



No. 123/DG/EPA/2024
GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
NATIONAL HOCKEY STADIUM FERROZEPUR ROAD, LAHORE
Dated: 12.11.2024



CLOSURE / SHIFTING TO ONLINE MODE BY SCHOOLS UPTO HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL U/S 6(1)(t) OF THE PUNJAB ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1997

ORDER

WHEREAS, Government of Punjab is striving hard to control all possible intrinsic factors which cause air pollution and deteriorate quality of ambient air. Pre-emptive measures against all the sources of air pollution have already been started by EPA as well as other concerned departments.

2. **AND WHEREAS**, as per Section 2(xxxiii) of the Punjab Environmental Protection Act 1997, **pollution** means the contamination of air, land or water by the discharge or emission of effluents or wastes or air pollutants or noise or other matter which either directly or indirectly or in combination with other discharges or substances alters unfavorably the chemical, physical, biological, radiation, thermal or radiological or aesthetic properties of the air, land or water or which may, or is likely to make the air, land or water unclean, noxious or impure or injurious, disagreeable or detrimental to the health, safety, welfare or property of persons or harmful to biodiversity.

3. **AND WHEREAS** the **Health Advisory System for Critical Air Pollution Events** (HAS-CAPEs) has been notified on 13.12.2022 under which the 1st meeting of Provincial CAPEs Committee (PCC) was held on 21.10.2024 which declared that Critical Air Pollution Event has taken place in Lahore. **Subsequently the Critical Air Pollution Events have also taken place in districts of Faisalabad, Multan and Gujranwala in last week.** The average AQI of these districts has crossed the critical limit of 500 which is alarmingly hazardous for human health and wellbeing. Likewise, reports are being received that an unprecedented rise in the number of patients with lungs and respiratory diseases, allergies, eye and throat irritation, pink eye disease is being observed in different parts of the whole province. The spread of conjunctivitis/ pink eye disease due to bacterial or viral infection, smoke, dust or chemical exposure is posing a serious and imminent threat to public health. Hence, it is mandatory to take all necessary measures for prevention and control of these diseases in the whole province.

4. **AND WHEREAS**, Section 6(1) (t) of the ibid Act empowers EPA to take or cause to be taken all necessary measures for the protection, conservation, rehabilitation and improvement of the environment, prevention and control of pollution and promotion of sustainable development;

5. **AND WHEREAS**, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me u/s 6(1) (t) of the Punjab Environmental Protection Act, 1997, all the educational institutions, including private tuition centers (public/private) **upto Higher Secondary Level (12th Grade/ A-level)** were closed and shifted to online mode till **17th November, 2024** in territorial jurisdictions of **Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad and Multan Divisions** vide this office Order No.108/DG/EPA/2024 dated 06.11.2024. Keeping in view the persistent elevated AQI levels in almost all districts of the province, it is imperative to extend the said order in other parts of the province for the safety and well-being of children upto Higher Secondary Level (12th Grade/ A-level).

6. **NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Dr. Imran Hamid Sheikh (PAS), Director General, Environmental Protection Agency, Punjab in exercise of the powers conferred upon me u/s 6(1) (t) of the Punjab Environmental Protection Act, 1997, do hereby order that all the educational institutions, including tuition centers (public/private) **upto Higher Secondary Level (12th Grade/ A-level)** shall remain closed and will shift to online mode with effect from **13th November 2024 (Wednesday)** within the territorial jurisdictions of DG Khan, Bahawalpur, Sahiwal, Sargodha and Rawalpindi Divisions as well till **17th November 2024 (Sunday)**.

Note: It is clarified that the order No. 108/DG/EPA/2024 dated 06.11.2024 about closure / shifting to online mode of all the educational institutions, including tuition centers (public / private) upto Higher Secondary Level (12th Grade / A-Level) till 17th November, 2024 in Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad and Multan Divisions shall also remain intact.

Further directions in this regard shall be issued on 17th November, 2024.

Issued under my hand and seal on this 12th day of November, 2024.

DR. IMRAN HAMID SHEIKH (PAS)
Director General
Environmental Protection Agency
Punjab

Copy forwarded for information:

- i. The Secretary, Environment Protection & Climate Change Department, Punjab
- ii. The Secretary, Higher Education Department with the request to get this order implemented in the field.
- iii. The Secretary, Schools Education Department with the request to get this order implemented in the field.
- iv. The Commissioner DG Khan, Bahawalpur, Sahiwal, Sargodha and Rawalpindi Divisions.
- v. The Director General Public Relations (DGPR) with a request to ensure wide publicity.
- vi. All the Deputy Commissioners of Punjab
- vii. The Secretary, Judicial Water & Environment Commission (JWEC), Punjab.
- viii. The Additional Secretary (Staff), Chief Secretary's Office, Lahore.
- ix. The Additional Secretary (Coordination), Chief Minister Office, Lahore.
- x. The Chief Environment & Climate Change, P&D Board, Lahore.
- xi. PSO to Minister for Environment, Forest and P&D
- xii. PSO to Provincial Police Office/ IGP, Punjab
- xiii. The Additional Director General (Ops & Imp), EPA Punjab
- xiv. The In-charge Smog War Room, EPA Headquarters, Lahore.
- xv. All the Deputy / Assistant Directors (Field), EPA Punjab.
- xvi. The Chairperson, Private Schools Association, Punjab for circulation among the concerned private educational institutions.
- xvii. PA to Director General EPA Punjab