Smoke Free Zones Policy

Purpose:

From 13 April 2015 the amended Tobacco Act 1987 (Vic) bans smoking within the grounds of, and at and within four metres of an entrance (pedestrian access points) to, all Victorian primary and secondary schools premises. This includes all Government, independent and Catholic schools. The ban therefore applies when other activities are taking place on school grounds, such as fetes or sporting events and school holiday programs as well as during school hours.

Melton Primary School recognises that role modelling can have a significant impact on students, and smokefree areas make smoking less visible and less socially acceptable. MPS believes that smoking bans denormalise smoking and discourages students from taking up smoking. MPS recognises that exposure to secondhand smoke is harmful to health and that the school community has a right to be protected.

Accordingly, the following smokefree policy has been developed by MPS.

The School will

- provide a factsheet to the school community and further information about the bans will be available from the Tobacco Reforms website.
- install suitable ‘No smoking’ signs at all entrances to the school premises.

Who is affected

MPS’s policy applies to all staff members, students, visitors, contractors and volunteers of MPS at all times.
Smoke free areas at Melton Primary

Under the Tobacco Act 1987 (Vic) smoking is banned within the grounds of, and at and within the grounds of, and within four metres of an entrance to, Melton Primary School. Melton Primary School Council have asked that this be amended to ten meters of the school entrance and along all school boundaries.

The ban applies at all times, no matter whether the building or school grounds are being used for education purposes or other purposes. The ban therefore applies when other activities are taking place on school grounds, such as fetes or sporting events and school holiday programs as well as during school hours.

The totally smokefree status of our school will be clearly signed at the entrance to, and within school grounds. This smokefree policy will be promoted within the school and in external school publications e.g. newsletters, website.

Following the policy

This smokefree policy is an integral part of our existing workplace health and safety policies. Staff adherence to this policy is a condition of employment at MPS.

Staff members are reminded that they are obliged, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic), to protect the health of their fellow workers. The responsibility for enforcing the policy rests with all staff.

Any staff member who has a grievance relating to this policy should speak to the Health and Safety Officer or appropriate representative.

Staff cannot be disciplined for smoking away from the school, in their own time. (However, MPS can expand their smokefree policy to include banning smoking behaviours at externally held school events such as school camps, sporting events, formals, etc.)
The Government will

- provide public awareness and an information campaign to promote community awareness of the bans. Print and radio advertising, as well as social media, will be used prior to the introduction of the bans and for a period following their commencement.

- give officers from councils the responsibility to enforce the bans, and will take an education approach, making sure smokers understand the new laws. However, an infringement penalty of $147 could apply to adults caught wilfully breaking the law.

- allow Council officers the power to enter school premises to monitor and enforce the ban. However, this is subject to permission from the school principal and, if permission is provided, the inspector must be accompanied by the school principal or a person acting on their behalf. It is anticipated that the focus for council officers will be on those smoking within four metres of school entrances, and that the power to enter school premises will be used sparingly.

Contacts

Tobacco Control Section in the DHHS
- phone (03) 9096 0469, or via
- email tobacco.policy@health.vic.gov.au.

Appeals process

Melton Primary have asked that the 4m from the school entrances be changed to 10m and have added along all fence lines. If anyone objects to these amended they must notify the school in writing by Tuesday 19th of May 2015. Attention Emma Sutherland.