clean, and helps our whole community breathe easier. Small changes make a big impact!”



Social Media Messaging



Social media is an excellent platform to spread the word about anti-idling signs to a wider audience, including parents, students, and the broader community. Consider including pictures of the anti-idling signs so people know what to look out for. Here are some examples of captions that can be used for post:

1. Swipe for anti-idling tips! 🚗🌍 Let's protect the planet & keep communities healthy! 🌍🌱
#AntiIdling #ProtectOurPlanet #HealthyCommunities Learn more: [🔗 Active & Safe Routes to School – Idling Info](#) 📺 [Idle Free for the Kids Video](#)
2. Save fuel & protect our air! 🌍🌱 #AntiIdling #SaveFuel #CleanAir #ProtectOurPlanet
Learn more:
Want to learn more about anti-idling? Check out these resources: [🔗 Active & Safe Routes to School – Idling Info](#) 📺 [Watch the Idle Free for the Kids Video](#)
3. Save fuel and protect our air! 🌍🌱 #AntiIdling #SaveFuel #CleanAir #ProtectOurPlanet
#HealthyCommunities Want to learn more about anti-idling? Check out these resources: [🔗 Active & Safe Routes to School – Idling Info](#) 📺 [Watch the Idle Free for the Kids Video](#)

Social media handles you may choose to use:

London District Catholic School Board – [@ldcsb](#)

Thames Valley District School Board - [@thamesvalleydsb](#)

Human Environmental Analysis Laboratory (Western University) – [@theHEALab](#)

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services – [@mybigyellowbus](#)

Southwestern Public Health - [@swpublichealth](#)

Middlesex-London Health Unit - [@mlhu.official](#)

Check out the resource packages section at the end of the toolkit for ready-to-use social media messaging, downloadable graphics, and more!

Engagement Activities

- **Lesson Plan (Grade 5-8):** An activity where students can get hands-on practice calculating CO₂ emissions from idling vehicles.
- **Step it Up! (all grades):** Students are encouraged to choose active methods of travel to reduce idling through an incentive program.
- **Anti-Idling Encouragement Cards (all grades):** Students will print their own encouragement cards that can be handed out to drivers who leave their engines running while in school drop off/pick up areas.

Lesson Plan - Calculating CO₂ Emissions

This worksheet and accompanying PowerPoint help students observe and measure idling behaviours in their school's Kiss & Ride area. The worksheet includes a simple data table and conversion chart that allow students to record how many cars and buses idle, estimate how long they idle, and calculate the resulting fuel wasted and CO₂ emissions.

The accompanying PowerPoint introduces the concept of idling and walks students step-by-step through how to complete the worksheet.


See Toolkit Resources below to find the PowerPoint and accompanying worksheet!

Kiss & Ride Idling Data Worksheet
(Adapted from Clean Air Partnership, 2009)

Goal: Track how many cars and buses idle at the drop-off, how long they idle, and calculate fuel wasted and CO₂ emitted.

Step 1: Observe and Record

Choose a 10-minute window during busy times (e.g., morning or end of day drop-off).
Count the number of cars and buses that are idling in the Kiss & Ride area.
Record how long they idle (approximate if needed).



Step 2: Use These Conversion Factors

Vehicle Type	Fuel Wasted /10 min	Fuel Wasted /1 min	CO ₂ Emitted /10 min	CO ₂ /min
Car	0.1 L	0.01 L	0.24 kg	0.02 kg
Bus	0.67 L	0.067 L	1.90 kg	0.19 kg

Examples

- A car idles for 3 minutes → 0.01 x 3 = 0.03 L of fuel wasted, 0.02 x 3 = 0.06 kg CO₂ emitted
- A bus idles for 7 minutes → 0.47 L fuel wasted, 1.33 kg CO₂ emitted

Step 3: Summarize your Data

- Total Vehicles Observed:
- Total Fuel Wasted:
- Total CO₂ Emitted:

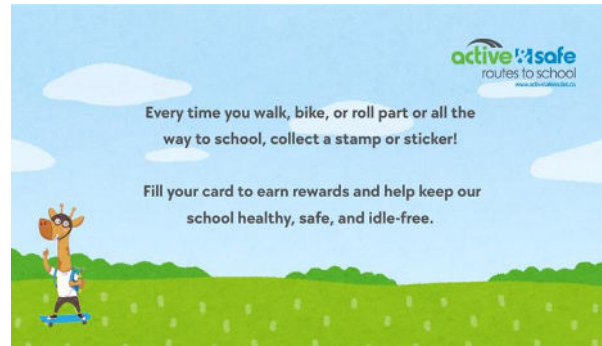
Example Statement: "During a 10-minute Kiss & Ride observation, 12 cars idled for an average of 5 minutes. That's 0.6 L of fuel wasted and 1.44 kg of CO₂ released – just in 10 minutes!"

Step 4: Reflect & Share

- What difference would this make in fuel saved and CO₂ avoided?
- Share your results with classmates, staff, and parents to raise awareness

Student Incentive Program

The Step It Up! program encourages students to walk, bike, or roll to school more often by tracking their trips with a fun stamp card. Each time a student walks part or all of the way to school, they receive a stamp or sticker on their card. Once the card is full, they can enter a prize draw, earn a certificate, or receive small rewards like school merchandise, healthy snacks, or recognition at a school assembly.



1. Distribute Stamp Cards:

Each student receives a “Step It Up!” card with spaces for 8 stamps.

2. Collect Stamps:

Volunteers, teachers, or student leaders stamp cards at designated “check-in spots” near the school entrance or a safe walking zone.

3. Reward Milestones:

- 3 stamps = recognition in class or a sticker
- 6 stamps = small prize (e.g., pencil, reusable water bottle)
- Full stamp card goes towards entry into a grand prize draw (e.g., family fitness pass, local business gift card)

4. Celebrate Participation:

End the campaign with a “Walk to School Celebration Day” highlighting total miles walked, emissions saved, and healthy habits gained!

Parent Outreach Activity

The *Anti-Idling Encouragement Cards* activity gives students a hands-on way to support their community. Students hand out small cards to drivers outside the school, offering friendly reminders to turn off engines, park farther away, or walk or roll to school. Beforehand, they will take part in a short PowerPoint presentation about the harms of idling and practice how to approach drivers respectfully. With a supervisor’s guidance, students then put their learning into action to help create cleaner air and a healthier school environment.



These resources act as starting points for the education and promotion efforts at your school. We encourage you to work with your school committees to think of creative ways to promote anti-idling.

Resources

For quick access to educational content on anti-idling for students, parents, and drivers, click the icons below to view materials from the city, our partners, or ASRTS. For more information, visit our website at <http://activesaferoutes.ca/>.

Resource Packages

Access ready-to-use resource packages designed to support lessons, school initiatives, and community outreach on the importance of reducing idling. These materials are suitable for educators, administrators, and program leaders.

Toolkit Resources

Social Media Posts

Educational Videos

Click the buttons below to explore a variety of video resources developed by ASRTS for children. For more detailed and current information, visit our website at activesaferoutes.ca/educationvideos.

Idling Free for the Kids

Benefits of Walking & Wheeling

External Resources

Explore additional tools, research, and materials from trusted organizations dedicated to improving air quality, promoting active transportation, and supporting healthier school environments.

City of London

Natural Resources Canada

Idle-Free Campaign Kit