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27 March 2015

CIRCULAR TO PRINCIPALS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN VICTORIA

New smoking bans to apply on school grounds and at school entrances

MAIN POINTS

- From **13 April 2015**, smoking will be banned within the school grounds of, and within four metres of an entrance to, all primary and secondary schools in Victoria, as well as all Victorian childcare centres, kindergartens and pre-schools, under an amendment to the *Tobacco Act 1987 (Vic.)*.
- While schools may already have a policy banning smoking, the new bans are enshrined in legislation and will apply to all schools in Victoria, thereby ensuring a consistent approach across the government and non-government sectors.
- It is a legislative requirement that each school installs suitable 'No smoking' signs at **all** entrances to the school premises.
- Signs and other communication materials, such as posters and brochures, will be available to order free-of-charge from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) from mid-March 2015. These can be ordered from the Tobacco Reforms website www.health.vic.gov.au/tobaccoreforms. Schools should only order items with the following product codes: **ATP1055, ATP1057, ATP1059, ATP1060 and ATP1061**.
- Schools are encouraged to [download and print](#) signs for display while waiting for ordered signs to arrive. These are also available on the Tobacco Reform website.

CRITICAL DATES

- 'No smoking' signs are now available for order.
- The legislated smoking bans will commence on **Monday 13 April 2015**.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

- Principals are asked to:
 - visit the [Tobacco Reforms website](#) for access to the [Online Order Form](#) to order 'No smoking' signs for all school entrances
 - display 'No smoking' signs on all school entrances
 - communicate the new legislative requirements regarding smoking to the school community.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- A public awareness and information campaign will 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.
- Officers from councils will be responsible for enforcing 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.

- Council officers have been given 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.
- Schools are encouraged to join over 650 schools currently participating in the [Healthy Together Achievement Program](#) to create a healthy learning and smoke-free environment. The Achievement Program supports a whole-school approach to promoting health and improving student wellbeing and engagement and this may also support the introduction of the bans.
- Factsheets and further information about the bans is available from the [Tobacco Reforms](#) website.

CONTACT/ENQUIRIES

- For enquiries regarding the new smoking bans, please contact the Tobacco Control Section at the DHHS if you have any questions, on 03 9096 0469 or via email tobacco.policy@health.vic.gov.au.
- For all other enquiries, please contact Mr Andrew Grindlay, Emergency Management, Catholic Education Office Melbourne on 03 9267 0228 or via email agrindlay@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au.



Stephen Elder
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR