22 October, 2013

Dear Parents

In light of the severe weather warning forecast for tomorrow as well as the number of boys reporting to sick bay and going home with breathing related symptoms we are recommending that parents of boys with known breathing difficulties keep their sons at home tomorrow, Wednesday 23rd October, 2013.

I have attached information from the Department of Health with appropriate links if you require further information.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Regards

Stephen Kennaugh
Deputy Headmaster
Bushfire Air Pollution Health Update

18 October 2013

NSW Health is urging people to closely monitor and follow advice issued by Emergency Services today with several major fires burning across the state.

The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) air quality measurements show that there is an increase in particulate air pollution in NSW, with many areas experiencing poor to very poor air quality. This increase is from bushfires that may be hundreds of kilometres away.

Professor Wayne Smith, Director Environmental Health Branch, NSW Health, warned that those with lung disease, and heart disease should closely monitor their symptoms.

"Bushfires can result in a large amount of smoke particles in the air, even great distances from the fires," Professor Smith said. "Smoke levels are likely to be higher outdoors than indoors, so sensitive people to should limit the time they spend outside."

Smoke particles can cause a variety of health problems, such as itchy or burning eyes, throat irritation or runny nose and aggravate existing illnesses including bronchitis, emphysema and asthma.

NSW Health reminds people that children, older adults and people with heart and lung conditions are most susceptible to the effects of air pollution.

"The best way to avoid breathing in the smoke is to remain inside with the windows and doors closed, preferably in an air-conditioned building," Professor Smith said. "Asthma sufferers need to follow their Asthma Action Plan and take their relieving medication where necessary. If symptoms get worse, asthma sufferers need to seek medical advice."

Anyone using regular medication should plan ahead and ensure they have plenty of medication or their prescription with them.

“Fine particles can also irritate the lungs of healthy adults, so it is best to avoid any prolonged outdoor exercise” Professor Smith said.

Further information on maintaining health during bushfires can be found at http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/bushfire-smoke.aspx

People can have air quality alerts sent to them via SMS or email by visiting the Office of Environment and Heritage website and subscribing to Air Quality Index daily forecasts.

For local air quality forecast and hourly air quality updates, visit the Office of Environment and Heritage website: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/aqms/index.htm

For more information about air pollution and health, visit the NSW Health website: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/air/Pages/default.aspx