THE TIMES OF INDIA

, NOVEMBER 6, 2026

Another masked winter for Delhi schoolkids

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New Delhi: The sports fields have fallen silent and the masks have found their way back into schoolbags.

As Delhi's air quality deteriorates with the onset of winter, schools across the capital are reviving pollution protocols, suspending outdoor activities, moving assemblies indoors and advising students to wear masks to minimise exposure to polluted air.

From private institutions equipped with air purifiers to govt schools adapting daily routines, administrators say the annual pollution season is once again reshaping the school day.

At Amity International School, outdoor activities have been suspended, and students have been advised to wear pollution masks. Principal Divya Bhatia said the school has also issued an advisory to parents on celebrating a green Diwali.

"Our eco club has sensitised the students about the hazards of bursting crackers," she said. Water sprinklers are being used regularly.

At The Indian School, classrooms are equipped with air purifiers and indoor plants, while outdoor activities have been curtailed. Principal Tania Joshi said students may wear masks and are allowed to remain indoors if they feel uncomfortable stepping outside. "The school is building awareness among children about pollution, its causes and prevention," she said.

Anindya Chattopadhyay



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MM Public School in Pitampura has fitted classrooms with air conditioners, air purifiers and snake plants. "We monitor AQI and follow GRAP guidelines, shifting assemblies indoors on bad-air days," principal Rooma Pathak said. Students with asthma and allergies are being monitored closely, while eco and health clubs are conducting awareness drives.

At Mamta Modern School, outdoor sports have been suspended, playgrounds are being sprinkled with water to control dust and classrooms are equipped with air purifiers. "The health, safety and well-being of our children remain our top priority," principal Pallavi Sharma said.

Govt schools, where resources can be more limited, are relying heavily on procedural changes. Joginder Kumar, principal of Govt Co-Ed Sarvodaya Vidyalaya in Rohini, said the school has incorporated classroom-based activities and online-learning plans into its academic calendar to ensure continuity whenever restrictions are imposed.

At Ravi Shankar SKV in Bawana, open-air activities, including morning assemblies, have been halted. Sanitation staff have been instructed to sprinkle water before sweeping and use wet-cleaning methods indoors. "No activities are being held in the open, including assembly," principal Sunita said.