

[Name. Head Teacher/Governor/Trust/Local Authority]
[Office Address]

Dear [Name]

Re: Air Pollution Inside Our Local Schools

I am a concerned [parent/grandparent and/or member of our community]. I would like to request your assistance with improving the air quality inside our local schools.

Indoor air is known to be up to five times more polluted than outdoor air. Breathing poor quality air is a well-documented risk to children's immediate and long-term health, as well as cognition. A typical British school has poor ventilation (with high levels of CO₂) and approximately four times as many occupants as an adult office space. Therefore, it is unsurprising that illness is the leading cause of all school absences in England for the 2023/2024 school year.

With simple measures and collaboration, immediate mitigations could be made to improve pupil and staff health. It would also consequently address attendance and enhance children's educational performance.

The World Health Organisation asserts that we remain in a pandemic and COVID-19 is an airborne virus. This is corroborated by expert witnesses for The UK COVID Inquiry who state that the virus is capable of lingering in the air for hours and schools are "... a big vector of transmission". Adults and children continue to develop chronic ill health due to viral infections such as COVID-19, for which there is no cure and symptoms can last indefinitely. Clinically vulnerable families remain at an increased and significant risk of harm and mortality.

Additionally, according to recent research into asthma, there is a 300% rise in paediatric hospital admissions during the month of September when children return to poorly ventilated classrooms. This is where children spend most of their time outside of the home and are exposed to asthma triggers such as viruses, dust mites and pollen. Indoor air is also penetrated by outdoor pollutants from wood burning, vehicle emissions and heavy industry. Further information can be found supported by experts on The Safe Air School's website linked here: safeairschools.org.

Schools are at the heart of our community. Our children have a right to be protected in these institutions and to be learning in safe, healthy environments.

Please can you raise this as an urgent issue and advocate for improved air quality inside classrooms:

- Mandate review of CO₂ monitors and take necessary action as advised by the government. It is recognised across the UK that CO₂ monitors are not being used and no meaningful action is taken when limits are breached
- Where senior leadership are unable to bring CO₂ levels below recommended limits as advised in guidance, instruct ventilation specialists to audit school buildings via their Local Authority or Trust. UK SAGE recommend maintaining CO₂ levels below 800ppm. Most classrooms will find this difficult to achieve because they are high-density and reliant on opening windows
- Supplement classroom ventilation with portable air filter units where appropriate, with future upgrades to mechanical ventilation system installation
- Change the culture of presenteeism: advise keeping symptomatic children away from schools and refrain from pressuring families to send them in

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response and hope to see positive changes in our community soon.

Yours sincerely,
[Your Name]

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Sources and References

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13. <https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/media/press-releases/number-children-hospital-life-threatening-asthma-attacks-could-quadruple-they>
14. <https://neu.org.uk/advice/health-and-safety/workplace-conditions/ventilation-schools-and-colleges>
15. <https://neu.org.uk/latest/library/how-use-co2-monitors-poster>
16. Boris Johnson. UK Covid-19 Inquiry, Module 2, Hearing 7th December 2023. “The fact is that sadly schools are terrific reservoirs of the virus and in the cold winter months they were going to be a big vector of transmission”
17. The Safe Air Schools Foundation website. safeairschools.org