

Ministry of Education Launches Nationwide Enforcement Drive to Make Educational Institutions Tobacco and Substance-Free

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In a major step toward protecting students and youth from the harmful effects of tobacco and substance abuse, Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education has issued a strong call for action to all States and Union Territories (UTs) to strictly enforce rules and guidelines that keep areas around educational institutions free of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.

Nationwide enforcement drive, issued by Shri Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, DoSEL, comes after the 8th Apex Committee meeting of the Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD) held on May 15, 2025. This high-level meeting, chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, highlighted the urgent need to safeguard young minds from harmful substances and called for coordinated efforts between education and law enforcement departments.

Why This Is Important

India has one of the youngest populations in the world, with a large number of its citizens below the age of 29. This youth population represents a powerful force for the country's future and protecting them — which represents a major demographic strength — is crucial for building a Viksit Bharat.

Studies indicate that consumption of tobacco among the youth is rapidly increasing leading to experimenting with other forms of substance abuse within the school/college premises. The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS-2), 2019, revealed that 8.5% of Indian students aged 13–15 were using tobacco in some form. Even more alarming is the fact that **over 5,500 children in India start using tobacco every single day**.

Tobacco use is often the gateway to more dangerous substances. Most adult users begin during adolescence, and many are able to buy these products easily from shops near schools, despite existing laws.

The Government's Response

To combat this growing threat, the Ministry of Education is actively implementing the **Tobacco-Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI) Guidelines**. It provides a structured guideline to make schools and colleges completely free from tobacco use and sale. DoSEL had launched the **implementation Manual of ToFEI** on 31st May 2024. It aims to assist schools in adhering to the ToFEI guidelines, thereby creating a healthier, tobacco-free environment for students. The manual empowers all the stakeholders to adopt and enforce guidelines that protect students from the dangers of tobacco.

The ToFEI guidelines list following nine activities schools and colleges must carry out to keep campuses tobacco-free.

1. Display of 'Tobacco Free Area' Signage Inside the Premises
2. Display of 'Tobacco Free Educational Institution' Signage at the Entrance/Boundary
3. No Evidence of Tobacco Use in the Premises
4. Display of Awareness Materials on Harms of Tobacco
5. At Least One Tobacco Control Activity Every Six Months
6. Nomination of Tobacco Monitors
7. Inclusion of Tobacco-Free Policy in School Code of Conduct
8. Marking a yellow line 100 yards around educational institutions to designate a tobacco-free zone

9. Ensuring no shops or vendors sell tobacco products within that 100-yard zone
Of these, two key actions require immediate support from local authorities:

1. **Activity 8** – Marking a yellow line 100 yards around educational institutions to designate a tobacco-free zone.

2. **Activity 9** – Ensuring no shops or vendors sell tobacco products within that 100-yard zone.
To ensure these measures are enforced in spirit, the Ministry has called on education authorities and law enforcement agencies to step up. An advisory from the Ministry of Home Affairs, issued in November 2024, had already requested strict implementation of these provisions.

A Month-Long Enforcement Drive

Starting **May 31, 2025** — World No Tobacco Day — and continuing until **June 26, 2025** — International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking — States and UTs are urged to launch a **month-long enforcement drive** to enforce Section 6(b) of the **Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003**, which bans:

- The sale of tobacco products within 100 yards of educational institutions
- The sale of tobacco to or by minors

States are also encouraged to develop a clear **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** that allows school and college staff to report violations directly and without fear to local police.

Community Involvement and Awareness Is Key

The Ministry has emphasized the role of **School Management Committees (SMCs)**, teachers, and parents in supporting this mission. By spreading awareness and reporting violations, communities can help create safe spaces for students to learn and grow.

To educate students, teachers and the general public on the harmful effects of tobacco in a fun manner, the Ministry has simultaneously launched the ‘World No Tobacco Day Awareness Quiz-2025’ on MyGov platform (<https://quiz.mygov.in>). The quiz is live from 22nd May 2025 to 21st July 2025. It is a step towards shaping strong societal norms against tobacco use by empowering the youth with knowledge on the dangers of tobacco.

Link: <https://quiz.mygov.in/quiz/world-no-tobacco-day-awareness-quiz/>

All citizens are urged to support this important campaign. The Ministry believes that together, with consistent efforts and public support, India can make its schools and colleges safe, healthy, and free from the influence of harmful substances.

States and Union Territories have been requested to ensure active participation of the enforcement during this period to make educational campuses safer and healthier.

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