

Dear Parents/Carers,

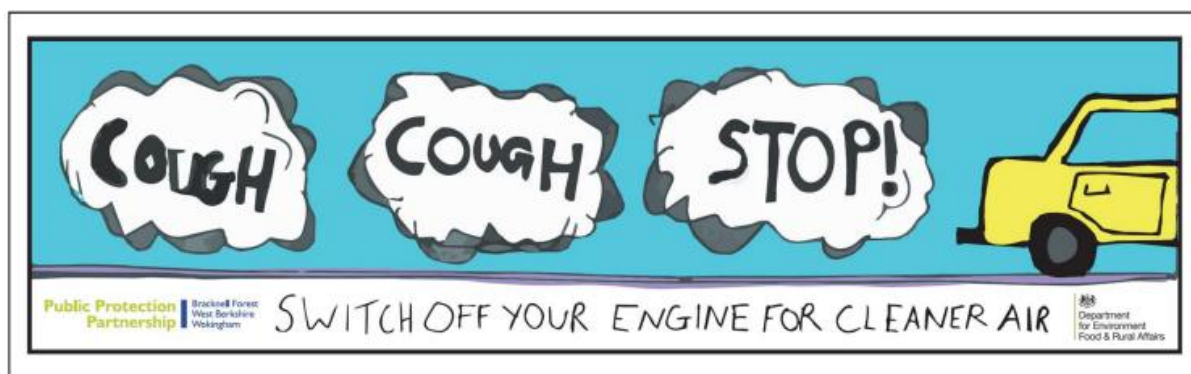
The quality of the air we breathe is important as it can have a big impact on our health. Air pollution is a serious problem, but the good news is we can all work together to reduce it. We are working alongside the Public Protection Partnership representing the local council and Defra to do our bit to create cleaner air for everyone. With this in mind, what is the most accessible source of air pollution that parents/carers can combat?

Idling is one of the main sources of air pollution that can be avoidable and that we can do something about, especially around schools and town centres. In its simplest of terms, idling is the “*act of leaving your car engine on, while your car is unmoving and stationary*”¹. There is a specific rule against engine idling within the Highway Code, indicating that one “*must not leave a parked vehicle unattended with the engine running or leave a vehicle engine running unnecessarily while that vehicle is stationary on a public road*”². So in simple terms, when you’re stopped at a light, turn off your engine, you can avoid any offences, save fuel and reduce emissions.

- Research has shown that children are exposed to higher doses of pollution especially during school runs (when parents drop off their children and collect them from school)³.
- Children can also be exposed to higher levels of pollution when they are in the school grounds and playgrounds of a school, especially if a school is near a busy road. Idling cars can produce emissions, which may be particularly prevalent around schools when parents drop off their children and collect them.

Idling fact: A single idling car can release up to 150 balloons worth of harmful chemicals per minute. These chemicals and particulates can then be blown towards people, schools and houses and worsen the air quality. What you as parents/carers do about it?

- A very simple way to combat idling is to turn your car off when you drop your children off at school.
- Consider car sharing with a number of different families when dropping off children to and from school and to events to reduce emissions when travelling.
- Consider the benefits of walking/cycling to the school when you drop your children off.
- Allow your children to walk or scoot to school if you live close enough.



¹ Warrantydirect (2023). Why Should Engine Idling Be Avoided, Will You Be Fined For It And What Can You Do To Avoid It? [online]. Available from: <https://www.warrantydirect.co.uk/blog/engine-idling.html> [Accessed: May 2023].

² Comparethemarket (2023). Engine idling: the impact on the environment and laws you may not be aware of [online]. Available from: <https://www.comparethemarket.com/car-insurance/content/engine-idling/> [Accessed June 2023].

³ UNICEF (2023). The Toxic School Run: How Toxic Air is Putting Childrens Health in Danger [online]. Available from: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/publications/the-toxic-school-run/> [Accessed: May 2023].