

# How to Speak to People About Not Idling in School Zones

(adapted from Northstar Sierra Club )

If you're not sure how to talk to people about this issue, role playing can be a fun way to practice and learn! Assign roles to friends, and walk through the following scenarios. You'll be an "Anti-Idling" champ in no time!

**Bus Driver Scenario:** It's after school on a warm sunny day in May and you're sitting on the bus for fifteen minutes waiting for the other kids to hop on. The school bus isn't moving for these fifteen minutes, but it's turned on, it's *idling*. What do you do? (Friend plays role of bus driver and student acts out their conversation.)

For example:

- Bus driver, could you please turn off the bus's engine when we're not moving.
- Why?
- Your idling pollutes the air and can be harmful to our health.
- Sure, I didn't even know that.
- Thank you.

**Principal Scenario:** Your principal doesn't know much about the harms of school bus diesel exhaust. You know that your school is a good place to start making improvements to reduce the pollution. You run into your principal in the hallway before school, how do you approach them about it?

For example:

- Mr. Principal, good morning. Yesterday in class I learned some really interesting stuff about the pollution that comes from school buses.
- Really? What did you learn?
- Well, I found out that buses use a fuel called diesel and when they burn diesel, they dirty the air we breathe. That pollution can cause diseases like asthma and cancer.
- Oh. That's awful.
- Yeah, but it doesn't have to be like that. There's stuff that our school can do to reduce the pollution.
- Like what?
- First, we can sign on as a Clean Bus School with EPA. (visit <http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus> for more information)

**Parent Scenario:** Your parents don't know anything yet about the harms of diesel exhaust. You are sitting at the dinner table and your parent asks you how your day was and if you learned anything new. How do you inform them about the school bus pollution and remind them not to idle in their cars?

For example:

- Today I was taught that school buses idle, they wait outside the school burning gas but not moving, and pollute the air too much.
- How do they pollute the air?
- When they burn diesel fuel, they give off exhaust that hurts the environment *and* is breathed in by all the kids at school. That could be why so many kids have asthma these days.
- That's terrible. What is your school doing about it?
- Well, for starters, they're signing on as a Clean Bus School and are going to work to reduce the pollution our school buses emit.
- That's good.
- But Mom, when cars idle they pollute too. So, unless you have to have the engine on, could you please wait to pick me up with the car turned off so we don't pollute?
- Yes.
- Thanks.