

# Tips for Improving Indoor Air Quality at School

Limit exposure to COVID-19, harmful chemicals, and wildfire smoke by implementing these strategies in schools and classrooms.



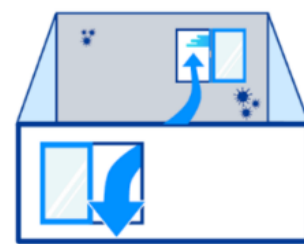
## Why is indoor air quality important?

Good ventilation and air filtration in schools are very important for reducing COVID-19 and other diseases that spread through the air. Improving indoor air quality also creates a healthier school environment by limiting exposure to [harmful chemicals](#) and [wildfire smoke](#). We know that better air quality at school is associated with better student performance and attendance.

## Tips for Improving School Air Quality Today:

### Open Doors and Windows (Natural Ventilation)

Opening windows and hallway doors on opposite sides of a room to create a cross draft is the best way to naturally introduce outside air. Use [CO<sub>2</sub> monitors](#) to determine if enough outdoor air is being brought into a classroom from natural or mechanical ventilation. CO<sub>2</sub> levels above 800 parts per million (ppm) can indicate more outdoor air is needed. *Note: While natural ventilation can be an important tool, it should not be used when outdoor air quality is poor. In general, mechanical ventilation is easier to control than natural ventilation.*



### Add Portable Air Cleaning Devices (PACs)

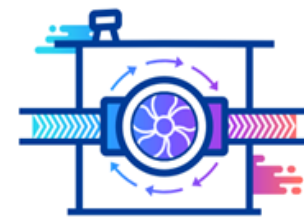
Schools can add [portable air cleaning devices \(PACs\) to classrooms](#) to supplement mechanical and natural ventilation. Purchase PACs that are appropriately sized and circulate air through High Efficiency Particulate Air or "HEPA" filters. Most PACs will list the intended room size. Avoid devices that advertise "ionizer" or "ozone" technology. PACs are also helpful during wildfire smoke events when windows and doors need to be closed.



## Tips for Improving School Air Quality Longer Term:

### Optimize or Upgrade Your Mechanical Ventilation (HVAC) System

The HVAC system reduces hazards in the air by pulling in outdoor air and circulating indoor air through filters. Work with facility managers to optimize your school's system by reviewing the [CDPH Guidance for Ventilation](#). Schools can use [federal stimulus funding](#) to work with indoor air quality or ventilation consultants to assess whether their system needs an upgrade.



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