

Smokefree Toolkit

for Schools



Introduction

Each year around **207,000 children** in the UK start smokingⁱ, with almost **two-fifths (40%)** starting to smoke regularly before the age of 16ⁱⁱ.

Those who start smoking at a young age are more likely to be heavier smokers, who find it more difficult to give up, and are at a greater risk of developing a smoking-related disease.

Children who are exposed to smoking from those around them are up to four times more likely to become smokersⁱⁱⁱ.

The evidence shows the best way to prevent children and young people from starting smoking is to make it invisible to them and that means changing the smoking behaviour of adults.

This toolkit will help schools to take a whole-school approach to being smokefree.



Smokefree Schools



The Smoke-free Regulations which were introduced in 2007 require all enclosed or substantially enclosed places to be smokefree and display the appropriate signage^{iv}.

When the legislation was introduced, most schools extended their smokefree areas to include their grounds.

This smokefree toolkit encourages schools to consider extending their smokefree areas to include not only their grounds but beyond, for example smokefree school gates and/or boundaries.

This would not be law but managed through the school's smokefree policy where the whole school would work together to encourage those who smoke not to do so in these areas.

Restricting smoking at the school gates and boundaries helps to de-normalise smoking in the eyes of children, helping to contribute to them being less likely to start.

It also helps to reduce littering. Cigarette butts are the most littered item in the world, with 4.5 trillion discarded every year^v. Most cigarettes also contain non-biodegradable filters, so they are harmful to the environment.

Therefore, being a Smokefree School creates a healthier and cleaner environment for the school community and its visitors.

Schools might like to consider a project looking at tobacco and the environment. The project could form part of the PSHE Curriculum Core Theme Living in the Wider World.

Here are some useful references:

- [**PSHE Association Programme of Study for PSHE Education \(Key stages 1–5\)**](#)
- [**Tobacco and the Environment - ASH**](#)
- [**Tobacco and the Environment - TobaccoTactics**](#)



What are the steps to becoming a Smokefree School?

A Smokefree Policy

A Smokefree Policy is an important step in ensuring a whole-school approach to tobacco. It enables the school to set out its expectations to all members of the school community and how it will protect them from exposure to secondhand smoke, whilst also preventing the uptake and reducing the prevalence of smoking.

When reviewing or developing a smokefree policy it is important to involve all members of the school community from the beginning, so they have the opportunity to contribute. One way to achieve this could be to consult the school's Wellbeing Action Group. Adopting this approach means the school community are far more likely to understand the expectations within the policy and adhere to these.

NICE recommendations around whole-school smokefree policies for those working in primary and secondary schools and further education colleges, are as follows:

1.5.1 Develop a whole-school or organisation-wide smokefree policy in consultation with young people and staff:

- Include smoking prevention activities (led by adults or young people).
- Include staff training and development.
- Take account of children and young people's cultural, special educational or physical needs. (For example, by providing material in alternative formats such as pictures, large print, Braille, audio and video). [2010]



1.5.2 Ensure the policy forms part of the wider strategy on wellbeing, relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE), health education, drug education and behaviour. [2010]

1.5.3 Apply the policy to everyone using the premises (grounds as well as buildings), for any purpose, at any time. Do not allow any areas in the grounds to be designated for smoking (with the exception of the caretakers' homes, as specified by law). [2010]

1.5.4 Widely publicise the policy and ensure it is easily accessible so that everyone using the premises is aware of its content. (This includes making a printed version available.) [2010]^{vi}

It is an individual school's decision how far beyond the school gates they wish to extend the smokefree policy, depending on where school playing fields are situated, etc. This should all be considered when developing a smokefree policy.

Visit our website for guidance around developing a smokefree policy,
<https://cypsomersethealth.org>



For those schools who are signed up to the Somerset Wellbeing Framework, having a smokefree policy is one of the essential criteria of the Leadership and Management Principle of the Wellbeing Audit.

For more information on the Somerset Wellbeing Framework visit our website:

https://cypsomersethealth.org/the_somerset_wellbeing_framework_a_whole_school_and_college_approach

Schools may also wish to consider implementing a separate policy around vaping.



Signage

Schools, as with all other enclosed and substantially enclosed workplaces and public places, need to ensure that the appropriate signage is displayed as part of the Smoke-free Regulations^{vii}.

As part of the Smokefree Schools toolkit Somerset Council have A3 metal signage available for school gates and boundaries. Please note that this signage is additional to the signage that a school is required to display to comply with the Smoke-free Regulations.

Below is an example of the signage that is available to schools.

Please note that Somerset Council have a limited number of free signs, as illustrated, available to schools and will not be liable to purchase any more of the signs on behalf of schools. Individual schools are required to take responsibility for attaching the sign provided to their perimeter fence/school entrance gate and any maintenance costs associated with the upkeep of the sign.



Requests for the supply of A3 metal smokefree signage (illustrated to the left) for individual schools as part of this toolkit should be sent to Nicola Crocker,

nicola.crocker@somerset.gov.uk

Communication

As outlined earlier in the toolkit, when reviewing or developing a smokefree policy it is important to involve all members of the school community from the beginning, so they have the opportunity to contribute and can help with communicating this to others. This means they are far more likely to understand the expectations within the policy and adhere to these.

Communication of the policy is an important step in a whole-school approach to being a Smokefree School. The policy should be available alongside all other school policies and the whole school community should know where they can access it. Communication could be through the school's social media platforms, website and intranet, on noticeboards, and in newsletters.

Schools may wish to send a letter to all parents/carers to inform them that the policy has changed, the reasons behind this, and ask for their support in adhering to it.



Resources for schools around tobacco education

Schools should cover tobacco as part of the statutory PSHE curriculum Core Theme Health and Wellbeing.

- A guide to support schools in covering the statutory PSHE education. [Click here](#)
- A training module for both primary and secondary schools to support staff teaching drugs, alcohol and tobacco. [Teacher training: drugs, alcohol and tobacco - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- INTENT is a free smoking prevention programme available to schools in Somerset, for students in years 7-10. [Somerset children & young people : Health & Wellbeing : Intent Smoking Prevention Programme \(cypsomersethealth.org\)](#)

Resources for schools around secondhand smoke

The Public Health Team have a Smokefree Resource pack available to primary schools which is based around secondhand smoke in the home and highlighting its dangers. This includes a Jenny and the Bear story, a small teddy bear, photocopyable dot-to-dot and colouring sheets, and secondhand smoke and your child leaflets for parents and carers



Requests for a Smokefree Resource Pack should be sent to **Nicola Crocker**, nicola.crocker@somerset.gov.uk

Our Somerset Children and Young People Health and Wellbeing website has more information on secondhand smoke and its dangers. [Somerset children & young people : Health & Wellbeing : Smokefree Settings \(cypsomersethealth.org\)](#)

Training available to schools

Smokefree Somerset offers a free, concise training course for schools (teachers and school nurses) the aim of which is to raise awareness of the harms of tobacco smoking, the benefits of quitting, and the flexible and free support options on offer for anyone (over the age of 12) seeking advice to reduce or stop smoking. The training can be delivered virtually or self-learn and is around 45 minutes.



The training covers the following topics:

- The reasons young people may experiment with and start smoking;
- How quickly smoking becomes an addiction and a habit;
- The harm from smoking – physical, economy and environment;
- The benefits of quitting;
- The flexible and free support options offered by the service;
- Extended support available for parents and carers.

For more information, please contact Smokefree Somerset:



01823 356222



smokefreelife@somerset.gov.uk



www.healthysomerset.co.uk/smokefree/



Stop smoking support

A Smokefree School whole-school approach should include promotion of the stop smoking support available to staff, parents, carers, and other members of the school community. This could include displaying posters and leaflets throughout the school, information on noticeboards, the school's social media platforms, website and intranet, and in newsletters.



Smokefree Somerset is the local stop smoking service offering flexible and free support options to those aged 12 and over who are ready to stop smoking.

For more information, please contact Smokefree Somerset:



01823 356222



smokefreelife@somerset.gov.uk



www.healthysomerset.co.uk/smokefree/

Illegal tobacco

Illegal tobacco harms local communities. Sold at pocket money prices it makes it easier for young people to smoke. Those selling it are also likely to be selling other illegal goods.

There are different types of illegal tobacco:

- Counterfeit – Tobacco which claims to be an established, well-known brand, but is fake.
- Non-duty paid – Legitimate tobacco purchased abroad cheaply, brought back to the UK, and sold at a lower price than within retailers.
- Other unknown brands – These brands are unknown and unregulated, and made solely for the illegal market.

If tobacco is cheap, there is a high likelihood that it is illegal.

Information on illegal tobacco can be reported anonymously on the Trading Standards South West website - **[SW Illegal Tobacco – SW Illegal Tobacco](#)**

This information can be shared with the wider school community.

Useful resources:

- Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) factsheet on Illicit trade in tobacco
Illicit Trade in Tobacco - ASH
- ASH factsheet on young people and smoking
Young people and smoking - ASH
- Better Health information on stopping smoking
Quit smoking - Better Health - NHS (www.nhs.uk)
- Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health statistics around smoking in young people -
Smoking in young people - RCPCH - State of Child Health
- Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England, 2021 survey results -
Part 1: Smoking prevalence and cigarette consumption - NDRS (digital.nhs.uk)
- Somerset Schools Health and Wellbeing Survey results
Somerset children & young people : Health & Wellbeing : New Home (cypsomersethealth.org)

References

- i. Child uptake of smoking by area across the UK | Thorax (bmj.com)
- ii. Smoking (General Lifestyle Survey Overview - a report on the 2011 General Lifestyle Survey) - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
- iii. Children whose parents smoke are 4 times as likely to take up smoking themselves - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- iv. The Smoke-free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006 (legislation.gov.uk)
- v. The Dirt Behind Big Tobacco and the Environment - STOP (exposetobacco.org)
- vi. Recommendations on preventing uptake | Tobacco: preventing uptake, promoting quitting and treating dependence | Guidance | NICE
- vii. The Smoke-free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006 (legislation.gov.uk)