

Smoke Free Parks Policy

Objective

The objective of this policy is to denormalise smoking by reducing the amount of smoking that occurs, particularly around children and young people, reducing the likelihood of them becoming addicted smokers

Policy

Council will encourage smoke free practice around areas dedicated for children, youth and active recreation. This includes facilities and open space around:

- Playgrounds;
- Skate parks and half courts;
- Sports fields and facilities (e.g. courts); and
- Event areas.

Adopted (or reviewed by)

Strategy and Policy Committee
September 2008



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Background

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The policy is an education and awareness based policy. It is voluntary and is not enforceable.

The main actions of this policy is promotion through the media and similar avenues, and the installation of signage on areas that are to be encouraged as 'smoke free' creating a moral ban on smoking and encouraging voluntary adherence.

Evidence suggests that:

- Teenagers exposed to smoking restrictions in the home and other environments are less likely to take up smoking.
- The more frequently young people observe smoking, the more socially acceptable and normal they perceive it to be.
- A smoke free environment reduces exposure to role modelling of negative health behaviour and reduces the visibility of smoking.
- Young people who have parents who smoke are more likely to smoke themselves.
- The longer the onset smoking is delayed, the less likely a person is to become addicted.

2006 census data show that 21% of people in Waitakere smoke on a daily basis, just above the national average. Nationally 22.1% have stopped smoking. In Waitakere, rates are slightly lower with 19.9% have stopped smoking.

This Policy is aligned with public opinion of where smoking should not occur. 2008 survey results from the Health Sponsorship Council show that the majority of people surveyed believe it was not appropriate to smoke around sports fields (51.4%) or playgrounds (76.4%).

The Smoke-free Environments Act 1990 requires that all internal workplaces (with some limited exceptions) must be 100 percent smoke free. The Smoke-free legislation does not apply to outdoor areas, other than grounds of schools and early childhood centres. Legal smoking bans on reserves, through bylaws, would likely be difficult to put in place as the bylaw making powers under the Reserves Act and Local Government Act 2002 are unlikely to be wide enough to justify such action. Furthermore, enforcement would be problematic and costly. As an educational initiative it requires no legal bylaws or enforcement.

Where possible, signs would be placed on existing posts to reduce installation costs and reduce visual clutter.