

Dadansoddi ar gyfer Polisi



Analysis for Policy

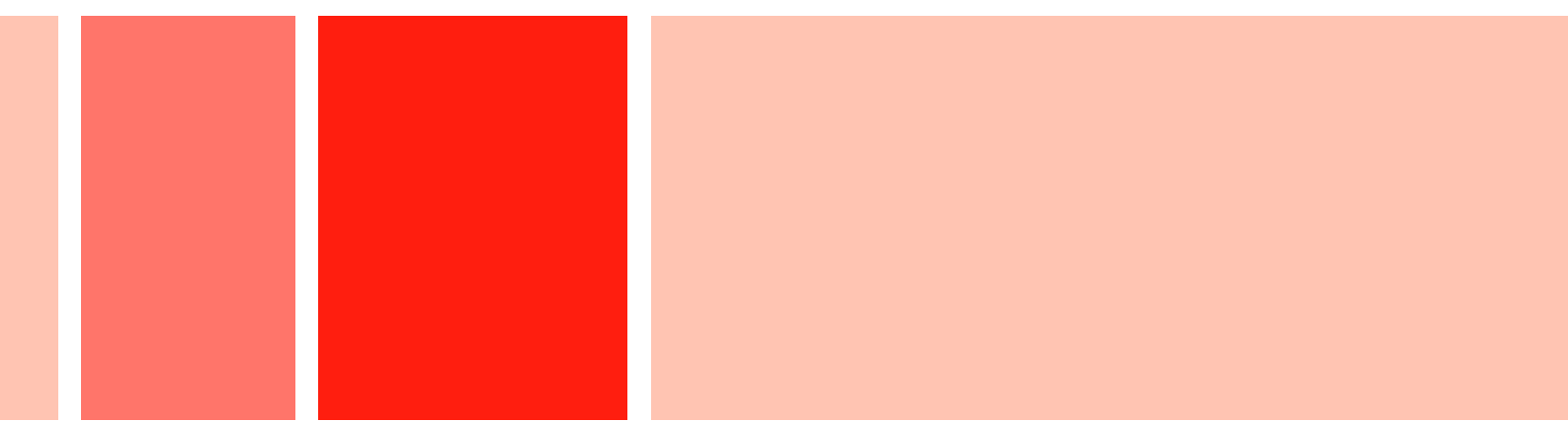


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E-cigarette policies: A survey of schools in Wales



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Key findings

- All primary and secondary schools in Wales were invited to take part in this survey which aimed to gather evidence about the implementation of e-cigarette policies. Responses were received from 13 per cent of primary schools (N=177) and 31 per cent of secondary schools (N=64).
- Around seven out of ten of the secondary schools (72 per cent) and a third of the primary schools (34 per cent) that responded already have an e-cigarette policy, or intend to develop one.
- The majority of primary and secondary schools are not aware of e-cigarettes being used on the school premises by pupils, staff or visitors.
- However, 17 per cent of secondary schools reported that pupils currently use e-cigarettes on the school premises. Only three per cent reported that they are used by staff or visitors.
- Around a third of the primary schools and just under half of the secondary schools that had an e-cigarette policy said that one of the reasons for having one was because they were concerned that e-cigarettes will lead to smoking tobacco, or that it will make smoking tobacco more acceptable.
- However, the principal reason given by primary schools (61 per cent) and secondary schools (72 per cent) that had an e-cigarette policy was to help with enforcement of the existing smoking ban.
- E-cigarette policies in primary schools are focused towards staff, visitors and pupils' families, while secondary school policies are more focused towards pupils.
- Given the conflicting messages around e-cigarettes, some schools commented that they would like clear guidance from local authorities and the Welsh Government on what approach they should take.

1. Introduction

The Public Health White Paper ‘Listening to you – Your health matters’¹ sets out a series of proposals for legislation to help further improve and protect people’s health and wellbeing in Wales.

One of the proposals within the White Paper is to restrict the use of e-cigarettes in enclosed public places in Wales. The proposal aims to address concerns that the use of e-cigarettes makes it difficult to enforce, and undermines, the smoke-free regulations.

It also reflects concerns among some public health practitioners and international organisations such as the World Health Organization² that e-cigarettes could renormalise smoking. Evidence also suggests that young people in Wales are using e-cigarettes³, and there are concerns among some public health academics that they could act as a gateway to smoking tobacco⁴.

However, these views are not universally accepted⁵, and the different interpretations of the evidence base have been summarised as a debate between those advocating e-cigarettes as a form of harm reduction, and those taking a precautionary approach⁶.

To help address some of these issues and inform the legislative process, the Welsh Government developed an online survey on e-cigarette policies and

¹ <http://gov.wales/consultations/healthsocialcare/white-paper/?status=closed&lang=en>

² WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Sixth session, Moscow, Russian Federation, 13–18 October 2014.

³ Moore, G.F. et al (2014). ‘E-cigarette use and intentions to smoke among 10-11-year-old never-smokers in Wales’, *Tobacco Control*, ([10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2014-052011](https://doi.org/10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2014-052011)).

⁴ See, for example: Dutra, L.M. and Glantz, S.A. (2014). ‘Electronic cigarettes and conventional cigarette use among US adolescents:168(7): 610-617.

⁵ See, for example: McNeill, A. et al (2014). ‘A critique of a World Health Organization-commissioned report and associated paper on electronic cigarettes’, *Addiction*, 109(12): 2128-2134.

⁶ Fairchild, A.L. and Bayer, R. (2015). ‘Smoke and fire over e-cigarettes’, *Science*, 347(6220): 375-376

their implementation in primary and secondary schools across Wales. The survey aimed to provide policy makers with some basic evidence on:

- awareness of the use of e-cigarettes on school premises;
- whether schools have an e-cigarette policy;
- the reasons for deciding to develop, or not develop, a policy;
- the nature of the policies and what they cover;
- whether schools were using a policy for enforcement of the current smoke-free legislation; and
- the extent to which e-cigarettes were perceived by schools as normalising smoking behaviour, or acting as a gateway to smoking tobacco.

2. Methods

All primary and secondary schools in Wales were invited to take part in the survey (questionnaire attached at Annex A). The questionnaire was available bilingually in English and Welsh. The survey was sent out by email via the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS) to local authority Healthy School co-ordinators, asking them to distribute the survey among all primary and secondary schools in their authority. The emails contained a link to the online survey, using SNAP software. Two follow-up reminder emails were sent out following the initial email to encourage responses.

The survey was designed to be completed quickly in order to minimise burden on respondents. For the majority of questions a response was not mandatory, therefore respondents could choose not to answer if preferred. Several questions in the survey allowed respondents to include further comments and a selection of these are included in the report to illustrate the views expressed.

Responses were primarily provided by WNHSS in-school co-ordinators with data collected between 3 September and 24 October 2014. In total, the survey was sent to 1,540 schools in Wales (primary = 1,333; secondary = 207). A total of 264 complete responses were received during the survey period. Following cleaning of the data to identify duplicate or ineligible responses (for example, where school status was not provided, or where special schools had both primary and secondary status), 23 responses were excluded from the analysis. Where there were two responses from the same school that gave a conflicting answer about whether or not they had an e-cigarette policy, a conservative assumption was made that the school did not have a policy. The final dataset for analysis included 241 schools (primary = 177; secondary = 64).

The following chapter presents the survey results and findings about e-cigarette use and policy in the responding primary and secondary schools in Wales.

3. Findings

3.1 Sample profile

In total, there were 241 valid responses to the survey. This included 177 primary schools and 64 secondary schools (a response rate of 13 per cent and 31 per cent respectively).

The number of primary and secondary school responses by local authority is available in Annex B.

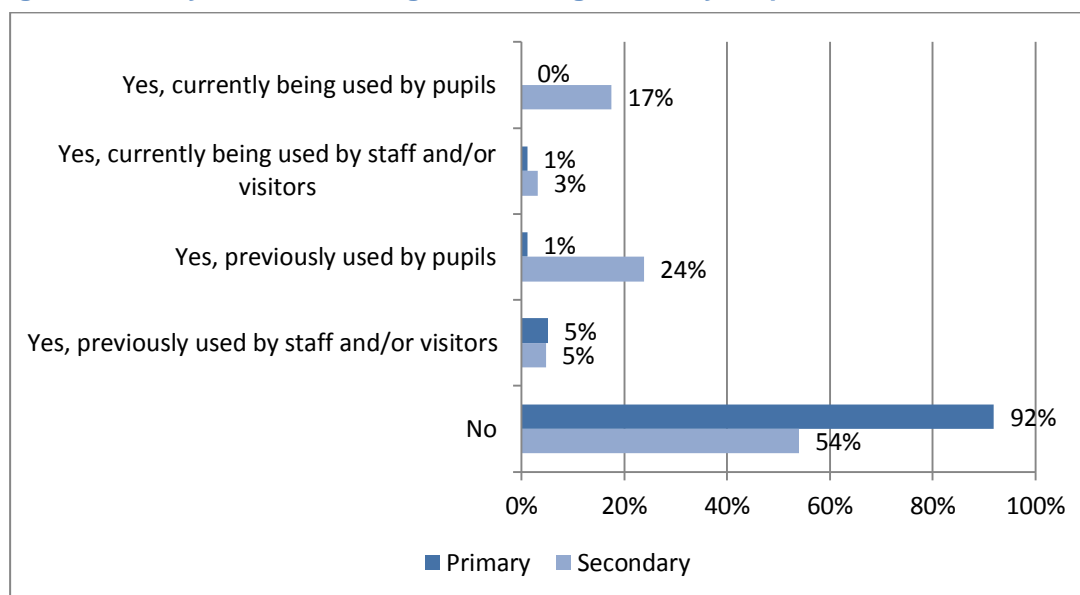
3.2 Awareness of e-cigarettes being used on premises

Respondents were asked if they were aware of e-cigarettes being used on their school premises.

The vast majority of primary schools (92 per cent) reported that they were not aware of e-cigarettes being currently or previously used by pupils, staff or visitors. No primary schools reported having pupils currently using e-cigarettes, and only one per cent reported that staff or visitors currently use them on the premises.

Just over half of secondary schools reported that they were not aware of e-cigarettes being currently or previously used on the school premises (54 per cent). However, 17 per cent reported they have pupils currently using e-cigarettes on the premises (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Are you aware of e-cigarettes being used on your premises?



N=241 (Primary=177; Secondary N=64)

Total may exceed 100% as respondents could choose more than one answer.

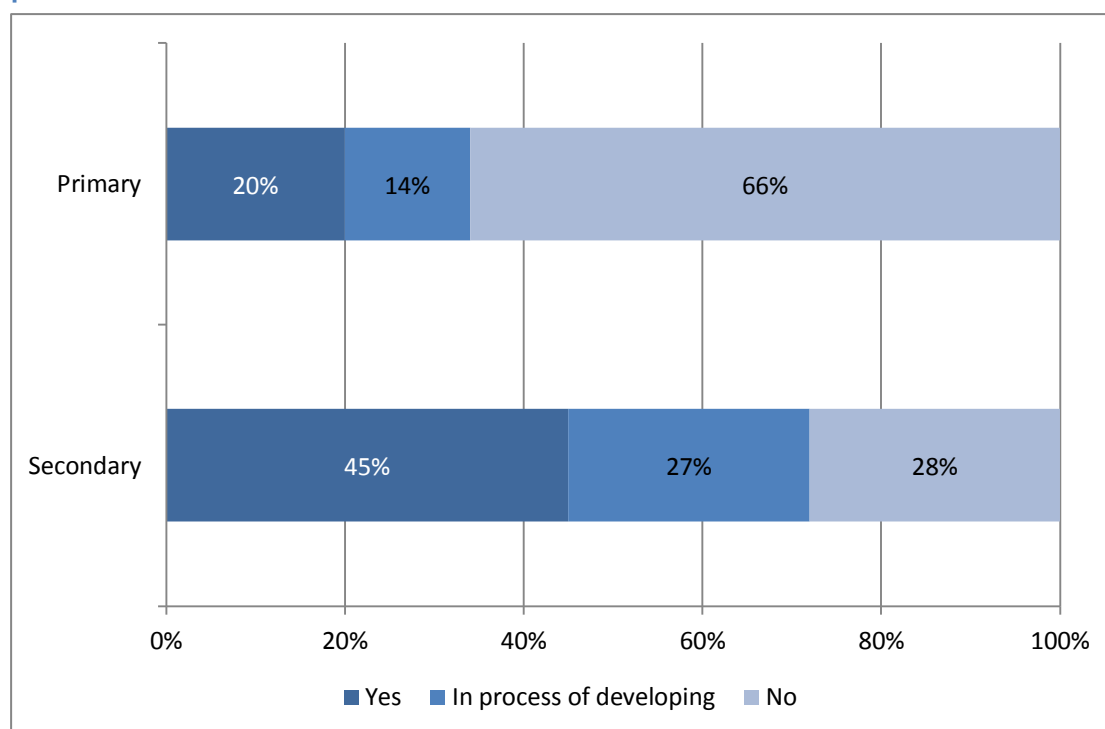
3.3 Policies to prohibit use of e-cigarettes

Respondents were asked if their school had a policy prohibiting the use of e-cigarettes, if they were in the process of developing one, or intend to do so.

In total, one out of five primary schools (20 per cent) had already developed a policy. A further 14 per cent were in the process of developing a policy, while the remaining two-thirds had not considered having a policy, or decided not to implement one.

Just under half of secondary schools (45 per cent) had an e-cigarette policy in place. A further 27 per cent reported they are in the process of developing a policy, while a similar proportion (28 per cent) had not considered developing a policy (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Do you have, or intend to have, a policy prohibiting e-cigarette use on the premises?



N=241 (Primary=177; Secondary N=64)

Additional comments provided on this issue included reasons why e-cigarette policies had not been considered, and a desire for more information on the subject from the Welsh Government and local authorities.

“I didn't consider having a separate policy for e-cigarettes [...] I assumed our current 'no smoking' policy covered e-cigarettes.”

Primary school

“I would appreciate a clear consistent message from the Welsh Government regarding this aspect.” **Primary school**

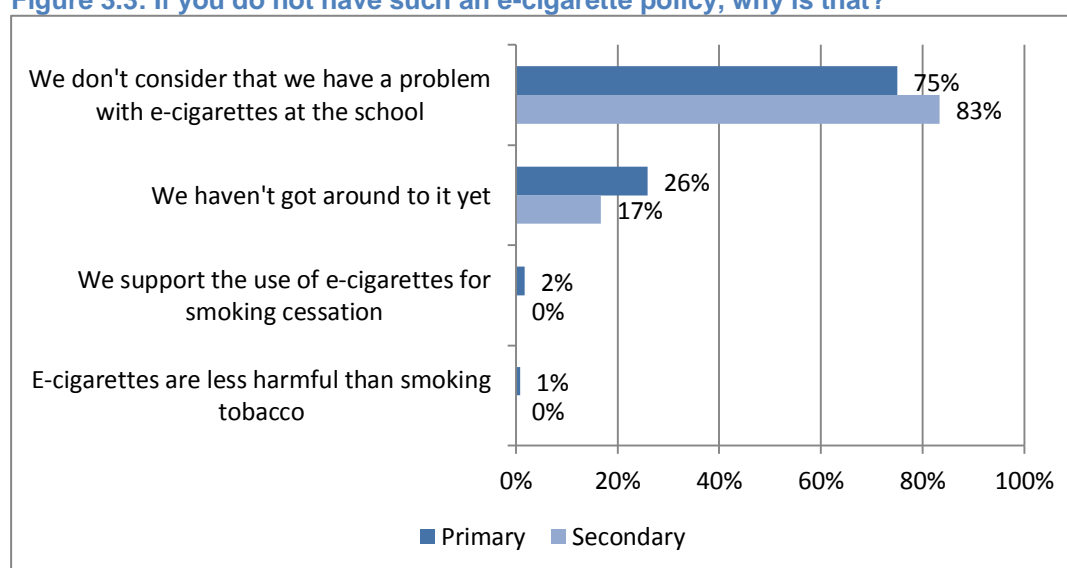
“Our school has adopted the County Council policy and we have had no issues with smoking here, or e-cigarettes.” **Primary school**

3.4 Reasons for not having an e-cigarette policy

Schools that had not considered having a policy, or decided not to implement a policy, were asked why this was. From a list of prompted answers, the majority of the primary schools gave the reason as being that they did not consider having a problem with e-cigarettes at the school (75 per cent). Around a quarter (26 per cent) said they had not got around to developing a policy yet.

The majority of the secondary schools without an e-cigarette policy gave the reason as being that they did not consider there was a problem with e-cigarettes at school (83 per cent), while 17 per cent had not got around to developing a policy yet (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3: If you do not have such an e-cigarette policy, why is that?



N=134 (Primary=117; Secondary=17)

Total may exceed 100% as respondents could choose more than one answer.

Comments from primary schools further explained the reasons for not having a policy on e-cigarettes, with many stating that it is not seen as an issue:

“On top of all other considerations, I don't believe that primary schools need to develop an e-cigarette policy. I would be very curious to see the scientific evidence around the issue.” **Primary school**

“We have a smoke free policy in place that does not include consideration of use of e-cigarettes. Should we find there is wide use of them on school premises in the future or new legislation in place then we shall review our current policy.” **Primary school**

“Although it is not written into a policy document to my knowledge, we obviously do not allow pupils to use e-cigarettes.” **Primary school**

“We take the view that e-cigarettes are helpful in terms of supporting those people who smoke to give up or reduce their intake of tobacco. But as a school we do not want to promote anything associated with smoking.” **Primary school**

Additional comments from secondary schools included that even without a policy, e-cigarettes would be treated in a similar way to tobacco cigarettes:

“E-cigarettes are treated the same as normal ‘conventional’ cigarettes in regard to their use on school site.” **Secondary school**

“This is not something we have considered to be honest. We have a smoking ban of course but as yet no one has tried to violate it with e-cigarettes” **Secondary school**

3.5 Reasons for having an e-cigarette policy

Schools who reported having, or planning to have, an e-cigarette policy were asked why this was. Respondents could choose multiple reasons from a list of prompted answers.

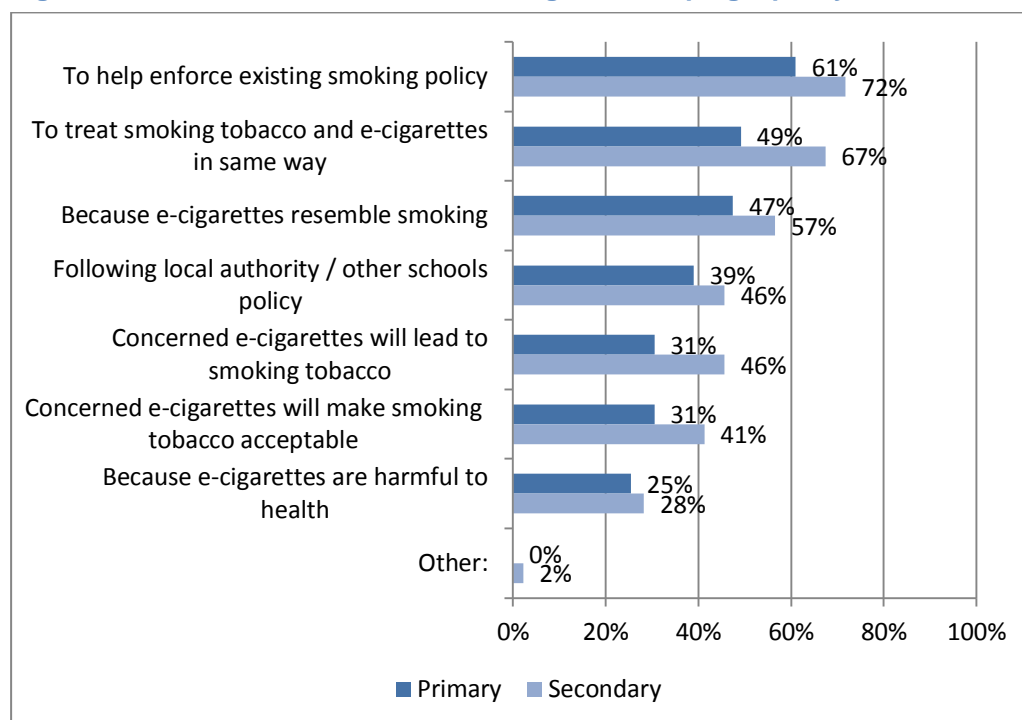
Around six out of ten of the primary schools (61 per cent) said that the policy was developed to help with enforcement of their existing smoking policy, while around half said it was because they wanted to treat smoking tobacco and using e-cigarettes in the same way (49 per cent), or because e-cigarettes resemble smoking (47 per cent).

Around a third said that it was because e-cigarettes will lead to smoking tobacco cigarettes, or that it will make smoking tobacco more acceptable.

Of the secondary schools with a policy, or intending to develop one, almost three quarters (72 per cent) reported it was to help with enforcement of their existing smoking policy, while two thirds (67 per cent) said they want to treat smoking tobacco and using e-cigarettes in the same way.

Just under half said they had an e-cigarette policy because of concerns that e-cigarettes may lead to smoking tobacco cigarettes, with two in five saying they were concerned it will make smoking tobacco more acceptable (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: What are the reasons for having or developing a policy?



N=106 (Primary=60; Secondary=46)

Total may exceed 100% as respondents could choose more than one answer.

Other additional comments explained that an e-cigarette policy was designed following advice from Healthy School co-ordinators, while others expressed issues with understanding what approach to take with regards to e-cigarettes, and questions regarding their legality among under 18s.

“Following our last Healthy Schools survey, the county’s Healthy Schools Officer suggested that we create an e-cigarettes policy or include them in our present substance abuse policy.” **Primary school**

“The message from public health organisations and local government is conflicting and we are seeking guidance from the Welsh Government.” **Primary school**

“It is our understanding that [using] e-cigarettes is illegal ^[7] for anyone under the age of 18.” **Secondary school**

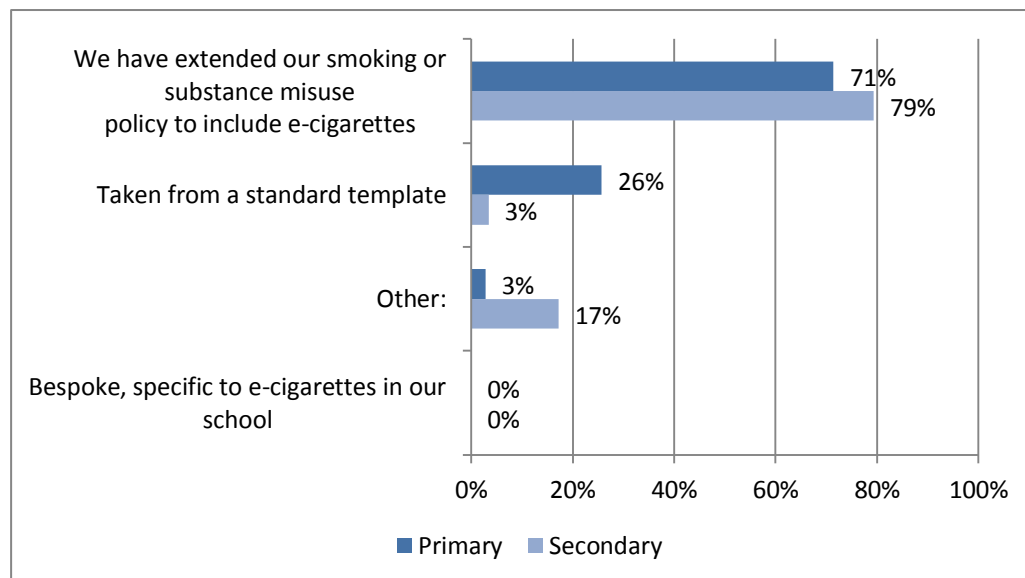
⁷ Use of e-cigarettes by under 18s is not illegal, although many e-cigarette retailers operate a voluntary code of conduct to not sell to under 18s.

3.6 How e-cigarette policies were developed

Schools that already had an e-cigarette policy were asked how it was developed. The majority of the primary schools reported that policies had been developed by extending the existing smoke-free policy (71 per cent) followed by 26 per cent using a standard template.

Most of the secondary schools reported that policies had been developed by extending their existing smoke-free policy (79 per cent). None of the primary or secondary schools developed a bespoke policy specific to e-cigarettes (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: How was your e-cigarette policy developed?



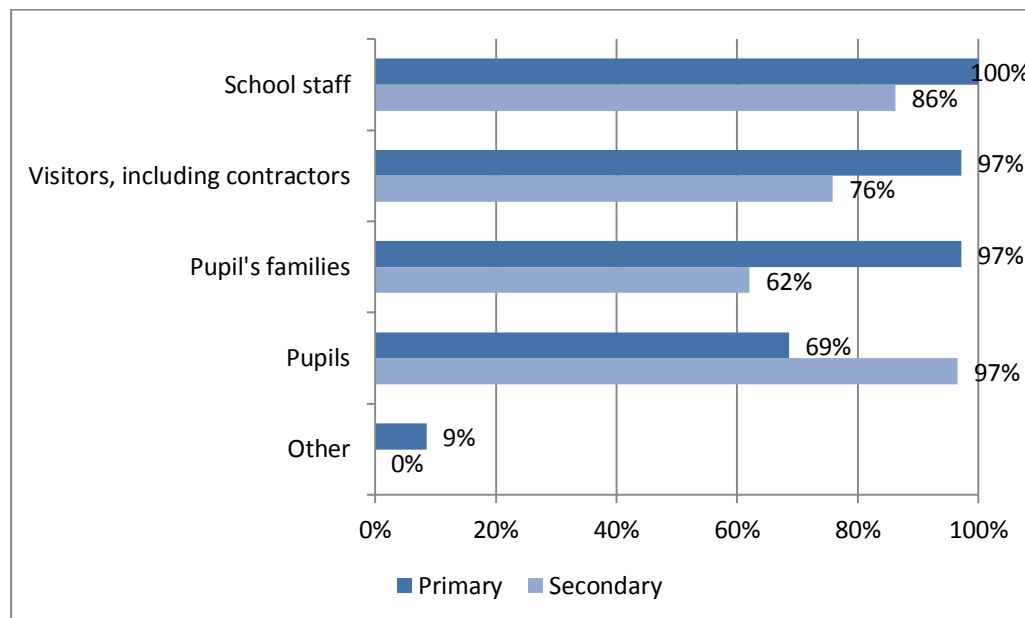
N=64 (Primary=35; Secondary=29)

3.7 Who the e-cigarette policies cover

All primary schools that had policies included members of staff under their policy, while almost all included visitors and pupils' families. A smaller proportion of policies (69 per cent) included pupils. Nine per cent of respondents also referred to others specifically in their policies, including 'other adults' and 'students on placement'.

Almost all secondary school policies included pupils, with most also including the staff and visitors. A smaller proportion of policies included pupils' families (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6: Who is covered by the policy?



N=64 (Primary=35; Secondary=29)

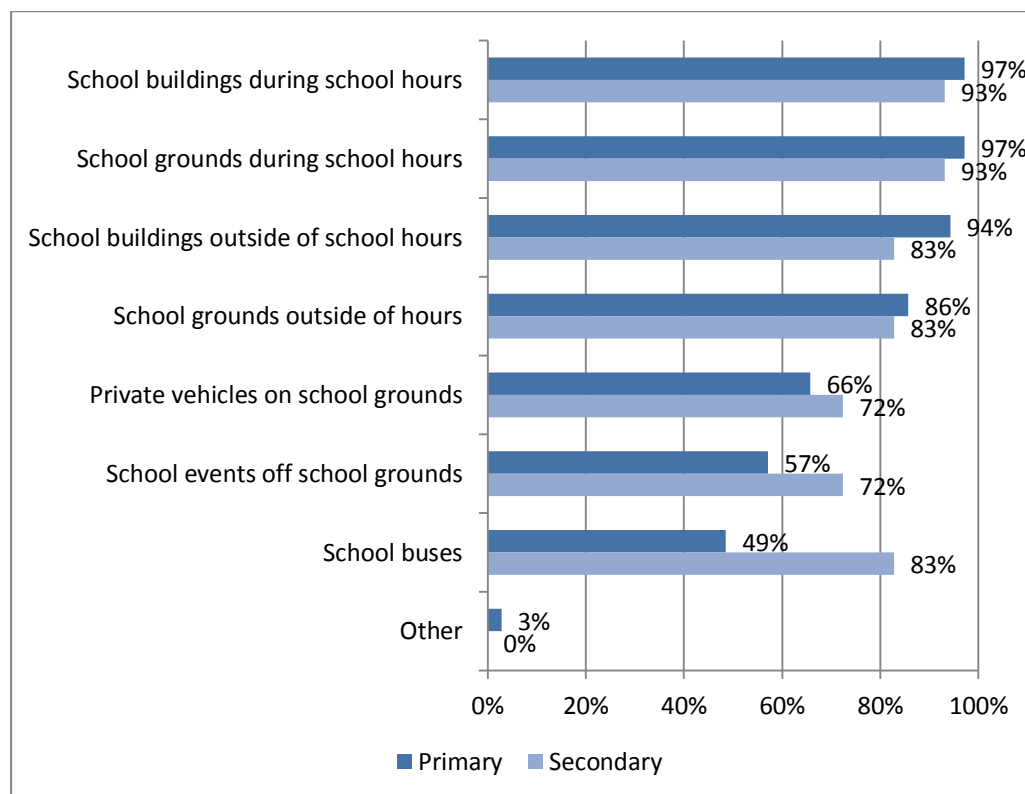
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could choose more than one answer.

3.8 Locations covered by e-cigarette policies

Almost all primary schools with policies reported that their policies covered areas within school buildings or school grounds during school hours, and school buildings outside school hours. In addition, a majority of primary school policies covered private vehicles on school grounds and school events off school grounds, while around half covered school buses.

Almost all secondary school policies covered school buildings or school grounds during school hours, although to a slightly lesser extent outside of school hours. Almost three quarters of secondary school policies covered private vehicles on school grounds and school events off school grounds, while around eight out of ten included school buses (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7: Does your e-cigarette policy prohibit use in the following locations?



N=64 (Primary=35; Secondary=29)

Total may exceed 100% as respondents could choose more than one answer.

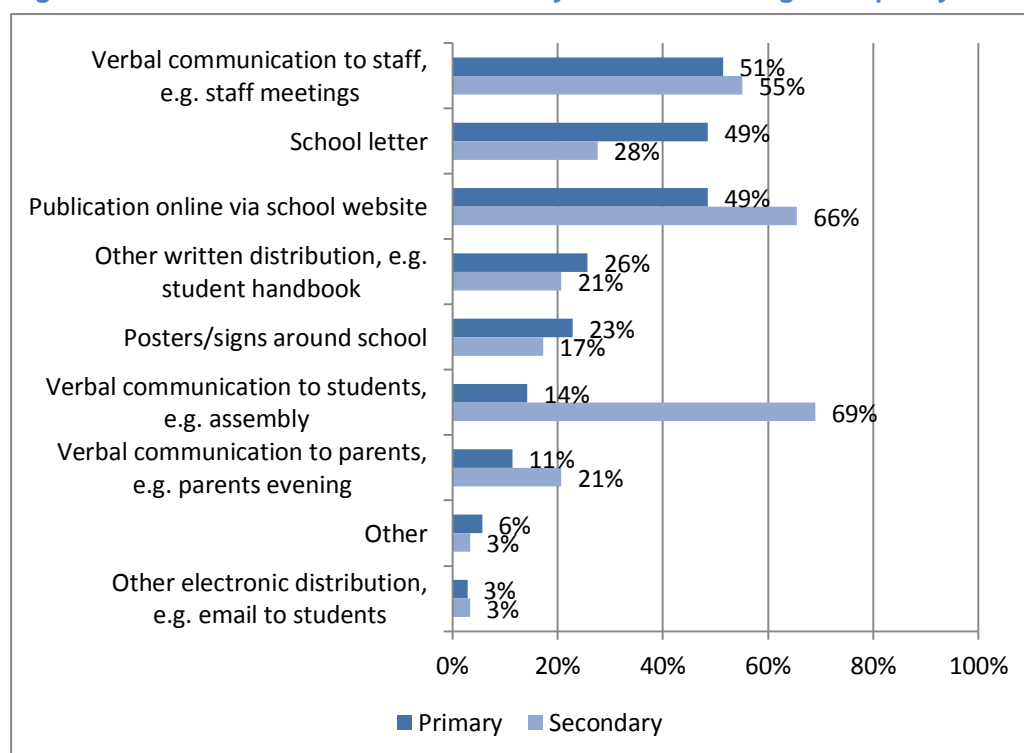
3.9 Methods used to communicate policies

Schools that had an e-cigarette policy were asked how it was communicated to pupils, staff and visitors.

The most popular methods of communication for around half of the primary schools were verbal communication to staff, school letters, and publication on the school website.

However, the most popular methods for the secondary schools to communicate their e-cigarette policies were through verbal communication to students (69 per cent) and publication of the policy on the school website (66 per cent), as Figure 3.8 shows.

Figure 3.8: Methods used to communicate your school's e-cigarette policy



N=64 (Primary=35; Secondary=29)

Total may exceed 100% as respondents could choose more than one answer.

A comment from one primary school stated that letters had been sent out to specific parents who had been observed using e-cigarettes around school

premises. Additional comments on how secondary schools communicated their e-cigarette policy included:

“[The policy] forms part of an agreement upon recruitment of all staff that smoking of any form is prohibited in any part of school grounds.”

Secondary school

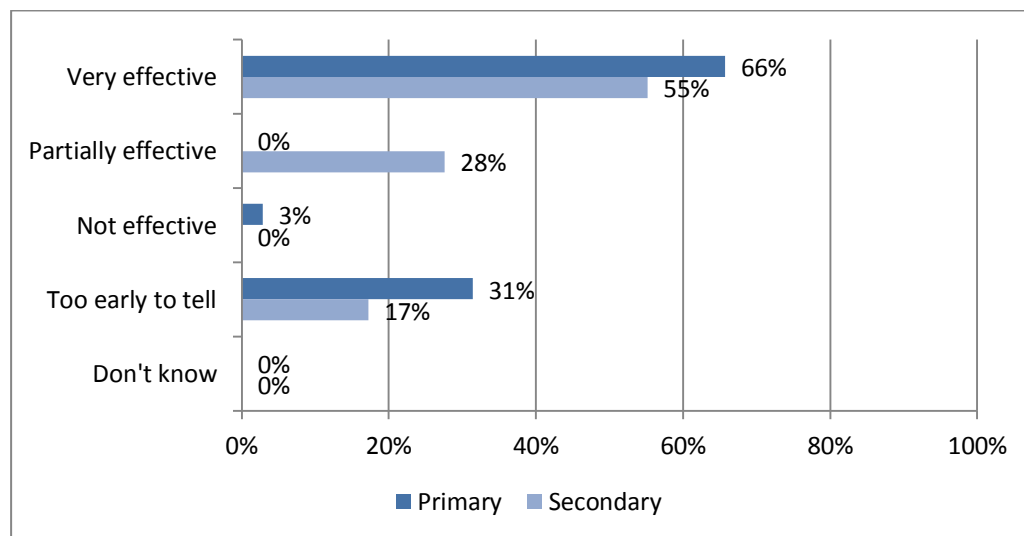
“Verbally disseminated – Personal and Social Education lessons, one-to-one sessions, small group sessions.” **Secondary school**

3.10 Perceived effectiveness of e-cigarette policies

All schools with a policy were asked how effective they thought it had been in prohibiting the use of e-cigarettes. Of the primary schools with a policy, two-thirds (66 per cent) believed that their policy had been very effective, and only three per cent thought it was not effective. Nearly a third of respondents thought it was too early to tell.

Around half of the secondary schools with a policy (55 per cent) thought it had been very effective, and three out of ten (28 per cent) considered it to be partially effective. Around one out of five of the secondary schools (17 per cent) reported it was too early to tell (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9: How effective has your e-cigarette policy been in prohibiting e-cigarette use?



N=64 (Primary=35; Secondary=29)

Only a few additional comments were added by schools on the effectiveness of their e-cigarette policy. One respondent commented that:

“Following a spate of sightings, we raised the issue through Heads of Year and Senior Leadership Team in assemblies, informing them of our stance (that, like cigarettes, e-cigarettes were prohibited). Sightings subsequently reduced.” **Primary school**

4. Discussion

This survey was designed to gauge the extent to which primary and secondary schools in Wales have implemented policies on e-cigarettes. For an online survey, the response rate was reasonable (particularly for secondary schools) and the survey provided information that was not previously available.

However, a number of limitations need to be recognised. The online survey method was chosen given the limited time and resources available to undertake the research. Response rates for online surveys tend to be lower than other survey methods, such as face-to-face or telephone interviewing⁸, and there is the potential for self-selection bias in the data received⁹. The findings of this report, therefore, relate only to those schools that participated and may not be representative of all schools in Wales (particularly for primary schools, given the lower response rate). It is also important to note the small sample size when analysis is restricted to groups of schools (for example, only those that already have a policy in place). In such cases, caution should be exercised when interpreting the findings.

The majority of the primary and secondary schools that responded are not aware of e-cigarettes being used on school premises. However, almost one out of five of the secondary schools reported that they are currently used on their premises by pupils, and around a quarter also reported e-cigarettes were previously used on the school premises by pupils. It is possible that this apparent decline in use may be due to the introduction of e-cigarette policies and enforcement at secondary schools, but this information was not explicitly drawn out in the survey.

While some secondary schools reported e-cigarette use by pupils, this was not the case for the primary schools, indicating that e-cigarette use is

⁸ Manfreda, K.L. et al (2008). 'Web surveys versus other survey modes: A meta-analysis comparing response rates', *International Journal of Market Research*, 50: 79-104.

⁹ Bethlehem, J. (2010). 'Selection bias in web surveys', *International Statistical Review*, 78(2), 161-188.

predominantly being observed in children over the age of 11. This appears to be reflected in the coverage of e-cigarette policies, with primary schools focussing the policy on staff and visitors, and secondary school policies being aimed at pupils to a greater degree.

As one would expect, the greater prevalence of e-cigarette use in secondary schools may have prompted the majority to develop a policy. The secondary schools that responded were proportionally more than twice as likely as the primary schools to have considered or already implemented a policy. Almost all of the responding schools with a policy developed it as an extension to their existing smoke free policy.

Concerns relating to possible follow-on effects of using e-cigarettes – such as the possibility that they are a gateway to smoking tobacco, or that they normalise smoking behaviour – were reported as a reason for developing a policy by around a third of primary schools and just under half of secondary schools. However, a greater proportion of the schools that responded (both primary and secondary) were concerned with enforcement of their current smoke free policies. It is important to note that these perceptions do not provide evidence about possible gateway or normalisation effects. Further research that examines pathways, for example, of e-cigarette use is needed before any conclusions can be drawn.

Most of the primary and secondary schools without a policy reported not having one because they did not consider they have a problem with e-cigarettes at school. Some schools also questioned the necessity of a policy because they considered e-cigarettes to fall within the existing smoke free policy. In addition, given the conflicting messages around e-cigarettes, some schools commented that they would like clear guidance from local authorities and the Welsh Government on what approach they should take.

Responses to the question on perceived effectiveness of e-cigarette policies should be interpreted with caution, as responses to the question may vary substantially due to subjective understanding of what constitutes an effective

policy. For example, some secondary schools reporting that pupils currently use e-cigarettes on the premises also rated their policies as 'very effective'. If this survey, or other research, is to be repeated in the future to monitor implementation of e-cigarette policies in schools, the way in which effectiveness of policies is assessed will need to be further explored.

Future monitoring of the implementation of e-cigarette policies, in the broader context of wider school policies and practices, may be valuable to policy makers. A repeat of the survey would also provide the opportunity to capture a significant proportion of schools that are currently considering developing a policy.

Annex A: Survey questions

This is a short survey relating to policies on e-cigarettes which should take around 5 minutes to complete.

Definition of Electronic cigarettes: e-cigarettes are devices whose function is to vaporise and deliver to the lungs of the user a chemical mixture typically composed of nicotine, propylene glycol and other chemicals, although some products claim to contain no nicotine. There are various distinct styles of e-cigarettes in circulation. Some are designed to look like their conventional (tobacco) counterparts (e.g. cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, pipes, hookahs or shishas), while others have been described as looking similar to pens.

- Q1 Are you aware of e-cigarettes being used at your school?
(choose all that apply)
- Yes, currently being used by pupils
 - Yes, currently being used by staff and/or visitors
 - Yes, previously used by pupils
 - Yes, previously used by staff and/or visitors
 - No
- Q2 Does your school have a policy prohibiting e-cigarette use?
- Yes, a specific policy for e-cigarettes Go to Q4
 - Yes, as an extension to the smoking or substance misuse policy Go to Q4
 - No, but in the process of developing one Go to Q4
 - No, but we intend to develop one in the future Go to Q4
 - No, it has not been considered yet Go to Q3
 - No, we have decided not to have an e-cigarette policy Go to Q3
- Q3 If your school does not currently have an e-cigarette policy, why is that?(choose all that apply)
- We don't consider that we have a problem with e-cigarettes at the school
 - E-cigarettes are less harmful than smoking tobacco
 - We support the use of e-cigarettes for smoking cessation
 - We haven't got around to it yet
 - Go to Q10
- Q4 What are the reasons for the school having or developing the policy?
(choose all that apply)
- To help enforcement of our existing smoking policy
 - We want to treat smoking tobacco and e-cigarettes in the same way
 - We consider that e-cigarettes are harmful to health
 - We are concerned that e-cigarettes will lead to smoking tobacco cigarettes
 - We are concerned that e-cigarettes will make smoking tobacco more acceptable
 - E-cigarettes resemble smoking
 - Following Local Authority/Other schools policy
 - Other

please specify

- Q5 How did you develop your e-cigarette policy?
- Bespoke, specific to e-cigarettes in our school
 - Taken from a standard template
 - We have extended our smoking or substance misuse policy to include e-cigarettes
 - Other
- please specify
-

- Q6 Who is covered by the policy?
(Choose all that apply)
- School staff
 - Pupils
 - Pupil's families
 - Visitors, including contractors
 - Other
- Please specify
-

- Q7 Does your school's e-cigarette policy prohibit use in the following locations:
(Choose all that apply)
- School buildings during school hours
 - School buildings outside of school hours
 - School grounds during school hours
 - School grounds outside of hours
 - Private vehicles on school grounds
 - School buses
 - School events off school grounds
 - Other
- Please specify
-
-
-

- Q8 Which of the following methods are used to communicate your school's e-cigarette policy?
(Choose all that apply)
- School letter
 - Verbal communication to staff, e.g. staff meetings
 - Verbal communication to students, e.g. assembly
 - Verbal communication to parents, e.g. parents evening
 - Publication online via school website
 - Other electronic distribution, e.g. email to students
 - Other written distribution, e.g. student handbook
 - Posters/signs around school
 - Other

Please specify

- Q9 On reflection, how effective has your e-cigarette policy been in prohibiting e-cigarette use?
- Very effective
 - Partially effective
 - Not effective
 - Too early to tell
- Please explain why that is

- Q10 What is the name of your school?

- Q11 Is your school primary or secondary?
- Primary
 - Secondary

- Q12 What local authority are you based in?
- Blaenau Gwent
 - Bridgend
 - Caerphilly
 - Cardiff
 - Carmarthenshire
 - Ceredigion
 - Conwy
 - Denbighshire
 - Flintshire
 - Gwynedd
 - Isle of Anglesey
 - Merthyr Tydfil
 - Monmouthshire
 - Neath Port Talbot
 - Newport
 - Pembrokeshire
 - Powys
 - Rhondda Cynon Taff
 - Swansea
 - The Vale of Glamorgan
 - Torfaen
 - Wrexham

- Q13 Are there any other comments you wish to make?

Annex B: Responses by local authority

Table B.1: Responses from primary schools by local authority

Local authority	Number of survey responses
Powys	25
Wrexham	21
Caerphilly	15
Newport	15
Carmarthenshire	14
Bridgend	12
Denbighshire	11
Torfaen	9
Neath Port Talbot	8
Blaenau Gwent	7
Isle of Anglesey	7
Monmouthshire	7
Swansea	7
Cardiff	6
Pembrokeshire	6
Ceredigion	2
Gwynedd	2
Rhondda Cynon Taff	2
Vale of Glamorgan	1
Conwy	0
Flintshire	0
Merthyr Tydfil	0
WALES	177
Response rate	13%

Table B.2: Responses from secondary schools by local authority

Local authority	Number of survey responses
Denbighshire	8
Newport	7
Powys	7
Caerphilly	5
Torfaen	5
Carmarthenshire	4
Cardiff	4
Gwynedd	4
Vale of Glamorgan	4
Wrexham	3
Bridgend	2
Ceredigion	2
Isle of Anglesey	2
Neath Port Talbot	2
Rhondda Cynon Taff	2
Blaenau Gwent	1
Monmouthshire	1
Pembrokeshire	1
Conwy	0
Flintshire	0
Swansea	0
Merthyr Tydfil	0
WALES	64
Response rate	31%