

Model Tobacco-Use and Prevention Policy

INTENT. All students shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to avoid all tobacco use, and school leaders shall actively discourage all use of tobacco products by students, staff, and school visitors. To achieve these ends, district/school leaders shall prepare, adopt, and implement a comprehensive plan to prevent tobacco use that includes:

- A sequential educational program to prevent tobacco use that is integrated within the school health education curriculum; that is aimed at influencing students; attitudes, skills and behaviors; and that is taught by well-prepared and well-supported staff;
- establishment and strict enforcement of completely tobacco-free school environments at all times;
- prohibition of tobacco advertising;
- appropriate counseling services and/or referrals for students and staff to help them overcome tobacco addiction;
- cooperation with community-wide efforts to prevent tobacco use; and
- strategies to involve family members in program development and implementation.

RATIONALE. Cigarette smoking is considered the chief preventable cause of premature disease and death in the United States. Schools have a responsibility to help prevent tobacco use for the sake of students' and staff members' health and the well-being of their families. Research conclusively proves that:

- regular use of tobacco is ultimately harmful to every user's health, directly causing cancer, respiratory and cardiovascular disease, adverse pregnancy outcomes, and premature death;
- second-hand smoke is a threat to the personal health of everyone, especially persons with asthma and other respiratory problems;
- nicotine is a powerfully addictive substance;
- tobacco use most often begins during childhood or adolescence;
- the younger a person starts using tobacco, the more likely he or she will be a heavy user as an adult; and
- many young tobacco users will die an early, preventable death because of their decision to use tobacco.

Additional reasons why schools need to strongly discourage tobacco use are that:

- the purchase and possession of tobacco products is illegal for persons under age 18 [depending on the state];
- use of tobacco interferes with students' attendance and learning;
- smoking is a fire safety issue for school; and
- use of spit tobacco is a health and sanitation issue.

DEFINITION. For the purposes of this policy “tobacco” is defined to include any lighted and unlighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, bidi, clove cigarette, and any other smoking product. This definition also includes electronic nicotine delivery systems, and spit tobacco, also known as smokeless, dip chew, and snuff, in any form.

TOBACCO USE PROHIBITED. No student, staff member, or school visitor is permitted to smoke, inhale, dip, or chew tobacco at any time, including non-school hours:

- in any building, facility, or vehicle owned, leased, rented, or chartered by the state/district/school
- on school grounds, athletic grounds, or parking lots; or
- at any school-sponsored event off campus.

In addition, no student is permitted to possess a tobacco product. The provisions of existing policies that address the use and possession of drugs shall apply to all tobacco products.

TOBACCO PROMOTION. Tobacco promotional items, including clothing bags, lighters, and other personal articles, are not permitted on school grounds, in school vehicles, or at school-sponsored events. Tobacco advertising is prohibited in all school-sponsored publications and at all school-sponsored events.

CLOSED CAMPUS. No student may leave the school campus during breaks in the school day to use a tobacco product. Signs to this effect will be posted at appropriate locations. School authorities shall conduct with local law enforcement agencies to enforce laws that prohibit the possession of tobacco by minors within the immediate proximity of school grounds.

NOTICE. The superintendent/principal/other shall notify students, families, education personnel, and school visitors of the tobacco-free policy in handbooks and newsletters, on posted notices or signs at every school entrance and other appropriate locations, and by other efficient means. To the extent possible, schools and districts will make use of local media to publicize the policies and help influence community norms about tobacco use.

ENFORCEMENT. It is the responsibility of all students, employees and visitors to enforce this policy through verbal admonition. Any tobacco product found in the possession of a minor student shall be confiscated by staff and discarded. Students and employees also may be subject to germane sanctions as determined by written school policy, including disciplinary action. All school staff shall participate in training on the correct and fair enforcement of tobacco-free policies.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN. Tobacco-use prevention education shall be integrated within the health education program and be taught at every grade level, pre-kindergarten through twelfth. The educational program shall be based on theories and methods that have been proven effective by published research and consistent with the state's/district's/school's health education standards/guidelines/framework. The program shall be designed to:

- instruct about immediate and long-term undesirable physiologic, cosmetic, and social consequences of tobacco use;
- decrease the social acceptability of tobacco use;
- address reasons why young people smoke;
- teach how to recognize and refute advertising and other social influences that promote tobacco use;

- develop students' skills for resisting social influences that promote tobacco use; and
- develop necessary assertiveness, communication, goal-setting, and problem-solving skills that may enable students to avoid tobacco use and other health-risk behaviors.

Instruction shall be most intensive in grades six through eight and shall be reinforced in all later grades. Instructional activities shall be participatory and developmentally appropriate. The program shall engage families as partners in their children's education.

STAFF PREPARATION. Staff responsible for teaching tobacco-use prevention shall have adequate pre-service training and participate in ongoing professional development activities to effectively deliver the education program as planned. Preparation and professional development activities shall provide basic knowledge about the effects of tobacco use combined with skill practice in effective instructional techniques and strategies and program-specific activities.

EDUCATIONAL REINFORCEMENT. Tobacco-use prevention education shall be closely coordinated with the other components of the school health program. Tobacco-use prevention concepts shall also be integrated into the instruction of other subject areas to the greatest extent possible. To send consistent messages to students and their families, school instructional staff shall collaborate with agencies and groups that conduct tobacco-use prevention education in the community. Guest speakers invited to address students shall receive appropriate orientation to the relevant policies of the *school/district*. School staff shall also help interested students become involved with agencies and other organizations in the community that are working to prevent tobacco use.