



**NO SMOKING DAY**

**12TH MARCH 2025**

**PRIMARY SCHOOL TOOLKIT**

# NO SMOKING DAY

## 12TH MARCH 2025

Thank you for being part of No Smoking Day which takes place on **12th March 2025**! This year's theme is "Every Minute Counts," a powerful reminder that every cigarette smoked takes away 20 minutes of life\*, but quitting gives that time back—for health, happiness, and family moments that matter most.

Schools play a huge role in inspiring young people and their families to make healthier choices, and we're here to help you make that happen in fun and engaging ways. Whether it's a 20-minute activity, a creative class project, or an assembly that gets everyone talking, this toolkit has everything you need to get involved.

## USING THIS TOOLKIT

This pack is bursting with ideas to make No Smoking Day a success in your school:

- **Assembly Plan:** A simple, ready-to-go plan to share the campaign message with students.
- **Lesson Ideas:** Fun and educational activities that fit into your school day.
- **20-Minute Activities:** Quick, creative tasks to bring the message to life.
- **Resources for Teachers and Parents:** To spread the message beyond the school gates.

You don't have to do everything—pick what works for your school, and feel free to adapt the ideas to make them your own. Every effort, big or small, helps to inspire a smoke-free generation. Let's make **No Smoking Day 2025** a day to remember!



# THE RESEARCH

## Every Cigarette Takes 20 Minutes of Life

- Research from University College London (UCL) finds that each cigarette reduces life expectancy by 20 minutes.
- Smoking 10 cigarettes a day for a week takes a full day off a person's life.
- By quitting for a year, a smoker could avoid losing 50 days of life.
- Reference: [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/add.16757](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/add.16757)

## Smoking in Young People

- 2.9% of Year 7-11 students smoke regularly, rising to 5.2% in Year 11.
- 23% of Year 7-11 students (2,546/11,002) live with a smoker.
- 18% of Year 12-13 students (268/1,522) live with a smoker.
- Young people who live with a smoker are 3x more likely to smoke (6.6% vs 1.8%).
- In Year 11, students with a smoker at home are 4x more likely to smoke (12.6% vs 3.1%).

## Vaping Among Young People

- 1 in 4 (24%) Year 7-11 students have vaped – rising to 44% in Years 12-13.
- 7% of Year 7-11 students vape regularly, increasing to 13% in Years 12-13.
- Vaping is 2x more common in students who live with a smoker or vaper (66% vs 32%).
- 62% of Year 10s say vapes are 'easy' or 'very easy' to get.
- 57% of students believe vaping is common in their school or area.

## Health Benefits of Quitting

- Smoking is the number one preventable cause of death in the UK.
- The earlier someone starts smoking, the harder it is to quit.
- Two-thirds of long-term smokers will die from a smoking-related illness.
- Quitting reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke, and cancer, with health benefits starting within 20 minutes.

## Support to Quit Works

- Help Me Quit supports young people aged 12+ to quit smoking or vaping.
- Support is free, confidential, and proven to increase success rates.

# LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION

For a comprehensive range of topics, downloadable resources, and in-depth research on smoking and health in Wales, please visit our website: [ash.wales](https://ash.wales).

# 20 MINUTE ACTIVITY IDEAS

The Every Minute Counts theme highlights how quitting smoking gives people back time—each cigarette not smoked adds 20 minutes to their life. Here are some 20-minute activities you can run to inspire positive change and raise awareness.

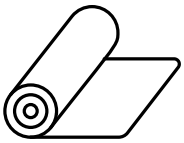
## ACTIVITIES



**The 20-Minute Walk:** Take the class on a 20-minute walk around the school grounds or a nearby green space. Encourage students to notice their surroundings and discuss the benefits of fresh air and movement.



**Active Circuit Challenge:** Set up five movement stations such as star jumps, lunges, skipping, or a balance challenge. Rotate every four minutes for a fun and active 20-minute session.



**Mindful Breathing and Stretching:** Guide students through a gentle stretching routine followed by simple breathing exercises. This helps them understand how healthy lungs work and promotes relaxation.



**Quickfire Team Games:** Organise a quick game of tag, rounders, football, or dodgeball. Split students into teams and keep the energy high with short, engaging bursts of activity.



**The 20-Minute Dance Party:** Play an upbeat playlist and let students move freely or follow a short dance routine. Dancing boosts mood, energy, and lung capacity.



**Step Challenge:** Challenge students to count their steps in 20 minutes, either as individuals or in small teams. At the end, compare results and discuss ways to stay active every day.



**Balloon Keep-Up:** Give small groups a balloon and challenge them to keep it in the air for 20 minutes without letting it touch the ground. Encourage teamwork and movement.



**Relay Races:** Organise simple relay races with a mix of running, hopping, skipping, and balancing to make it inclusive for all abilities. Keep it light and fun.



# LEVEL UP: SMOKE-FREE QUEST

PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSEMBLY & LESSON PLAN

# ASSEMBLY PLAN



**Theme:** Every Minute Counts – Choose Your Path

**Audience:** Primary School

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Objective:** Teach children about the impact of smoking. Focus on how smoking takes time, health, and money, while healthy choices lead to rewards.

## 1. Introduction: Let's Play a Game!

We're going to follow two characters on a journey in a video game. One is Raspy the Raccoon, and the other is Breezy the Fox. You're going to help me figure out what happens to them. But first, who would you pick to play as—Fox or Raccoon?"

- Ask students to vote by raising their hands for Fox or Raccoon

## Slide 2: Fox and Raccoon Begin Their Journey

The adventure begins. Look, they both start with full health and energy! But wait... what does Raccoon see up ahead? It's a mystery box - what's inside?

## Slide 3,4,5: Raccoon Finds a Cigarette

Raccoon has found a cigarette. What do you think he'll do? Let's find out... (4)

Looks like Raccoon has chosen the cigarette. (5) Raccoon has chosen to smoke the cigarette. Oh dear, look—his health bar has dropped, and he's coughing! Smoking is making him slower and weaker. It's taking his life! What could he have done instead?

## Slide 6,7,8: Fox Finds a Cigarette

Now Fox has found a cigarette. What do you think he'll do? Let's find out...(7) Fox has chosen to leave the cigarette behind. Instead, he keeps moving and... oh, look! (8) He's collected a coin! Fox is staying healthy and saving money.

What could Fox use those coins for? (Encourage answers like buying a football, saving for a trip, etc.) Why do you think Fox made that choice?

## Slide 9,10: Fox Keeps Collecting Coins

Fox spots another cigarette but has decided to dodge it by jumping over it! (10)

Fox is on a roll now and collected even more coins along the way. Look his savings are adding up. Healthy choices aren't just good for your body they save you money too!

## Slide 11,12,13: Raccoon Smokes Again

Fox is collecting lots of coins now. Uh-oh, Raccoon has found another cigarette. What do you think will happen if he smokes it? Should he do it? (13) Oh no, Raccoon has smoked another cigarette. Now he's coughing even more, and his

health bar is dropping further. Smoking is making him weaker and slower. Poor Raccoon can't keep up with Fox. How do you think Raccoon's choices are affecting his game? What could he do differently?

### **Slide 14,15: Fox Plays Football**

Now let's check in with Fox. Look! Fox has found a mini game. Should he play it? **(15)** Look! Fox is using his extra time and energy to play football. Playing games keeps him strong and healthy... and look at his heart bar! It's growing bigger and stronger! What kinds of fun, active games do you like to play? How does being active help us stay strong?

### **Slide 16: Raccoon Spots Another Cigarette**

Let's see where Raccoon is now. Oh dear, he's spotted another cigarette. Do you think he'll choose to leave it this time? Let's find out...**(17)** Nope, Raccoon has smoked the cigarette again. Now he's really struggling. He's out of breath and moving even slower. Poor Raccoon...What do you think Raccoon is missing out on because of his choices?

**Slide 18:** Look at Fox go! He's been making healthy choices, and now—he's just discovered an extra life! That means more time, more energy, and more chances to keep playing and having fun. Why do you think Fox got an extra life? What kinds of healthy choices give us more energy and help us live longer? What would you do if you had extra time every day?

**Slide 19:** And now it's time to see who reaches the finish line. Look! Fox is full of energy and is racing towards the end. But where's Raccoon? Oh no, Raccoon is still far behind. He doesn't have enough breath in his lungs to climb the ladder.

**Slide 20:** Fox has found a shiny star and has won the game! Smoking made Raccoon slower and weaker, while Fox made healthy choices and got to enjoy all the fun things in the game. Fox was able to save time, stay healthy, and have fun because of his good choices.

### **Slide 23: One Cigarette Takes 20 Minutes of Your Life**

Now here's something really important to think about. Just like in the game, smoking takes away your health and energy. Did you know that one cigarette takes 20 minutes off your life? That's time you could spend doing something fun, like playing football, reading your favourite book, or playing with friends. What could you do with 20 extra minutes every day?

**Final:** Remember, every minute counts. Let's choose to make the most of our time and enjoy all the fun and healthy things we can do!

# LESSON PLAN

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Objective:** Reinforce the assembly's key messages about healthy choices, using fun, creative, and interactive activities to engage students.

## Lesson Structure

1. **Start with the Assembly Script (10-15 minutes)** Use the slides and interactive questions to guide the discussion.
2. **Activity Options (20-25 minutes)** Choose one or more of the following creative activities based on your class's interests and time available:

### Option 1: Create Your Own Video Game Character

**Goal:** Encourage creativity and reinforce the idea of making positive choices in a fun, relatable way.

#### Materials Needed:

- Blank paper
- Colouring pencils, crayons, or markers

#### Instructions:

1. Ask students to design their own video game character who makes healthy choices, like Fox.
2. Their character can:
  - Collect rewards (e.g., coins, stars, trophies) by doing healthy activities.
  - Avoid obstacles like cigarettes or junk food.
  - Gain special powers through actions like playing sports or eating healthy snacks.
3. Display the characters on a classroom bulletin board titled "Our Healthy Heroes!"

**Extension Idea:** Turn the characters into a class video game storyboard. Students can suggest ideas for what the levels might look like and the types of challenges their characters would face.





## Option 2: The Ultimate 20-Minute Fun Plan

**Goal:** Help students think about the best possible ways to spend 20 minutes doing something healthy or fun.

### Materials Needed:

- Paper and pencils
- Optional: Stopwatch or timer

### Instructions:

Explain to students: "We've talked about how one cigarette takes 20 minutes of life. But if we had an extra 20 minutes in school, what's the most fun, healthy way we could spend it?"

Have students brainstorm and write down their ideas individually or in pairs.

Encourage creativity and variety, such as:

- Playing a group game (e.g., football, tag, or a creative class game).
- Drawing, painting, or crafting something.
- Doing a mini workout or dance.

Once everyone has shared their ideas, pick one that is practical to do as a class.

**Teacher's Note:** If time or logistics are tight, have students vote on the most creative or fun idea instead, and discuss how they could try it at home or during break time.

### 3. Closing Reflection (5-10 minutes)

Gather students for a short group discussion.

- "What did you learn today about making healthy choices?"
- "What's one healthy thing you're going to do this week?"
- "If you could tell Raccoon one piece of advice, what would it be?"

End with a positive challenge: "Let's all try to spend 20 minutes today doing something healthy or fun! Remember, every minute counts."



# TEACHER FAQ

Smoking and vaping can be sensitive topics for students, especially if they have family members who smoke or if they are exposed to smoking and vaping in their daily lives. This guide provides teachers with clear, factual information and advice on how to handle discussions in a way that is age-appropriate, non-judgemental, and supportive.

## **What if a student says their parents smoke?**

- Acknowledge their experience in a neutral way: "Lots of adults smoke, and it can be difficult to talk about. We're learning today about how smoking affects health, but that doesn't mean we are saying anything bad about people who do smoke. Some people find it really hard to stop, and there is support available to help them if they ever choose to."
- Be sensitive to personal circumstances. Avoid saying smoking is 'bad' or that 'only unhealthy people smoke.'
- Instead, focus on health benefits: "People can choose to quit smoking at any time, and many do with the right support."
- Acknowledge that quitting is hard, and some people need help to do it.

## **How do I talk about vaping without making it seem appealing?**

- Emphasise that vaping is not risk-free and is not for young people.
- Keep it factual: "Vapes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. We don't yet know all the long-term effects, but we do know that young people's lungs and brains are still developing, and using vapes could have risks."

## **What if a student asks, 'Isn't vaping safer than smoking?'**

- Be honest but clear: "For adults who already smoke, vaping is less harmful than cigarettes, which contain thousands of toxic chemicals. However, that doesn't mean vaping is safe. The best choice is to stay smoke-free and vape-free."

## **How do I handle a student who admits to smoking or vaping?**

- Stay calm and avoid punishment or judgement.
- Ask open-ended questions: "What made you decide to try it? How do you feel about it?"
- Encourage reflection on how smoking or vaping could impact their health, fitness, and finances.
- If needed, signpost them to Help Me Quit, which supports young people aged 12+ in Wales.

## TEACHER FAQ

### What if a student says smoking 'isn't that bad'?

- Provide factual, age-appropriate information: "We now know that smoking causes serious illnesses like cancer and heart disease. It also affects your breathing, energy levels, and costs a lot of money over time."
- Use relatable examples, e.g., "Smoking can make it harder to run and play sports because it damages your lungs."

### How do I talk about peer pressure and smoking/vaping?

- Explain that many young people feel pressure to try smoking or vaping because they think 'everyone is doing it.'
- Reinforce that most young people in Wales do not smoke or vape, and making independent choices is important.
- Suggest refusal strategies: "If someone offers you a vape, you can say 'No thanks, I don't want to mess up my lungs.'"

### What if a student asks about smoking cannabis?

- Keep the focus on health and legality: "Smoking any substance is harmful to the lungs, and in the UK, cannabis is illegal. There are also risks to brain development, especially for young people."
- If needed, refer students to trusted health resources or pastoral support.

For more information and additional resources, visit [ash.wales](http://ash.wales).

## NEWSLETTER TEMPLATE

### No Smoking Day at [School Name]

This week, we celebrated No Smoking Day, promoting a smoke-free, healthy future for our students. Through engaging activities and discussions, we explored the impact of smoking and vaping on health, time, and well-being. Help Me Quit provides free support for young people aged 12+ and adults looking to stop smoking or vaping. Call 0800 085 2219, text: HMQ to 80818 or visit: [helpmequit.wales](http://helpmequit.wales).

For more information on smoking and vaping, visit ASH Wales – [ash.wales](http://ash.wales).



# LETTER HOME TEMPLATE

Dear Parents and Carers,

Today, we celebrated No Smoking Day at school, reinforcing our commitment to being a healthy school and encouraging positive choices for our students.

Through interactive activities, discussions, and engaging lessons, we discussed how smoking and vaping affect health, time, and well-being.

As children and young people grow, they may have questions about smoking and vaping, especially as these topics come up in their daily lives. Here are some ways you can continue the conversation at home:

- For younger children: Keep discussions simple. Explain that smoking and vaping are unhealthy habits and can make it harder to breathe, run, and play. Focus on positive health choices like fresh air, exercise, and looking after our bodies.
- For older children and teenagers: They may already be aware of smoking and vaping in their environment or among peers. Be open and approachable—discuss the risks honestly, including how these habits impact lung health, money, and energy. Encourage them to think about their future health and the benefits of making smoke-free choices.

For parents, carers, or young people looking for support to quit smoking or vaping, Help Me Quit offers free, friendly advice tailored to individuals aged 12 and over.

## **Help Me Quit Contact Details:**

- Call: 0800 085 2219
- Text: HMQ to 80818
- Visit: [www.helpmequit.wales](http://www.helpmequit.wales)

For further information on smoking, vaping, and quitting support, visit: ASH Wales – [ash.wales](http://ash.wales).

Thank you for supporting our healthy school and helping us spread the No Smoking Day message beyond the school gates. Together, we can help every young person make positive choices for their health.

[School Signature]





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STOPIO  
-  
HELP ME  
QUIT**

**Help to Quit Smoking**

**Freephone: 0800 085 2219**

**Visit: [helpmequit.wales](http://helpmequit.wales)**