

Encinitas

UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

WALK TO SCHOOL AND IDLE-FREE ZONES – CLEAN AIR AND ACTIVE STUDENTS



Walk to School Programs
and Idle-Free Zones

PROTECT THE AIR AROUND YOUR SCHOOL

Car idling vehicles release air pollutants (commonly called soot) in areas where students are entering or exiting the school building. Children are especially vulnerable because they breathe faster than adults, inhale more air per pound of body weight (50%), and stand closer to tailpipe level. Car idling contributes to health issues such as asthma, lung problems, allergies and even heart disease.

Vehicles that idle 10 minutes per day waste more than 29 gallons of fuel per year. One anti-idling group estimates that the United States wastes 3.8 million gallons of gasoline this way every day, and annually that adds up to 1.4 billion gallons, which emit 13 million tons of carbon dioxide.

Car idling is an important contributor to climate change and smog. Just 10 seconds of idling uses more gasoline than restarting your car. Idling also harms your engine and exhaust system; increases maintenance costs by leaving fuel residues that contaminate motor oil and make spark plugs dirty.

EARLY MORNING EXERCISE AND MINDS THAT ARE READY TO LEARN

Walking is known to improve academic performance. A brisk walk to school leads to children arriving to school brighter and more alert for class in the morning. Walking reduces student stress and increases creativity, both of which will help a child's performance at school.

Physical activity promotes both gross and fine motor skills development, which then leads to advancing neurological connections in the brain. The increased brain activity in

children creates neural pathways that assist in the brain's ability to learn and the child's overall academic performance.

Children who get physical activity before class tend to be more on task and fidget less. This is true for both boys and girls. It has also been shown to benefit children who have trouble paying attention. Their focus is improved, and their minds more alert.

Walking gets children outdoors and provides an opportunity for daily exercise and connection to their environment. Obesity rates have skyrocketed in North America, so incorporating physical activity into a child's daily routine is a good place to start fighting it. As physical fitness improves, so does academic performance, according to the California Department of Education.

Kids are less active today, and 23% get no physical activity at all. One mile of walking each way to and from school is equal to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the daily recommended 60 minutes of physical activity.