



Air Quality Flag Program – Before you begin

My name is Glynn Brothen, project coordinator for the Air Quality Flag Program. I'll be your main point of contact during this pilot. Before the Air Quality Flag Program begins at your school, please review the following information, which includes:

- Summary of the program.
- How to access your school's web page on airqualityflags.ca and how to raise the flag online and onsite.
- How your school will be supported through the program coordinator and resources.

The Air Quality School Flag Program is the first of its kind in Canada. The focus of this BC-based program pilot is to;

- Raise awareness about the relationship between air and health within school communities.
- Increase understanding about actions people can take during times of poor air quality.
- Encourage people to take action to help protect the air.

We're lucky to live in a part of the world that enjoys clean air most of the time. The Air Quality Flag Program encourages people to be active outside and provides school communities with ideas on how to remain active if the air quality is poor.

This program is not intended to provide personal health advice related to local air quality conditions. Air quality and health advisories are issued by the BC Ministry of Environment and local or regional Medical Health Officers.

This document provides you information on:

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Air Quality Flag Program website – home page:

- Information about the AQHI
- History of the program
- Program partners
- Air pollution and health.
- List of participating schools
- Your school web page to raise the flag
- Your school blog
- Curriculum-based resources
- Lessons & Activities
- Leadership

the air quality flag program

home about » participate » resources » blog contact

Fly a coloured flag to tell your school what kind of air day it is.

It's easy It's healthy It's educational

The Air Quality Flag Program is the first of its kind in Canada and is being offered at a select number of BC elementary schools. Participating takes a few minutes each day and encourages students, staff and parents to think more about air, its connection to health, and how to be better stewards of air. [Learn more about participating.](#)

The Air Quality Flag Program for schools encourages outdoor activity when the air quality is good, and provides school communities with ideas on how to remain active if the air quality is poor.

The Air Quality Flag Program for schools is the first of its kind in Canada, and will be [piloted in communities](#) across British Columbia.

Fly a blue flag to tell your school it's a good air day for everyone to get active outside.
 A grey flag means it's a good air day for most people to get active.
 Fly a brown flag to tell your school it's an OK air day for some, but others might feel symptoms if they are getting active.
 A red flag means there is a lot of air pollution today. Everyone should take it easy.

Air Quality Flag Program for Schools

YouTube video to introduce the program to students.

- Blog posts from the Program Coordinator

- YouTube video to introduce the program to students.

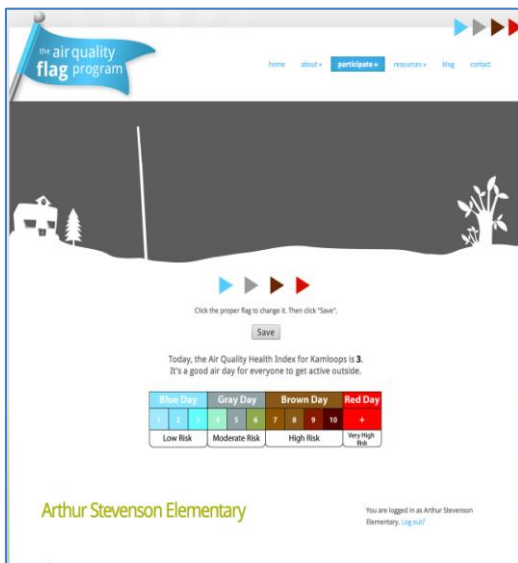




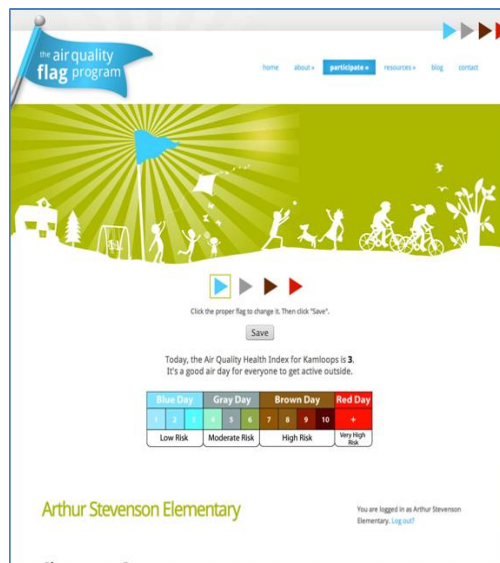
Raising the Air Quality Flag in a virtual environment:

The daily process of raising the flag should take no more than 5-10 minutes each day. To help facilitate this, you can:

1. Prepare a flag bearer schedule – each day a student(s) from your class can raise the flag online and onsite.
2. Have the student go to www.airqualityflags.ca and navigate to the “participate” tab. Choose “participating schools” from the drop down list and click on your school.
3. On the school page, have the student login to raise the flag. The coordinator will provide your school its own login via email prior to December 20. This is the only page students can access to edit or add content.
4. Your page reports the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) for your community each day. The data is pulled directly from Environment Canada. Students are invited to pick the flag that corresponds with the AQHI for the day. This page is refreshed automatically each night, so the next day a flag can be chosen again.
5. Once you’ve chosen the appropriate flag for the day, click “save”.
6. Below the flag section on your web page is a comment section. Students are encouraged to blog each time they raise the flag. They can write about air quality, pollution, what kind of activities they’re doing for that day, etc. Question prompts are also available for teachers to share with students. These question prompts are available on the [resources](#) page. Students should not identify themselves when posting. Each time your student posts a comment the coordinator will review and accept it.



This is what your school flag page looks like before raising the Air Quality Flag.



This is what your school flag page looks like after raising the Air Quality Flag.





Raising the Air Quality Flag on-site:

Make sure to locate the pole in an area with ample viewership, for example, near the front door. As each school is different, it is up to the schools/teachers to decide on the best location for your flags, inside or out.

Special Notes:

- If there is an air quality event in your community that is driving the AQHI to moderate or high categories (poor air quality), the program coordinator will notify you and your school.

Short summary of resources:

- **Coordinator Handbook:** The coordinator for this program is the teacher or contact person from a specific school. The handbook can be used as a reference guide for the program.
- **Learning Stations:** Healthy living and risk assessment curriculum-linked activities for Grades 5 & 6 which can be adapted to suit other grade levels. For example, in the exercise “jumping to conclusions” - students compare air quality in their community, to another community in Canada. The exercise features a worksheet with questions for students to answer. For lower grades, the worksheet could be completed as a class.
- **Clean Air Heroes:** Additional curriculum-linked materials for Grades 5 & 6 developed by Environment Canada.
- **Letter to Parents:** This is a resource to support communication between you and your students’ parents. It also supplies coordinator contact information if parents want to know more about the program.
- **Summary:** Provides an overview of the program. It can be used in conjunction with the parent letter.
- **FAQ & Terminology:** To supplement lesson plans on air quality.
- **Air Quality Video:** To introduce your students to the program.
- **Stewardship:** A resource to spur ideas among students on what they can do to help protect the air.
- **Surveys:** Pre and post program surveys will be provided to teachers and parents of students participating in the program. These electronic surveys form the research component of this pilot project to measure changes in awareness and understanding about air quality, its connection to health and the Air Quality Health Index. They are anonymous and take 5-10 minutes to complete.

