



HSE Tobacco Free Ireland Programme
Health & Wellbeing
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Deputy Marie Sherlock,
Dáil Éireann,
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By email to marie.sherlock@oireachtas.ie

17th April 2025

Ref: PQ 16166/25

To ask the Minister for Health the details of any public information campaigns undertaken to raise awareness of the use of HHC vapes, particularly with parents and within schools; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

The HSE has not been requested or funded to develop a HHC (hexahydrocannabinol) vape prevention campaign and has no plans to develop a specific campaign highlighting their use with parents or in schools, unless requested and resourced to do so.

The *Public Health (Tobacco and Nicotine Inhaling Products) Act* which became active in December 2023 made it illegal to sell nicotine containing vapes to anyone under the age of 18. HHC vapes are neither a tobacco nor a nicotine inhaling product, so they do not currently fall under the scope of this legislation as it currently exists. A legislative gap exists as HHC products can still legally be sold to people under the age of 18.

The HSE Tobacco Free Ireland Programme has been provided with once off funding in 2025 to develop a general youth vaping prevention media campaign. A stakeholder group is currently being formed to review relevant research and evidence, define the specific target audience, identify campaign objectives and then commission the development and implementation of this campaign.

Drug use prevention is covered more generally within the SPHE junior cycle curriculum. SPHE aims to build students' self-awareness and positive self-worth; to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values that will support them to lead fulfilling and healthy lives; empower them to create, nurture and maintain respectful and loving relationships with self and others; and enhance their capacity to contribute positively to society.

HSE Health and Wellbeing supports teachers to provide substance use education through the provision of resources and training.

Junior Cycle SPHE Resource

The Junior Cycle SPHE resource has been developed through a partnership with HSE Health and Wellbeing, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, National Educational Psychological Service and HSE Social Inclusion.

Students explore their current understanding of use and misuse of legal and illegal drugs, including medication, cigarettes, alcohol, and other drugs more generally.

Making Healthy Choices Units 1 & 2 address substance-use through learning activities on e-cigarettes, alcohol and smoking. HHC containing vapes are not specifically covered within these lessons. Market changes in terms of drugs are frequent and evolving. Core prevention principles can apply to any substance, including those purchased in shops.

Know the Score

Know the Score is a substance-use resource material for senior cycle SPHE. It contains 14 lesson plans aimed at enabling students to make conscious and informed decisions about alcohol and drugs. This resource does not specifically address HHC. Again, core prevention principles can apply to any substance, including those bought in shops.

Training to support teachers to provide substance use education is delivered through:

- *Know the Score* – 1 day in-person trainings and 2-hour online workshops.
- [Skills for Facilitating SPHE](#) – 2 day in-person training to support teachers to develop the skills, competencies and attitudes for effective teaching and learning in Junior Cycle SPHE, including substance use education.

Resources for Schools

[Information and guidance on e-cigarettes for schools](#) was published in 2023 to support schools to take a whole of school approach to address e-cigarettes more generally.

There is information available on HHC on the www.drugs.ie website
https://www.drugs.ie/drugtypes/drug/hexahydrocannabinol_hhc

I hope this information is of assistance to you. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Martina Blake

National Lead, HSE Tobacco Free Ireland Programme