

## GESSE Policy During Times of Haze

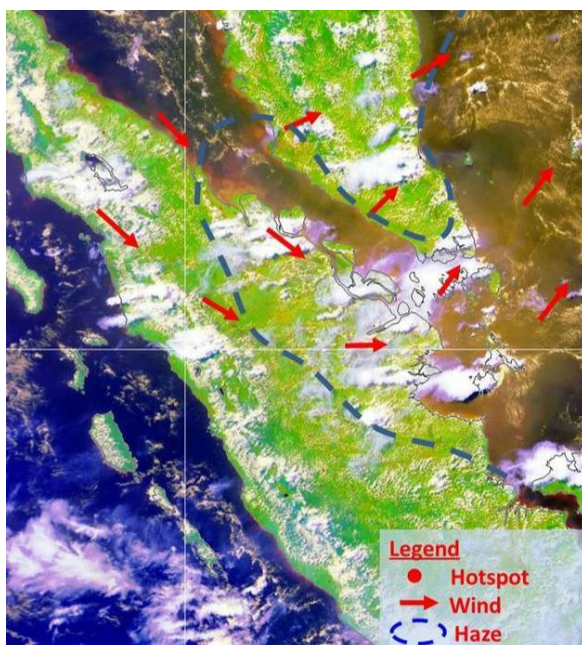
### Policy Background Information

During the period from May to October, Singapore experiences Southwest Monsoon winds which blow from the southeast or southwest. These may bring with them smoke and haze from forest fires in neighbouring countries. The haze and smoke may cause irritation of the eyes, airways, nose and throat, and may be particularly problematic for those with chronic conditions such as asthma, sinusitis and allergic skin conditions.

The National Environment Agency monitors air quality by taking PSI (Pollutant Standards Index) readings. Results are available in the general media and on [www.nea.gov.sg](http://www.nea.gov.sg). In recent years, PSI readings have exceeded (sometimes considerably) the recommended 'safe levels', thereby prompting the implementation of additional measures by GESSE management in order to safeguard our students, particularly those with chronic lung conditions and/or other conditions affected by haze.

### Health Implications of Haze

The health impact of haze is dependent on one's general health; the PSI (Pollutant Standards Index) and the length and intensity of out-door activities undertaken during times of haze.



The Ministry of Health advisory for the general public provides general advice on the preventative measures that can be taken to reduce the health impact of haze when air quality is poor. This advice has been used to create GESSE policies below which will determine how and when activities at school are held during times of haze.

### N95 Masks at School

GESSE First Aid department only holds sufficient stock of N95 face masks for staff, and all students with chronic lung conditions and/or conditions that are affected by haze. GESSE strongly recommends that parents purchase sufficient N95 masks for each family member in advance, (since historically in Singapore, stock levels of N95 masks run extremely low or run out completely during times of need). Normal surgical masks are not sufficient to effectively filter particular matter from the air. Please also read the NEA advisory regarding use of N95 masks in the link below.

### NEA Advisory Regarding the Use of N95 Masks

The use of N95 mask increases the effort in breathing and may cause discomfort, tiredness or headache. For most people this is not serious. However, as some elderly people, people with chronic lung disease, heart disease or stroke, and women in the 2nd and 3rd trimesters of pregnancy may already have reduced lung volumes or breathing issues, they should stop using a N95 mask if they feel uncomfortable. They should consult their doctor as to whether they can use the N95 mask.

Women in the 2nd and 3rd trimesters of pregnancy should not use the N95 mask for more than a short duration each time. N95 masks are not certified for use in children, so children should remain indoors as much as possible.

Parents can obtain further Information and advice on Haze in Singapore from the [NEA's website](http://www.nea.gov.sg) and view the [Health Advisory for the General Public](#). Regarding GESSE policies and student activities during haze, please email [firstaid@gess.sg](mailto:firstaid@gess.sg).

## CESS Policies During Times of Haze

### CESS Action and Communication Matrix

Based on 24-hr PSI levels until 9am and 3-hr PSI level between 9am and 4.30pm

PSI LEVELS	NEA DESCRIPTOR	ACTION BY GESS STAFF	COMMUNICATION
0 - 50	Good	No change to normal activities.	None
51 - 100	Moderate	No change to normal activities. Teachers conducting outdoor activities to closely monitor students with chronic lung conditions/other haze affected conditions.	Haze policy reminder and in the News section of the website.
101 - 125	Moderate	Football field (JSC) and basketball field (MC) to be closed. Teachers conducting outdoor activities to closely monitor students with chronic lung conditions/other haze affected conditions.	Haze policy reminder and in the News section of the website.
126 - 150	Unhealthy	Strenuous outdoor activities to be minimized for all students and cancelled for all students with chronic conditions.	Haze policy reminder and updated PSI level in the News section of the website and on the front page in the parents portal.
151 - 200	Unhealthy	Strenuous outdoor activities to be cancelled for all students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PE classes are cancelled at JSC</li> <li>PE classes at MC are only permitted in the Sports Hall at MC (air conditioned with HEPA filters installed)</li> <li>ACSIS matches in non-air conditioned environment is cancelled.</li> </ul>	Haze policy reminder and updated PSI level in the News section of the website and on the front page of the parents' portal with further information about the specific outdoor activities that are cancelled.
201 - 300	Very Unhealthy	All outdoor activities to be minimized for all students and cancelled for students with chronic conditions.	Haze policy reminder and updated PSI level in the News section of the website and on the front page of the parents' portal. All parents will receive email communication including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GESS Haze Policy</li> <li>Requesting parents to refer to the Website for updated information on which activities are cancelled.</li> </ul>
Above 300	Hazardous	No outdoor activities for all students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PE classes are cancelled at JSC.</li> <li>PE classes at MC are only permitted in the Sports Hall at MC (air conditioned with HEPA filters installed)</li> <li>Other scheduled outdoor activities to be conducted in the MC Sports Hall or other air conditioned room where possible, or if not possible are to be cancelled.</li> </ul>	Haze policy reminder and updated PSI level in the News section of the website and on the front page of the parents' portal. All parents will receive email communication including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GESS Haze Policy</li> <li>Requesting parents to refer to the Website for updated information on which activities are cancelled.</li> </ul>

**ANY DECISION TO CLOSE THE SCHOOL DUE TO HAZE WILL BE MADE SOLELY ON MOE'S GUIDELINES / DIRECTIONS AND COMMUNICATED TO THE PARENTS VIA SMS, EMAIL AND ON THE SCHOOL'S WEBSITE BEFORE MAKING A DECISION. REMEMBER TO INFORM NEIGHBOURING SCHOOLS.**