

Tobacco-Free Schools

Effective September 2, 2007, the *Tobacco Control Act* requires all BC schools (public and independent) to prohibit the use of tobacco on school grounds.

The legislation applies to:

- Students, school employees and parents.
- School visitors, on-site workers and guests.
- Anyone attending non-school activities on school grounds.
- Anyone in school vehicles.
- Anyone in private vehicles parked on school property.
- All tobacco products.

Why is this important?

- tobacco is the greatest preventable cause of death and illness in BC
- most smokers start smoking before the age of 18
- these new requirements may help smokers in their efforts to quit.

As per section 2.2 (3) of the Act, the ceremonial use of tobacco is exempted from the legislation if the ceremonial use is approved by the board and it is performed in relation to a traditional aboriginal activity, or by a prescribed group for a prescribed purpose.

To view the complete *Tobacco Control Act*, visit http://www.leg.bc.ca/38fh3rd/3rd_read/gov10-3.htm.

Implementing Tobacco-Free School Grounds Policy

A comprehensive approach to implementing tobacco-free school grounds policy is most effective when tobacco bans are supported by broader prevention, enforcement and cessation support initiatives involving community partnerships.

7 Steps for Developing and Implementing a Comprehensive Tobacco Control Strategy in BC Schools

1. Create capacity.

In consultation with key school and community stakeholders, schools can task a committee to design, implement, monitor and enforce a tobacco control strategy.

2. Encourage support and involvement from school and community stakeholders.

School level stakeholders could include administrators, teachers, other school staff (e.g. counselors), students (including students who smoke!), and parents. Community level stakeholders could include tobacco reduction coordinators (health authorities), local police services, neighbourhood associations, local businesses, and youth service organizations.

3. Analyze the school situation and design a tailored response.

Each school is unique. Therefore it is important to collect information on local conditions for a customized tobacco-free strategy. For example, collect information on percentage of students and staff who smoke, examples of educational/promotional activities already in place that could support a tobacco-free school strategy, and a list of successes and challenges of previous tobacco-reduction activities at the school.

4. Develop clear and consistent messaging and posting signage.

Consider developing general messages about the *Act* and the tobacco control strategy, and

customized messages aimed at students, staff, and parents.

5. Ensure measured, consistent and fair enforcement.

Implementation works best when rules are well understood, consistently applied and perceived as fair and reasonable by students. When designing consequences for non-compliance, schools may wish to consider using a positive approach, referring to the purpose of the legislation (encouraging smoke-free lifestyles), and varying the consequences based on the number of infractions and whether the person is a student, staff member or visitor.



6. Provide support for students and staff who want to quit using tobacco.

Schools are encouraged to take advantage of existing cessation support resources (*see Tobacco Cessation Resources, page 2*) and to get creative in organizing supports at the school level (e.g. a “buddy system” among students and staff to support their efforts to stop).

7. Prepare for and respond to students who leave school grounds to smoke.

Since every environment is different, schools are encouraged to actively address this issue by engaging with students, staff and relevant external stakeholders; discuss potential safety and public order consequences before they manifest; and be creative and flexible in making adjustments as necessary.

Source: Centre for Addictions Research of BC

Tobacco Control Resources

TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOL POLICIES

New Zealand and Quebec implemented smoke-free school grounds in 1990 and 2006 respectively. Both regions developed “toolkits” or “implementation guides”, to provide additional assistance to schools to implement the new legislation:

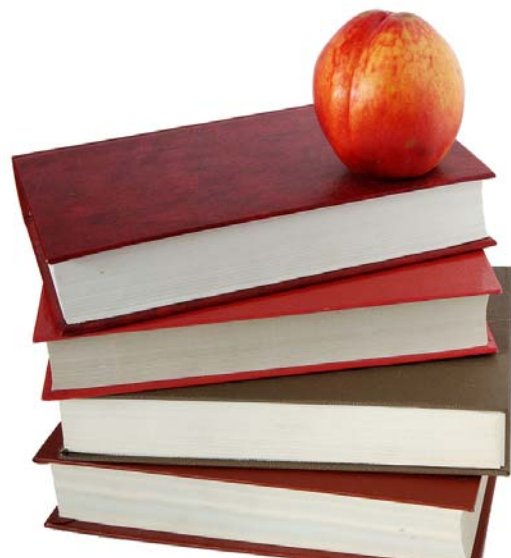
- Quebec’s *Guide to Implementing a Tobacco-Free School Strategy* is available online at <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/acrobat/f/documentation/2006/06-006-20A.pdf>.
- New Zealand’s *Smokefree Schools* website contains a number of helpful resources for teachers and administrators – for more information, visit <http://www.smokefreeschools.co.nz/>.

The Quebec approach also included direct involvement of students in efforts to design and implement programs to achieve smoke free schools. A set of tools created by students to facilitate the implementation of Quebec’s smoke free schools and school grounds, including a poster and pamphlets for students, teachers and parents, is available online at

<http://www.lagangallumee.com/librescommelair/index.asp?langue=en>.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) offers a sample tobacco-free school policy online at

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/files/36897/11013839983FINAL_cc1-drugt01fithealthy.doc/FINAL%2Bcc1-drugt01fithealthy.doc (pages 8-10).



DID YOU KNOW?

- 15% of Canadians ages 15-19 and 27% of Canadians ages 20-24 smoked tobacco in 2006 – down from 28% and 35% respectively in 1999.
- Across both age groups, over 60% of respondents reported being daily smokers, consuming an average of 12 to 13 cigarettes per day in 2006.¹
- In B.C., smokers comprise 13% of 15-19 year olds, and 19% of 20-24 year olds.²
- The smoker population increases by grade level in B.C., from Grade 7 (3.9%) to Grade 12 (19.2%).³
- 14 = the average age at which B.C. smokers, under the age of 20, smoked their first whole cigarette.²
- 33% of smokers in British Columbia, over the age of 15, are Aboriginal/First Nations.²

Sources:

¹ *Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey*. Health Canada. 2006.

² *Tobacco Attitudes and Behaviour Survey*. BC Stats. 2006-2007.

³ *BC School Satisfaction Survey*, 2006-2007.

TOBACCO CESSATION

QuitNow.ca... is an internet-based quit smoking service that is available free-of-charge to all BC residents. It combines effective methods for quitting smoking with a powerful individualized program that is available anytime and anyplace. In addition to an online community that offers peer support, it provides expert advice on quitting strategies as well as information about nicotine replacement therapies. QuitNow.ca is operated by the BC Lung Association on behalf of the Ministry of Health. Find more information at www.quitnow.ca.

Kick the Nic... Developed with BC teens and available in BC high schools. For more information about Kick the Nic in your community, contact the [Regional Tobacco Reduction Coordinator](#) nearest you.

Quit4Life... Health Canada’s interactive and personalized 4 week web program to assist youth to quit smoking. Find more details at www.quit4life.com.

Health Canada’s First Nations & Inuit Health Tobacco Resources... http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnih-spni/substan/tobac-tabac/index_e.html.

Tobacco-Free Schools Update

Fines for smoking on school property have come into effect as of March 31, 2008. Individual fines will be \$58 – comparable to a minor having alcohol in a public place.