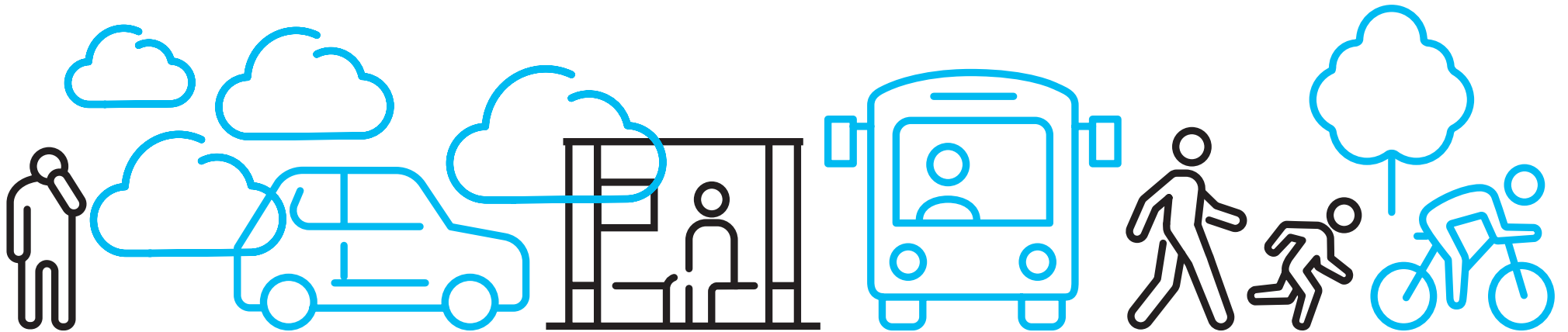


A city-wide
approach to tackling
air pollution

#brumbreathes

Switch Off School Streets

A toolkit for schools



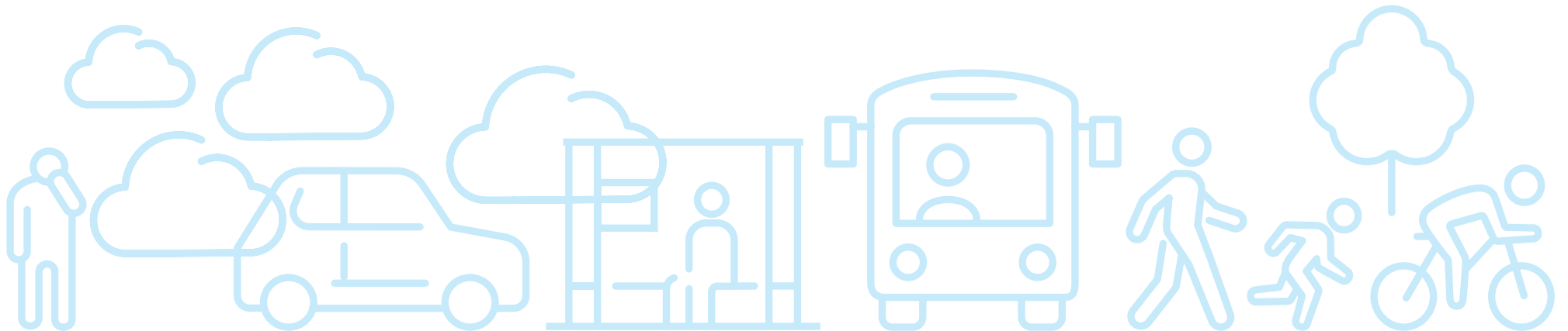
Making a positive difference

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Entry in the School Switch Off poster competition from Sladefield Infant School.





Switch Off School Streets

Foreword



Our Switch Off School Streets campaign is about putting children and families first, helping to reduce air pollution and making it cleaner and healthier for them to walk, cycle or scoot to and from school.

Air pollution is a major problem here in Birmingham and the school gate is a location where we are particularly exposed to this. As the father of young children myself, I know that we simply cannot stand by and do nothing.

We do encourage people to walk, cycle or scoot to school whenever they can, but we realise people may sometimes need to drop off or pick up their children from school by car.

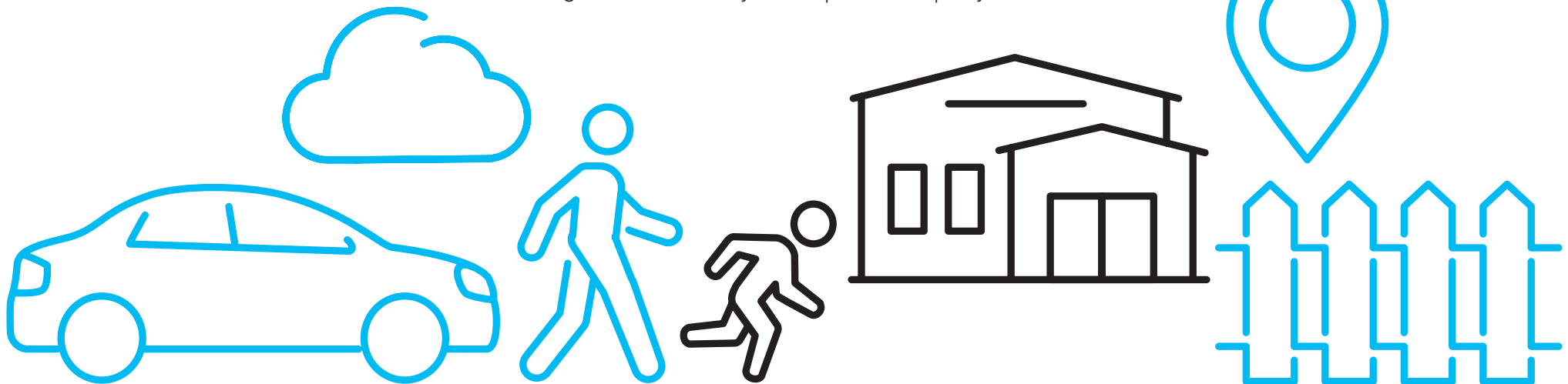
This campaign demonstrates how one small everyday change can make a big difference.

When you do need to use your car, please support our Switch Off campaign by simply turning off your engine when stationary. This improves the quality of

air both inside and outside of your car. You can make a real difference and help improve the quality of the air we all breathe.

This is one of a number of things we are doing to tackle air pollution and encourage people to make greener travel choices so that every school in the city can be a clean air safe haven for our children.

Councillor Waseem Zaffar MBE
Cabinet Member for
Transport and Environment



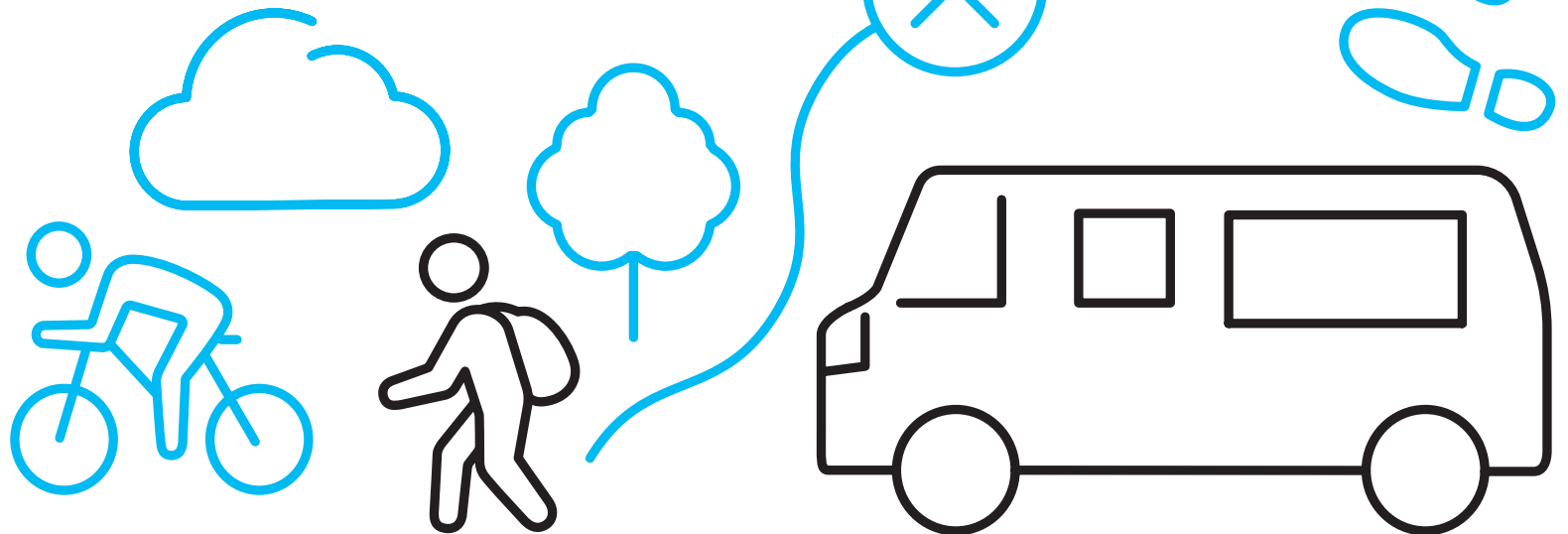
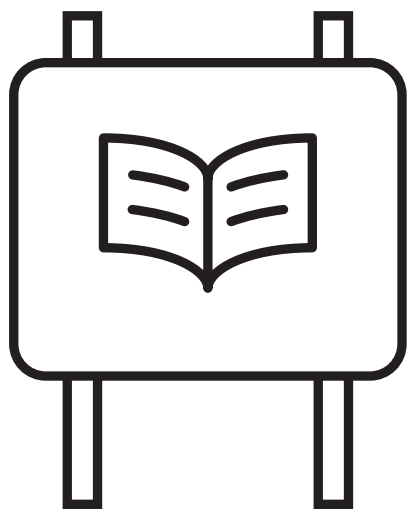
Introduction

Air pollution affects everyone in Birmingham, but especially children. Studies have shown that children in high pollution areas are four times more likely to have reduced lung function when they become adults.

Transport is responsible for around 80% of pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and the school gate is a location where we are particularly exposed to this. Pollutants from vehicle exhaust fumes are linked to health issues such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, lung cancer and other serious health conditions.

The good news is that small changes can make a big difference – and we can all play our part! Improving air quality will mean people, especially children, live healthier lives.

That's why we're calling on all schools in Birmingham to take action and join us in tackling air pollution caused by idling vehicles. Your actions really can change the air that people breathe.



What is idling?

Leaving the car engine running when stationary, often referred to as 'idling', is a common occurrence around many schools and causes high levels of air pollution.

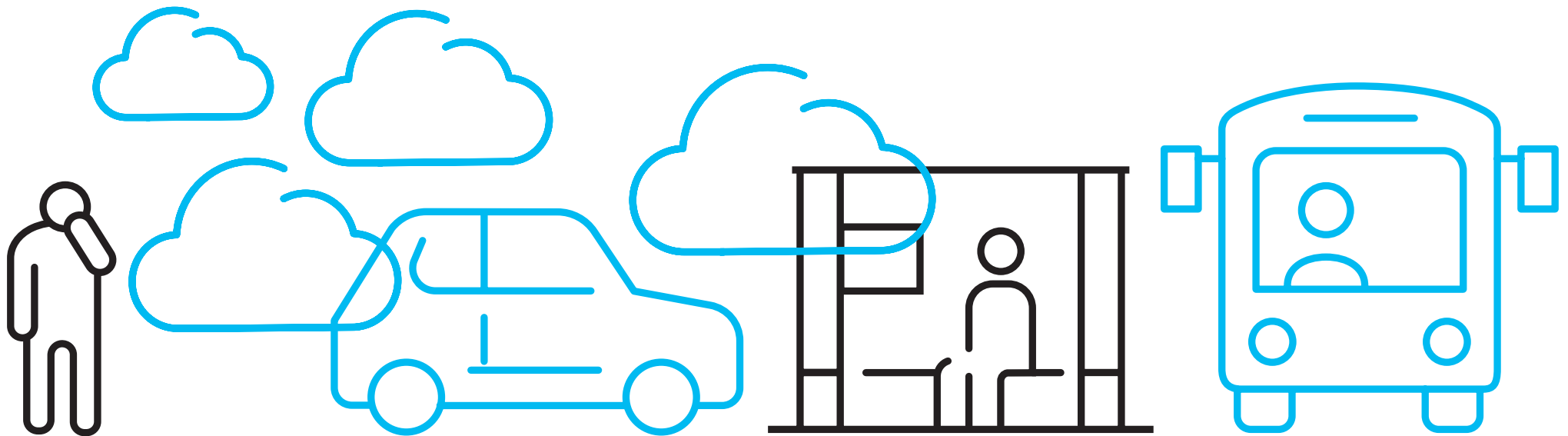
This 'idling' means that a high concentration of fumes are released into the air which is then breathed in by pupils, parents and teachers (and anyone else in the area).

Vehicle exhaust fumes are damaging to everyone's health, but this especially affects younger children as their bodies are still developing. They also breathe faster than adults, tend to take in more air relative to their body weight, and are generally at a lower level (either when walking or in a buggy) and therefore nearer to the exhaust fumes.

Every child should be able to breathe clean air. This Switch Off School Streets toolkit will help your school to run a campaign to encourage drivers to switch off their engines when stationary, such as outside the school gates.

We can only make the air cleaner with the help of schools and communities like you.

Thank you for your support!



Modeshift STARS

Before you start your Switch Off campaign, make sure you've signed up to Modeshift STARS.

Modeshift STARS is a national award scheme which supports schools to create a travel plan promoting safer, greener, healthier travel. Schools can then use this to work towards bronze, silver and gold accreditation.

Encouraging walking, cycling or scooting to school helps reduce the number of cars on the roads – and is the best way to make the air cleaner for everyone. The Modeshift STARS scheme includes lots of initiatives to promote active travel.

Your Switch Off campaign can be included in your action plan and many of the ideas and activities in this toolkit will count towards your accreditation.

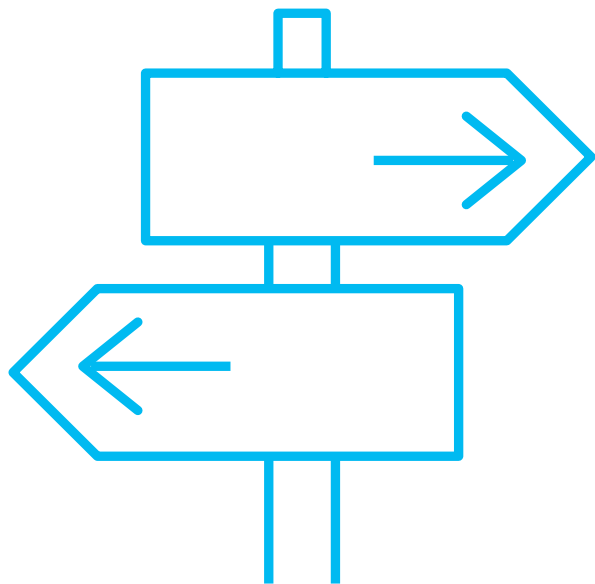
For further information please visit:

birmingham.gov.uk/modeshiftstars



Planning your switch off campaign

Organising a Switch Off campaign doesn't mean a lot of work but if you follow the simple steps opposite it can make the air a whole lot cleaner! Resources to support these steps are included with this toolkit.



Understand why this issue is so important

The more you understand about air pollution the more you will be able to educate others and change behaviour. Our FREE Clean Air Cops CPD training programme supports school staff, parents and community champions to highlight the importance of having clean air. Lesson plans and colourful homework books are provided, ensuring that the message is also taken home to parents and carers. To find out more and book a place please email us at connected@birmingham.gov.uk.

Decide who will run the Switch Off campaign at your school

This could include teachers, other staff, parents, local residents and of course pupils. Remember – children are powerful influencers who can greatly affect how drivers think and ultimately act. Perhaps you have a School Council or Eco Team who can help to organise this? Try to involve the whole school community in your campaign wherever possible – this toolkit contains lots of ideas and resources to plan your activities and get everyone involved.

Spread the word about your Switch Off campaign

It is vital to widely promote your campaign both within the school and externally. Holding a clean air themed assembly is a great way of engaging pupils in this issue. You can use any communication channels you have available, such as notice boards, newsletters, letter to parents/guardians, text alerts, website, or social media – use #brumbreathes so we can share your messages! Content provided in this toolkit can be adapted to suit your school. You may also like to put up a banner up on the school railings.

Observe the situation outside the school by carrying out a simple survey

Count the number of idling vehicles outside your school at the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up for a week before starting your campaign. Use the 'No Idling' survey sheet to record your data. If you then carry out the same survey after running your campaign you will be able to measure its impact. The number of people walking or cycling to school instead of driving could also be used for this – Modeshift STARS can help you to carry out pupil travel surveys and record the data from these.

Activity ideas

Here are some simple actions to get you started that you could use or adapt to discourage idling and reduce vehicle emissions around your school. This will create a more pleasant environment for everyone which could then encourage others to walk, cycle or scoot to school instead.

Creative activity or competition

Tap into your children's creativity by getting them to make Switch Off posters, design leaflets or even write poems. This is an effective way of educating children (and parents) about the importance of clean air and the harmful effects of idling. It allows them to portray the key messages in a way that can be more powerful than even the most carefully crafted marketing campaign! Encourage pupils to go big, bold and bright to help get your Switch Off message across. You may even want to run this activity as a competition with prizes; winning entries could be made into a banner for the school railings or used to reach a wider audience through your website or social media. Don't forget to use your Clean Air Cops books for ideas!

Clean Air Parade

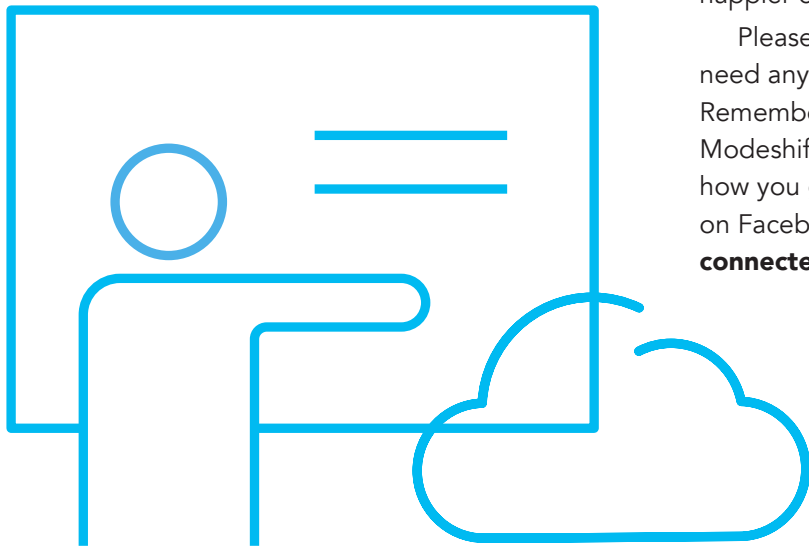
Staging a mini parade can help everyone to understand the benefits of switching off their engines. Get pupils to create posters that can be mounted onto lightweight placards and encourage them to come up with a slogan or a short song for added impact. Assemble children in the school playground or outside the school gates (if you consider it safe to do so) to hold their mini parade at the start or end of the school day when others are congregating. Balloons, bubbles, windsocks and anything else that uses air can add visual impact to your campaign and highlight the importance of clean air. Remember to take photos or videos to help your message reach a wider audience through your website or social media.



Activity ideas continued...

Sign Switch Off Pledges

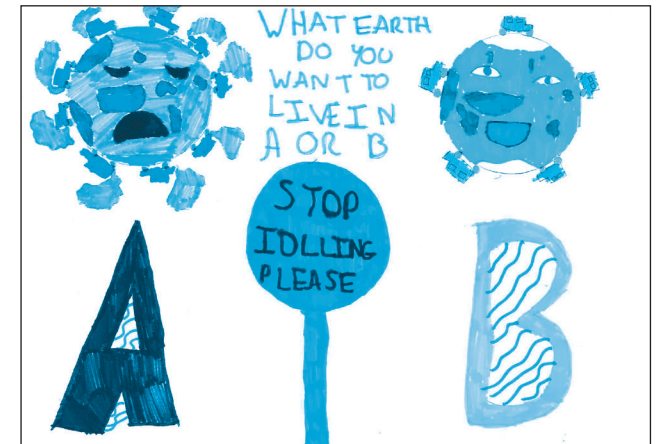
Making a pledge encourages people to commit to be part of this change. Pupils can colour in and personalise the Switch Off pledge postcard provided in this toolkit to ask drivers to commit to turning off their engines when stationary. This can be done as part of an event such as the mini-parade or sent home to parents/guardians to sign and return to school. Why not create your own pledge tree using recycled materials and share your personalised 'Switch Off' messages in the school entrance hall?



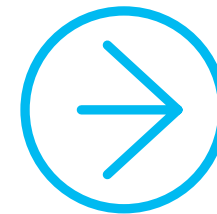
Junior Clean Air Cops

Recruit a team of pupils who can act as Junior Clean Air Cops for your school and be a visible presence at the school gates to introduce the campaign to everyone. They can give out information about this issue, reward those who are already walking or cycling to school and thank drivers for switching off their engines. We've produced some Switch Off flyers and thank you slips that can be used to support this along with window stickers that can be given out as a sign of appreciation for helping to make the school street a cleaner, healthier and happier environment.

Please let us know if you have any questions or need any support with your Switch Off campaign. Remember to include everything you do in your Modeshift STARS action plan, and let us know how you get on via Birmingham Connected on Facebook and Twitter or email connected@birmingham.gov.uk.



Entry in the School Switch Off poster competition from Topcliffe Academy.



Additional resources

There is lots of other information and resources available to help you with your Switch Off campaign.



Clean Air Day school resources

<https://www.cleanairday.org.uk/free-resources/schools>

Friends of the Earth

<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/clean-air/clean-air-campaign-reports>

Greenpeace

<https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/challenges/air-pollution/> (includes an Air Pollution Teacher's Pack
<https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/teach-pollution>)

Idling Action London

<https://idlingaction.london/>

Living Streets

<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/about-us/our-work-in-action/tackling-idling-in-london>

London Sustainability Exchange

<http://www.lsx.org.uk/our-work/air-quality/>
(includes their Cleaner Air 4 Schools programme
<http://www.lsx.org.uk/projects/cleaner-air-4-primary-schools/>)

Sustrans

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/campaigns/air-quality/>

Unicef

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/clean-air-child-health-air-pollution/>

Other useful links:

Birmingham City Council

<https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/cleanair/>

Brum Breathes

<https://www.brumbreathes.co.uk/>

Appendices



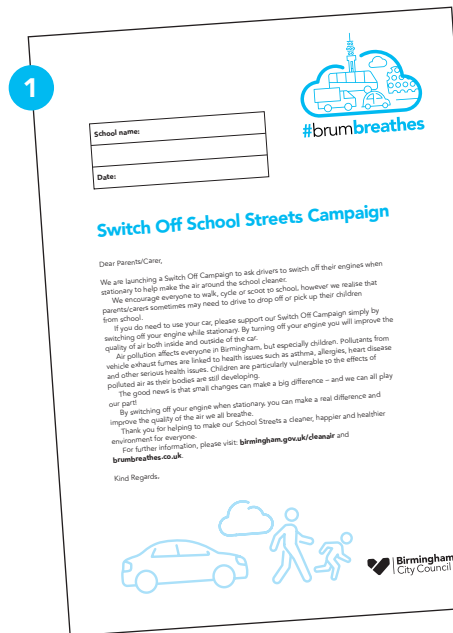
Campaign support

On pages 13 and 14, you'll find additional resources to support your Switch Off campaign – visit: <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/switchoffschoolstreets>

1. Example letter to parent
2. Idling survey
3. Switch Off postcard pledge
4. Junior Clean Air Cops thank you slips
5. Flyer*
6. Car window sticker*
7. Switch Off banner*

* If you would like to order any flyers or car window stickers (see overleaf) please contact **connected@birmingham.gov.uk**. We also have a limited stock of Switch Off banners available.

1



School name: _____
Date: _____

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Switch Off School Streets Campaign

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

We are launching a Switch Off Campaign to ask drivers to switch off their engines when stationary to help make the air around the school cleaner. We encourage everyone to walk, cycle or scoot to school, however we realise that parents/caregivers sometimes may need to drive to drop off or pick up their children from school.

If you do need to use your car, please support our Switch Off Campaign simply by switching off your engine while stationary. By turning off your engine you will improve the quality of air both inside and outside of the car.

Air pollution affects everyone in Birmingham, but especially children. Pollutants from vehicle exhaust fumes are linked to health issues such as asthma, allergies, heart disease and other serious health issues. Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of pollution as their bodies are still developing.


The good news is that small changes can make a big difference – and we can all play our part!

By switching off your engine when stationary you can make a real difference and improve the quality of the air we all breathe.

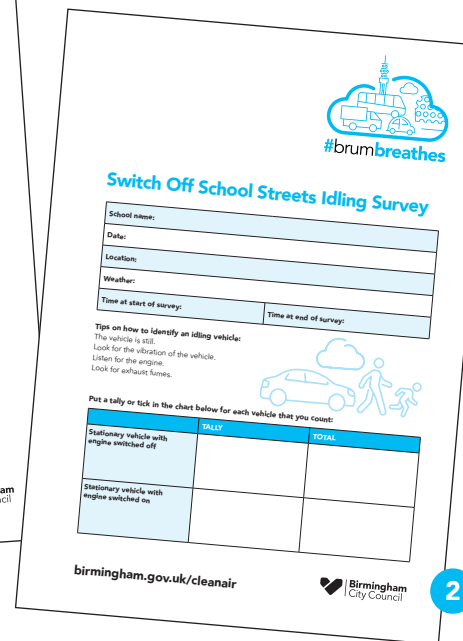
Thank you for helping to make our School Streets a cleaner, happier and healthier environment for everyone.

For further information, please visit: birmingham.gov.uk/cleanair and brumbreathes.co.uk

Kind Regards,



2



#brumbreathes

Switch Off School Streets Idling Survey


School name: _____
Date: _____
Location: _____
Weather: _____
Time at start of survey: _____ Time at end of survey: _____

Tips on how to identify an idling vehicle:
The vehicle is still.
Look for the vibration of the vehicle.
Listen for the engine.
Look for exhaust fumes.

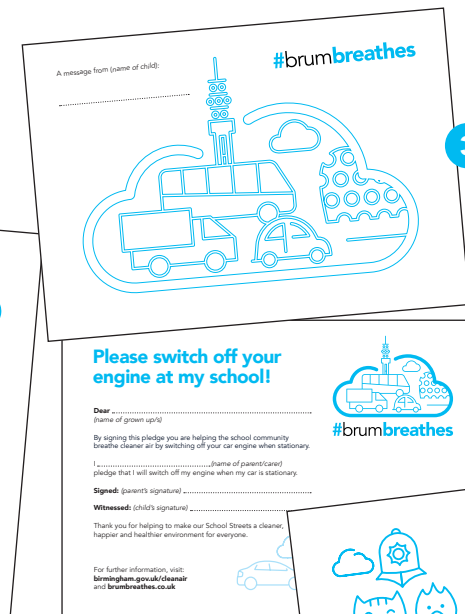
Put a tally or tick in the chart below for each vehicle that you count:

| | TALLY | TOTAL |
|---|-------|-------|
| Stationary vehicle with engine switched off | | |
| Stationary vehicle with engine switched on | | |

birmingham.gov.uk/cleanair



3



A message from (name of child): _____

#brumbreathes

Please switch off your engine at my school!

Dear _____ (name of grown up)

By signing this pledge you are helping the school community breathe cleaner air by switching off my engine when stationary.

_____ (name of parent/caregiver) pledge that I will switch off my engine when my car is stationary.

Signed: (parent's signature) _____

Witnessed: (child's signature) _____

Thank you for helping to make our School Streets a cleaner, happier and healthier environment for everyone.

For further information, visit: birmingham.gov.uk/cleanair and brumbreathes.co.uk

4



#brumbreathes

Hello! We are the Junior Clean Air Cops!

We're asking drivers to switch off their engines when stationary to help make the air around our school cleaner. We're really pleased to see you're doing that already. Keep up the good work!

Thank you for helping to make our School Streets a cleaner, happier and healthier environment for everyone.

For further information, visit: birmingham.gov.uk/cleanair and brumbreathes.co.uk

Campaign support continued...

A city-wide approach to tackling air pollution

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Switch Off School Streets
for cleaner, healthier streets

5

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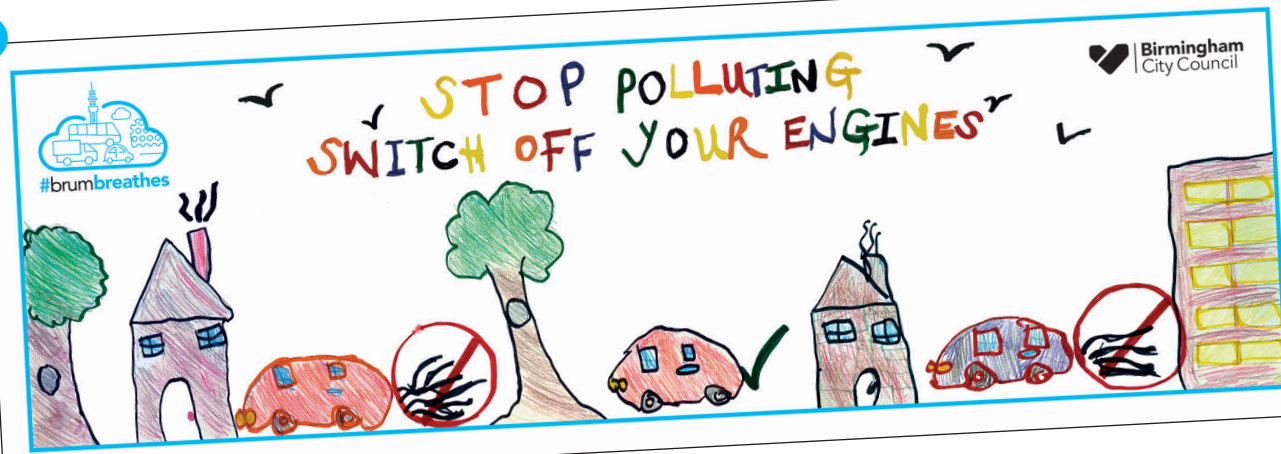


#brumbreathes


Switch Off Your Engine
for cleaner, healthier streets

birmingham.gov.uk/cleanair 

7



**STOP POLLUTING
SWITCH OFF YOUR ENGINES**



Winning entry in the School Switch Off poster competition from Hill West Primary School.

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Air pollution affects everyone in Birmingham, but especially children. Studies have shown that children in high pollution areas are four times more likely to have reduced lung function when they become adults.

Email: connected@birmingham.gov.uk

Telephone: 0121 303 7674

 [@bhamconnected](https://twitter.com/bhamconnected)

 facebook.com/bhamconnected

brumbreathes.co.uk