



**NO SMOKING DAY**

**12TH MARCH 2025**

**SECONDARY 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.

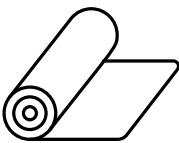
### ACTIVITIES



**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.



**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.



**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.



nic-oh-time



38M Posts 3.2B Followers 1 Following

Nic-Oh

I'm not going anywhere... and neither are you

Facebook profile and 1 other link

Edit Profile

Share Profile



Vibes



24/7



CHILL



Tick-Tok



# NIC-OH'S INFLUENCE

## SECONDARY SCHOOL ASSEMBLY & LESSON PLAN

# ASSEMBLY PLAN

**Audience:** Secondary School Students (Ages 12-16)

**Duration:** 15-20 Minutes

**Objective:** Educate students on the manipulative grip of nicotine addiction by presenting it as an influencer relationship. The goal is for students to recognise Nic-Oh's control and feel the emotional weight of addiction—before realising who Nic-Oh really is.

## **Slide 1: Introduction**

Let's talk about influencers. Whether it's TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube—these people shape what we wear, what's trending, even how we think.

**Questions:** Who are your favourite influencers? Why do you follow them? What makes someone worth following?

## **Slide 2: – Meet Nic-Oh**

This is Nic-Oh. Nic has billions of followers worldwide. Some of you might already be following them. Nic-Oh doesn't post flashy giveaways or promote skincare routines. But they still have a grip on millions of people.

## **Slide 3 & 4: Why People Love Nic-Oh**

These posts make Nic-Oh seem like a great person to follow, right? They're supportive, reliable, and always there when you need them. These messages show how much people rely on Nic-Oh

**Questions:** Why does Nic-Oh have this much control?

## **Slide 5: Would You Follow Nic-Oh?**

So, now that you've seen a bit of what Nic-Oh is like—would you follow them? **Ask for a show of hands.**

Some of you might think Nic-Oh sounds great, others might not. But what if you followed an influencer that was really hard to unfollow? Let's have a look at some of Nic-Oh's posts.

## **Slide 6: The Reality Behind Nic-Oh**

This post might seem lighthearted, but the comments tell another story. People talk about missing moments—whether it's a winning goal or the end of a movie—because of Nic-Oh. Nic-Oh is pulling people away from things that matter whether it's being with friends, making memories, special moments.

## **Slide 7: "Friendship comes at a price. Worth it tho... right?"**

"Friendship comes at a price. Worth it tho... right?" Nic isn't just a friend—they're controlling. They drain your money, convincing you to spend on them instead of

things you actually want. Someone says they were saving for new shoes but ended up wasting their money elsewhere. Another says they don't even want to add it up. Nic makes it seem like no big deal, but imagine a friend who constantly takes from you and never gives back.

### **Slide 8: Show: "Where does the time go?"**

Nic-Oh's followers know they're being drained of time. Someone literally says, 'You're draining me,' and Nic-Oh's response? 'You say that, but you're still here.' Time is something we can't get back, and Nic-Oh doesn't care.

### **Slide 10: Who Is Nic-Oh?**

Who Is Nic-Oh? At first, Nic-Oh seemed like a friend, someone who always had your back. But now we see the truth: Nic-Oh is controlling you, taking your time, money, energy—and giving nothing back. Nic-Oh traps people, making them believe they need them. Why are people still following Nic-Oh?

### **Slide 11: The Big Reveal**

Because Nic-Oh isn't just an influencer. Nic-Oh is an addiction. Nic-Oh is Nicotine.

### **Slide 12: How Nic-Oh Hooks You**

- Nic-Oh works just like an influencer—they get into your head, make you think you need them, and slowly take control. At first, Nic-Oh feels comforting, showing up when you're stressed or tired. But over time, they take more - time, money, and energy—without giving anything back.
- When people try to leave, Nic-Oh makes it feel impossible, saying things like: 'You need me.' 'What will you do without me?' Nic-Oh makes you feel in control, but they're the ones pulling the strings. That's how addiction works—it traps you in a cycle that feels impossible to break.

### **Slide 13: The Side Effects of Nic-Oh**

- Nic-Oh isn't just taking your time and money—they're changing your brain, too. Nicotine tricks your brain into thinking you need it to feel good, but that's not true. When it wears off, it leaves you feeling Anxious, Irritable, Restless.
- Did you know that every cigarette takes 20 minutes off your life? Over time, that adds up to days, weeks, even years lost
- And then there's the time and money. Nic-Oh takes it little by little until you're left wondering: 'Where did it all go?' Imagine what you could have done instead—a concert, a game, a holiday.

### **Closing Question Final Slide:**

If Nic-Oh was a real person—would you still follow them?





# LESSON PLAN

**Duration:** 1 Hour

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

## Lesson Structure

1. **Start with Assembly Script (10-15 minutes)** Use the slides and interactive questions to guide the discussion.
2. **Activity Options (45 minutes)** Choose one or more of the following creative activities based on your class's interests and time available:

### Option 1: "Create Your Own Influencer"

**Goal:** Students will design a fictional influencer who promotes positive, life-enhancing habits (e.g., fitness, art, hobbies).

#### Instructions:

**Introduce the task:** "Nic-Oh showed us what a toxic influencer looks like—controlling, manipulative, and harmful. Now, let's flip the script and create an influencer who actually helps people." **In groups of 3-4: Students will create an Instagram profile for their positive influencer.**

- A username (e.g., FitWithFinn, ChillTimeCharlie).
- 3 captions/posts promoting healthy habits (e.g., mindfulness, exercise, hobbies).
- A short bio describing what their influencer stands for.

#### Present and Discuss:

- Groups share their influencer with the class (1-2 minutes each).
- "How is your influencer different from Nic-Oh? What kinds of choices would this influencer encourage? How could they help their followers avoid negative habits like Nic-Oh's?"



## Option 2 (New): "Nic-Oh's Lifeline" (Interactive Timeline Challenge)

**Goal:** Students will create a visual timeline of what happens to someone who follows Nic-Oh, exploring how small actions lead to long-term consequences.

### Instructions:

**Set the Scene (5 Minutes):** "Let's imagine someone starts following Nic-Oh. At first, things seem great, but over time, Nic-Oh starts to take more and more. Together, we're going to map out how Nic-Oh affects their life step by step."

- Divide the class into small groups of 4-5.
- Each group is tasked with creating a Lifeline Timeline for one of Nic-Oh's followers.
- Provide groups with key milestones to incorporate into their timeline:
  - The Beginning: Why did they start following Nic-Oh? (Stress relief, boredom, fitting in, etc.)
  - The Build-Up: How does Nic-Oh start impacting their life? (E.g., missing moments, feeling tired, losing money.)
  - The Turning Point: When do they start noticing Nic-Oh's grip on their life?
  - The Consequences: What happens over time? (E.g., missing key events, health issues, financial struggles.)
- Each group creates their timeline as a story:
  - Give their Nic-Oh follower a name and age.
  - Use specific examples for each milestone.
  - Make it visual: groups can draw the timeline on paper or use a whiteboard.

### Group Presentations (5 Minutes):

- Each group shares their Nic-Oh follower's "journey."
- Key Questions to Ask:
  - "What was the biggest impact Nic-Oh had on their life?"
  - "At what point should they have unfollowed Nic-Oh?"
  - "What could have helped them break free from Nic-Oh's grip earlier?"





### **Option 3: "The Ripple Effect" Debate**

**Goal:** Students will explore the broader social, emotional, and financial consequences of following Nic-Oh.

#### **Instructions:**

**Set the Scene:** "Nic-Oh doesn't just impact one part of your life—they create a ripple effect. Let's debate the different ways Nic-Oh's influence spreads into people's lives."

#### **Divide the Class: Split students into 3 groups:**

- Group 1: Focuses on the time impact (e.g., missed moments, lost memories).
- Group 2: Focuses on the health impact (e.g., anxiety, stress, physical consequences).
- Group 3: Focuses on the financial impact (e.g., money wasted on nicotine products).

#### **Group Prep (10 minutes):**

- Each group creates an argument for how Nic-Oh negatively affects their assigned area. They should include examples and discuss why it matters.

#### **Class Debate (15-20 minutes):**

- Groups take turns presenting their points. After each presentation, allow the other groups to ask questions or offer counterpoints.

#### **Wrap-Up Discussion:**

- "Which impact do you think is the most serious?"
- "How do these impacts connect to each other (e.g., poor health leading to lost time and wasted money)?"





# 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]







**HELPA FII  
STOPIO  
-  
HELP ME  
QUIT**

**Help to Quit Smoking**

**Freephone: 0800 085 2219**

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