

Supporting the health of YOUNG PEOPLE IN LUTON

A summary report of the Health Related Behaviour Survey 2004

These results are the compilation of data collected from a sample of secondary pupils aged 12 to 13 and 14 to 15 in Luton in Spring/ Summer of 2004. This work was co-ordinated by Morag Stewart, Associate Director of Public Health for Luton teaching Primary Care Trust, as a way of collecting robust information via a Young People's Lifestyle Survey.

Teachers were briefed on how to collect the most reliable data and then pupils anonymously completed the questionnaire.

A total of 1824 pupils took part in 9 secondary schools. Completed questionnaires were then returned to the Schools Health Education Unit in Exeter for processing.

This report also gives some of the statistically significant differences found between the Luton data and the Unit's wider 2002 databank. This includes the results of surveys from areas such as Dudley, Sefton, Jersey and Cambridgeshire. The results are a compilation of a sample of almost 19,000 pupils.

1824 young people were involved in the survey

School year	Year 8	Year 10	Total
Age	12-13	14-15	
Boys	487	457	944
Girls	450	430	880
Total	937	887	1824



**Schools
Health
Education
Unit**

The Schools Health Education Unit

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The Unit specialises in questionnaire surveys of children and young people for Local Authorities, PCTs, voluntary agencies, charities, schools and colleges and other partnerships. SHEU is also able to undertake consultation, monitoring and evaluation exercises, and bespoke research.

Topics include

Home and family

Healthy Eating

**Drugs, Alcohol and
Tobacco**

Health and Safety

**Emotional Health and
Well-being**

Physical Activity

Luton

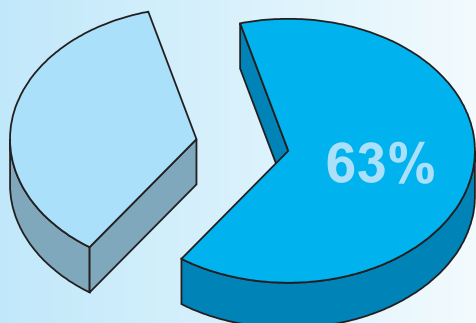


Primary Care Trust
A teaching Primary Care Trust

Luton Secondary school pupils in Years 8 and 10 (ages 12-13 and 14-15 years)

HOME AND FAMILY

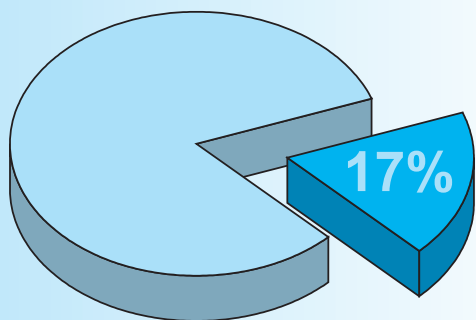
- 71% of pupils described themselves as White.
- 7% described themselves as Mixed Race, which was the largest other category in the sample. Some schools in Luton with a large proportion of pupils with Asian heritage did not take part in the survey.
- 63% of pupils reported that they live with both parents.



- 10% said they lived with their mother and step father/partner.

HEALTHY EATING

- 17% of all pupils had nothing at all for breakfast on the day of the survey.



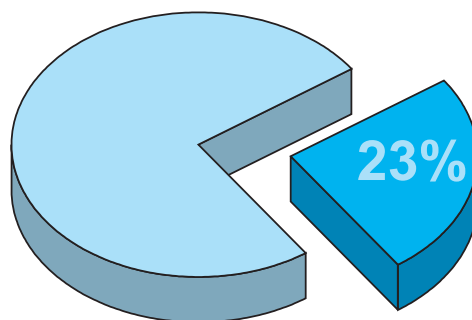
- 16% did not have any lunch at all on the day before the survey
- Among the Year 10 girls, 23% had nothing at all for breakfast on the day of the survey and 21% had nothing for lunch on the day before.
- 50% of girls would like to lose weight.

? How many Year 10 girls that are trying to lose weight are not eating breakfast or lunch?

- 14% of Year 10 boys would like to put on weight.
- 59% of pupils have dairy products on most days; 40% have vegetables on most days, and 34% have fruit on most days.
- However, 39% have crisps on most days and 45% have sweets and chocolates on most days.
- The top five foods, on the list given in the questionnaire, with the highest percentages saying they eat the foods 'on most days' are:

	Boys		Girls
Dairy produce	63%	Dairy produce	54%
Sweets etc.	45%	Sweets etc.	44%
Crisps	41%	Vegetables	43%
Any meat	39%	Fresh Fruit	37%
Vegetables	37%	Crisps	37%

- 23% of pupils drank at least a litre of water on the day before the survey. This does not include other water-based drinks.

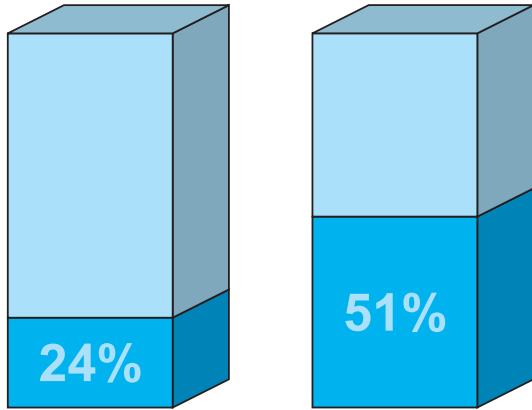


- 11% of pupils say they usually eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables on a school day. In terms of the government's '5 a day' campaign, potatoes should not be included, but this point is not emphasised in the question.
- 13% of pupils say they never consider their health when choosing what to eat.
- 41% said they 'sometimes' considered their health and 45% said they did, 'quite often', 'very often' or 'always'.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

Drugs

- 24% of Year 8 pupils and 51% of Year 10 pupils said they were 'fairly sure' or 'certain' they knew someone personally who takes an illegal drug listed in the questionnaire.



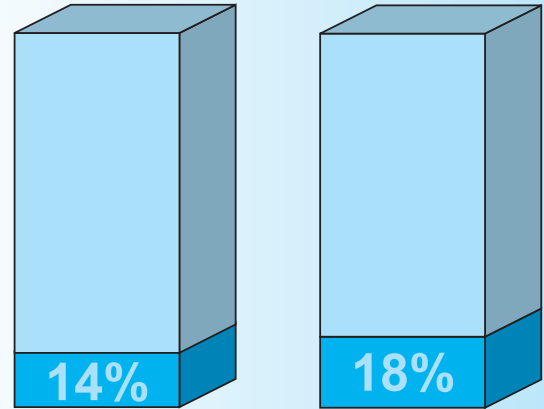
- Pupils were asked what they knew about a list of drugs in the questionnaire. They were given a number of options including 'safe if used properly' and 'always unsafe'. Among the most commonly rated drugs as 'safe if used properly' were:

- Cannabis leaf/resin
- Muscle building steroids
- Tranquillisers
- Opiates
- Natural hallucinogens (i.e. magic mushrooms)

? Can anything be done to improve the impact of school drug education while schools are so busy?

- Of Year 8 pupils, 20% of boys and 11% of girls have been offered cannabis and 18% of boys and 11% of girls at least one of the other drugs listed in the questionnaire.
- By Year 10, 45% of boys and 38% of girls have been offered cannabis and 25% of boys and 31% of girls at least one of the other drugs listed.
- 18% of pupils reported that they had taken an illegal drug in the past.

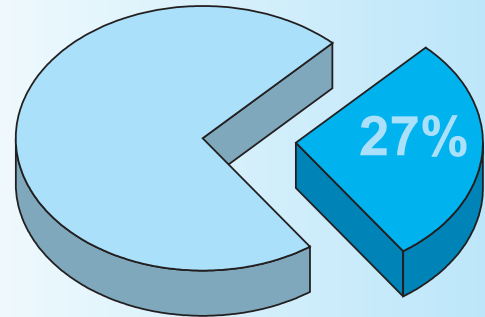
- 14% of Year 10 boys and 18% of Year 10 girls reported that they had taken some form of illegal drug within the last month.



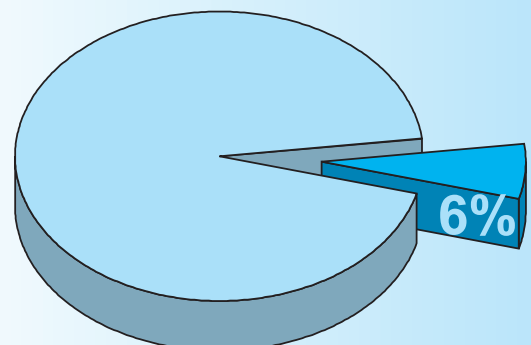
- 4% of Year 10 boys and 4% of Year 10 girls say they have taken more than one type of drug on the same occasion.
- 13% of Year 10 boys and 19% of Year 10 girls say they have taken an illegal drug and alcohol on the same occasion.

Alcohol

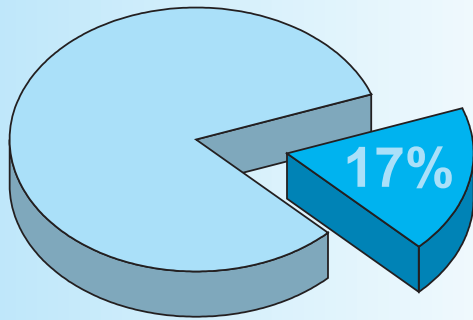
- 27% of pupils had at least one alcoholic drink (more than just a sip) in the last week.



- Amongst Year 8 pupils similar proportions of boys (20%) and girls (21%) had at least one alcoholic drink in the week before the survey. In Year 10 more girls than boys reported drinking: 34% of the girls compared with 29% of the boys.
- 6% of pupils drank more than 10 units of alcohol in the week before the survey:



- In the seven days before the survey the most popular drinks were alcoholic 'soft' drinks, pre-mixed spirits, and spirits.
- 14% of Year 10 girls drank wine and 5% of Year 10 boys beer or lager in the seven days before the survey.
- During the seven days before the survey, 4% of boys and 2% of girls in Year 8 bought alcohol from an off-licence that should sell only to over-eighteens. The figures for Year 10 are 6% for boys and 11% for girls.
- **17% of Year 10 pupils had drunk alcohol at home in the seven days before the survey.**

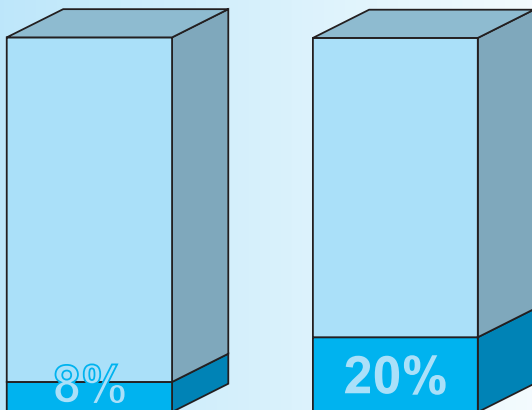


- 12% of pupils drank at a friend's or relation's home last week and 10% outside in a public place.
- If drinking was ever done at home, about half of all pupils reported that their parents always knew.

? Are we teaching our children to drink sensibly?

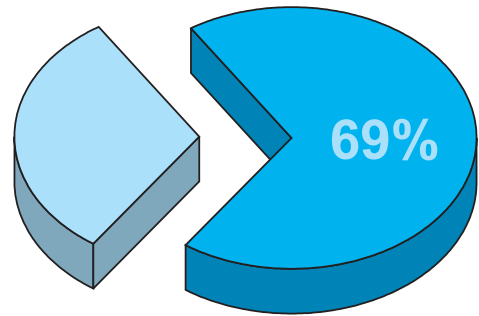
Tobacco

- 8% of Year 8 pupils and 20% of Year 10 pupils smoked at least one cigarette during the seven days before the survey.



- 9% of Year 10 boys and 15% of Year 10 girls said they 'recently' bought cigarettes from a shop.
- 22% of pupils said they had tried smoking once or twice.

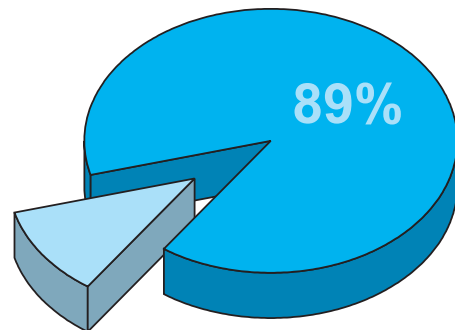
- A greater proportion of girls smoked compared with the boys. Of Year 10 pupils, 15% of boys and 28% of girls described themselves as smoking 'occasionally' or 'regularly'. This boy/girl difference is usually apparent in our surveys.
- **69% of pupils reported that they have a parent, sibling or close friend who regularly smokes.**



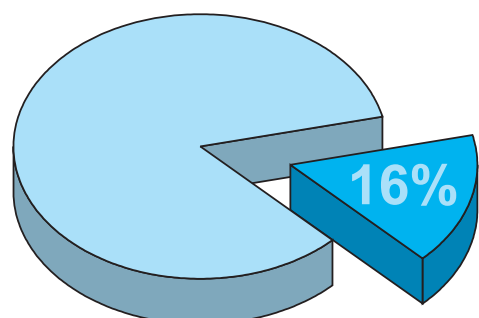
? Can anything be done to slow down or stop this progression in smoking? Can additional smoking prevention work be done with girls? How can parents, who may be smokers, help?

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- **89% of young people visited the doctor within the previous year.**



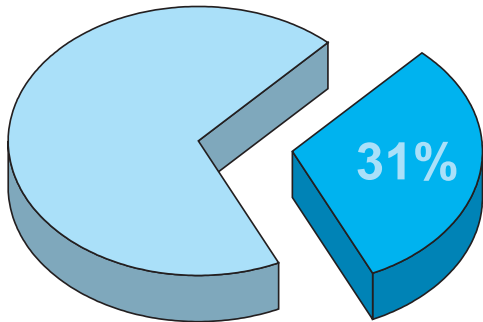
- In the seven days before the survey, 41% of pupils took painkillers, 25% vitamin tablets and 34% medication for skin problems.
- 55% of Year 10 girls took painkillers in the seven days prior to the survey.
- **16% of pupils said they had asthma** and 10% reported taking medication for asthma in the seven days before the survey.



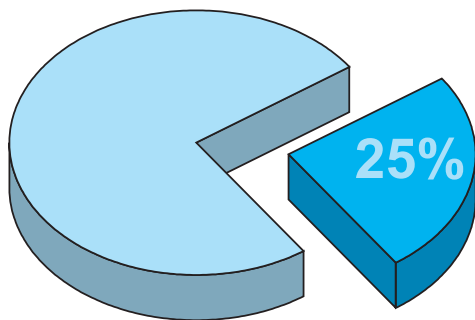
- 79% of young people visited the dentist within the last six months.

? Does the use of painkillers, particularly among Year 10 girls, give cause for concern?

- 31% of pupils said they were treated for an accident by a doctor or at a hospital within the last year.



- Overall, 6% of pupils had broken a bone in the last twelve months.
- 7% of pupils suffered bruises, grazes and sprains.
- 7% of pupils reported that their most recent accident occurred whilst playing sport.
- 25% of pupils reported that they felt afraid of going to school because of bullying at least sometimes.



- A greater proportion of girls felt afraid compared with the boys.

? Can anti-bullying strategies be improved?

- 4% think others may fear going to school because of them.
- 50% say they 'usually' or 'always' use precautions (like putting on sun cream) to avoid sunburn.

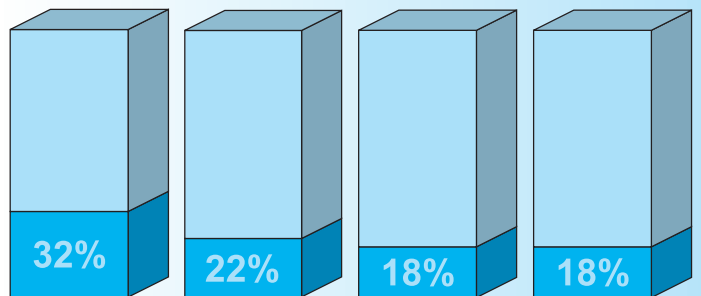
SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

- The main source of information about sex for Year 8 pupils was:

	Boys		Girls
School lessons	32%	My parents	27%
My parents	19%	Friends	23%
Friends	17%	School lessons	22%
TV/films	11%	Magazines	8%

- These changed to the following for Year 10 pupils:

	Boys		Girls
School lessons	18%	Friends	30%
Friends	29%	My parents	21%
TV/films	16%	School lessons	18%
My parents	12%	Magazines	10%

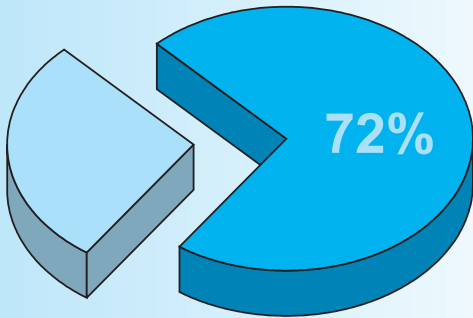


- 43% of Year 8 girls and 33% of Year 10 girls thought their parents **should** be their main source of information.
- 33% of Year 8 boys and 35% of Year 10 boys thought school lessons **should** be the main source of information.
- 16% of Year 10 boys said their main source of information about sex was TV/films, while only 6% said they thought this **should** be their main source of information.
- Among Year 8 pupils 16% of boys and 21% of girls knew where to get free condoms. This has increased by Year 10 to 51% of boys and 71% of girls.
- 16% of Year 8 boys, 21% of Year 8 girls, 30% of Year 10 boys and 50% of Year 10 girls reported that they believe there is a young people's special contraception and advice service available locally.

? Can young people's knowledge of contraception services be increased, particularly among the boys?

EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- 72% of pupils agreed that 'I am in charge of my health'. The perception that health is just a matter of chance has been linked to health-risky behaviours like smoking.

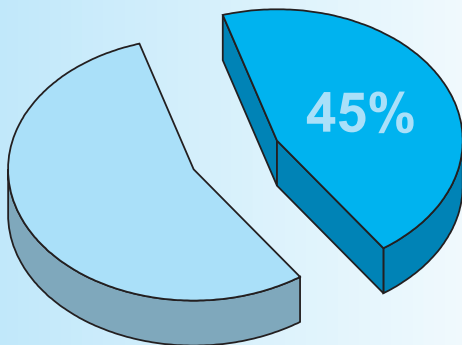


- Pupils were asked how useful they had found certain lessons. The proportion finding them 'very useful' were:

	Year 8		Year 10	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Drugs	57%	52%	44%	43%
Healthy Eating	39%	41%	26%	29%
Physical Activity	48%	39%	44%	40%
Sex and Relationships	41%	42%	39%	43%

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- 45% of pupils consider themselves 'fit' or 'very fit'.



- Those pupils reporting themselves as least fit were Year 10 girls, with only 30% describing themselves as 'fit' or 'very fit' compared with 53% of Year 10 boys.
- Among Year 8 pupils 53% of boys and 41% of girls described themselves as 'fit' or 'very fit'.
- 76% say they enjoy physical activities 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'. The proportion of Year 10 girls reporting this was again lowest of all groups of pupils.
- 92% of pupils exercised hard enough to increase their breathing rate at least once in the week before the survey 45% at least three times.
- Pupils were asked how often they took part in various activities outside of school lessons, during the 12 months before the survey. The most popular, overall, was going for a walk, with 39% of pupils said they did this at least weekly.
- When asked what activities they would like to do more of, 15% of all pupils said swimming. 11% of Year 10 boys said they would like to do more martial arts, while 16% of all the girls said dancing.
- 67% of pupils walked at least part of the way to school; just 2% cycled.
- The top five physical activities Year 8 pupils said they did at least weekly during the twelve months prior to the survey were:

	Boys		Girls	
Soccer	58%	Going for walks	49%	
Riding a bike	47%	Dancing	41%	
Jogging	38%	Swimming	34%	
5-a-side	32%	Jogging	34%	
Swimming	32%	Riding a bike	26%	

- Year 10:

	Boys		Girls	
Soccer	56%	Going for walks	48%	
Riding a bike	45%	Dancing	36%	
Jogging	33%	Jogging	23%	
Going for walks	30%	Fitness exercises	20%	
5-a-side	25%	Riding a bike	15%	

? What local facilities are available for youngsters to be active? What more can be done to encourage girls to be active?

Significant differences between Luton and the reference sample

- 67% of pupils **walked** at least part of the way to school, compared with just 51% of pupils in the reference sample.
- 72% of pupils agreed with the statement “**I am in charge of my health**”, compared with 60% of the reference sample.
- 16% of pupils in Luton said they had **no lunch at all** yesterday, compared with 9% of pupils in the reference sample.
- 39% of pupils in Luton say they **consider their health ‘quite often’ when choosing what to eat**, compared with 27% in the reference sample (but see the figures for eating fruit and vegetables, opposite)
- 51% of Luton pupils said they were ‘fairly sure’ or ‘certain’ they **know someone personally who takes illegal drugs**, compared with 46% of pupils of the same age in the reference sample
- A higher proportion of pupils in Luton had ever tried cannabis than in the reference sample (16% compared with 11%), although overall levels of drug experimentation are very similar.
- More pupils in Luton report **worrying ‘quite a lot’ or ‘a lot’** about a whole range of topics than do their peers elsewhere.
- Pupils in Luton are more aware of local **sources of free condoms and contraceptive advice** compared with pupils in the reference sample.
- Pupils in Luton **enjoy physical activities** more than their peers elsewhere (76% compared with 53%) and more perceive themselves as **being fit** (45% and 29% respectively). They were also more likely to have taken three periods of **hard exercise** last week (45% and 27%). Jogging, Basketball, Swimming and Walking were all reported more often in Luton than is normally seen elsewhere.
- The proportion of pupils who said they **wanted to lose weight** was lower in Luton than in the reference sample: 39% compared with 45%. This difference was even more marked among the Year 10 girls: 52% compared with 61%
- In Luton only 30% of pupils had a **packed lunch** yesterday, compared with 41% of their peers in the reference sample.
- Pupils in Luton are less likely to report **eating fresh fruit, salads or vegetables ‘on most days’** compared with those in the reference sample.
- Fewer pupils in Luton say they have **ever smoked at all** compared with those in the reference sample (46% and 50% respectively), although levels of current smoking are more similar.
- Fewer pupils in Luton say they have **had an alcoholic drink last week** (75% and 79% respectively), although fewer are completely abstinent.
- Fewer pupils in Luton report that they have asthma: 16% compared with 21%
- Pupils in Luton seem rather less likely to use a range of medications than are those in the reference sample.
- Fewer pupils in Luton report having had an accident requiring medical attention in the last year (69% compared with 62%).

THE WAY FORWARD

This survey was funded by Luton teaching Primary Care Trust and supported by the Local Education Authority. The results will be discussed by relevant forums and partnerships including Luton and Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Scheme, Luton Drug and Alcohol Partnership, Luton Teenage Pregnancy Partnership, Luton Sexual Health Strategy Group and Luton Food Network.

Our thanks go to the staff and pupils of the schools that took part

We are grateful to the teachers, schools, and young people for their time and contributions to this survey. As a result of their work we have excellent data to be used by both statutory and voluntary agencies that support the health and education of young people in Luton.

For further information about the survey contact

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Luton and Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Programme Current Priorities and Programmes

Promoting Emotional Health and Well-being

Promoting Emotional Health and Well-being is a priority for the scheme this year. A simple audit form will be sent out to all schools in October. This will help us to collect information relating to the good practice which already exists in our local schools to promote and support the emotional health and well-being of young people. The information will help us to plan a package of support for schools and inform the content of the 2005 Healthy Schools Conference which will focus on this theme.

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)

The new SRE Information and Guidance and Curriculum Framework will be sent out to all Luton schools in October. This will be followed up by a comprehensive training programme for teachers, governors and parents co-ordinated by the PSHE Advisor and The Lodge

Healthy Eating

Have you received your updated version of the Healthy Eating Folder? This was sent out to all schools in September 2004 and contains very useful information to help schools to promote healthier eating habits.

PSHE Teachers' Certification Programme

30 teachers from across the County are taking part in this exciting new programme. 20 teachers are completing an extension module in SRE and 10 are focusing on Drug and Alcohol Education. Funding is available for the next two years to support the DfES targets to have at least one teacher with a PSHE certificate in all secondary schools by 2006. The next course will be starting in April 2005 and letters will be sent during the Autumn Term 2004 inviting applications

Forthcoming National Campaigns

4-8 Oct 2004 ● National Walk to School Week
10 Oct 2004 ● World Mental Health Day
31 Oct 2004 ● Bug Busting Day: Head Lice Beware
1 Dec 2004 ● World AIDS Day

A local campaign is being organised to coincide with World AIDS Day.

Further information will be sent out to schools soon.

For more information about any of the above contact

Barbara Rooney, Healthy Schools Co-ordinator Tel: 01234 792629