

The 5 Step Program to a Smoke Free School



The Department of Health has recently set out a brand new Tobacco Control Strategy: 'A Smoke free Future' which highlights the need 'to stop the inflow of young people recruited as smokers' as the first of its three key objectives, with a specific focus on reducing the smoking rate among 11–15-year-olds to 1% or less, and the rate among 16–17-year-olds to 8% by 2020.

Reducing the incidence of smoking is the key issue in improving the health of our children and is taking a high priority within the Healthy Schools initiative along with drugs, hygiene and dietary issues.

Is your school smoke free?

In order to change attitudes to smoking amongst younger children, we must first accept that the problem exists both in school and in the home. Whilst we may not be able to control what happens in a domestic situation, we can certainly ensure that our schools are smoke free and provide a stable, open learning environment that reinforces positive attitudes towards health and well-being.

Over the last 12 years Radal Technology have been at the forefront in assisting some 5,000 schools in creating a smoke free environment. Over this period, with the help of head teachers, school councils and staff we have developed the '5 Step Program to a Smoke Free School' as a blueprint for achieving the goal of reducing youth smoking in school facilities. Here's how it works!

1. Identify and acknowledge the problem

Across the UK around 8-10% of students smoke within school buildings and grounds. Predominantly smoking occurs in the school washrooms, behind outbuildings and in tucked away areas. The area of most concern to the school management team is the washroom. Statistically, girls are more likely to congregate in the washroom to smoke, eat and chat. The knock on effect of this is a washroom full of environmental tobacco smoke, vandalism, and graffiti. The school washroom in effect becomes a 'no go' area for younger children who feel intimidated and ultimately they will not use the facilities. Those that do run the gauntlet are often bullied or coerced into taking their first cigarette in order to 'fit in'.

Many schools have historically 'solved' this problem by having a member of staff permanently on duty in the corridor, or by locking the washrooms between breaks. Given the fact that only 10% of high school students actually wash their hands, this 'solution' creates a bacteria infested key which changes hands numerous times each day!

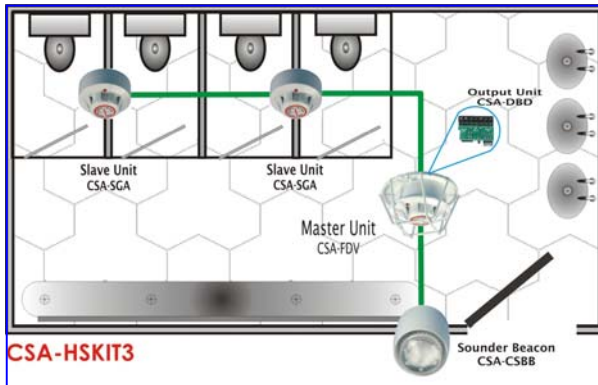
We must first identify and acknowledge that we have a problem that requires a solution!



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2. Remove Smoking from the Washroom by Deterrent

The simplest, most cost effective way of eliminating illicit smoking is to install specialist tobacco detection devices such as the Cig-Arrête® Tobacco Control System. The system provides an unequivocal visual and audible deterrent to all potential smokers.



The system can detect the flame from a match or lighter within 1 second, or the smoke from a cigarette using high specification gas detection elements with super high sensitivity to tobacco smoke.

On detection of an alarm, Cig-Arrête® will output a voice message asking smokers to extinguish their cigarettes and informing them that staff has been alerted. At the same instant Cig-Arrête® will output a signal to a sounder beacon unit that is installed just outside the washroom to alert staff.

Note: Cig-Arrête® should not be confused with ionisation and optical fire detection products unscrupulously sold by some companies as 'cigarette smoke detectors', which are actually totally unsuitable for the purpose.

3. Automatically Monitor Problem Areas 24 / 7

Once you have a proprietary tobacco detection system installed, the system will continually monitor protected areas for the presence of cigarette smoke and illicit smoking and provide an alarm on every occurrence. Staff are no longer needed until such an alarm is raised. Additionally, locking the school washrooms is no longer required as even a single cigarette will set off the alarm. Since the areas are now fully monitored, students will no longer congregate to smoke, eat and chat and therefore will not provide the intimidating atmosphere for younger children. The incidence of vandalism and graffiti will also be reduced providing cost savings for allocation to other school priorities.

4. Education on the Health Risks of Smoking.



The most important part of the program is to educate children in a new and innovative way about the harm that smoking can do in the longer term. This program will never advocate victimization of smokers, but rather promote an innovative, visual method of teaching or reinforcing positive reasons for becoming an ex-smoker.

For the majority of 11-15 year olds who have taken up smoking as a result of peer pressure, boredom, rebellion or simply hold the concept that smoking is 'cool' or makes them look grown up, they will never have contemplated that smoking is actually causing them harm.



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Most teenagers feel that they will live forever and that nothing can harm them. In fact unseen damage is already underway even though there is little visible or tangible effect on the outside.

This is where an innovative teaching aid can be of tremendous advantage in addressing the true cost of smoking.

There are a number of breath test monitors available today, but Radal Technology have partnered with the market leader to provide schools with a unique product aimed at children to be used in PHSE class. When used in a non-judgemental way, the Cig-Arrête® Smokerlyzer breath test monitor will allow all children, regardless of whether they smoke or not, to see a graphical representation of the impact of smoking on their lungs. In other words, children who have taken up the habit will, for the first time, see that they are already different from their non-smoking peers. This is a serious wake up call and tangible evidence for them to review their current habits.

5. Reinforce Health Values with Medical Assistance

The Government recently announced changes in the ability of Doctors to prescribe nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) to children as young as 12 years old. It is unlikely but not impossible that children at this age could already be ardent smokers and be in need of NRT. However, if the first four steps of the program have really registered with the students and a decision as been made to quit, then help is at hand in the form of NRT. By reinforcing steps 1-4 regularly during PHSE classes in a supportive environment, then the majority of smokers will indeed take the first steps to quitting.

What do other schools think about the program?

"Within a matter of days we had eradicated a problem we had struggled for years to solve. This sends a positive message to all present and prospective pupils and parents. We can market ourselves as a smoke free school!"

Mrs Adeline Dinsmore—Principal Ashfield girls school, speaking to the Ulster cancer Foundation

"Most teenagers who smoke are persuaded by their peers, so for the school to break the cycle is a major step. Research has shown that if a young person can reach their teens without smoking then they are unlikely to ever smoke. Ashfield girls' is to be congratulated on taking positive action to help protect the health and wellbeing of its pupils".

Claire Smith of the Ulster Cancer Foundation

"its so much better now, we can go to the toilet without being surrounded by cigarette smokers"

Student at Holmfirth High School

"The fitting of the Cig-Arrête smoke detectors is further evidence of Holmfirth High Schools commitment to the healthy school ethos"

Parent of student attending Holmfirth High School

Please visit our website for further testimonials on the effectiveness of our programs and to view video demonstrations on how our products can help your school become smoke free!

