

Student Support Services Centers provides technical assistance to improve policies and develop programs. We also loan research-based tobacco prevention and cessation curricula through our lending library.

Coalitions present current tobacco control initiatives targeted in the community to schools and youth health and safety advocates.

Health departments and coalitions often have mini-grants or service resources to support schools' tobacco control program. They can also supply free signage.

Reality Check and coalitions offer youth an opportunity to develop leadership, knowledge, and skills.

Make Connections

Local health departments can provide contact information for coalitions and youth groups.

Coalitions meet once a month. Stay in communication with coalition coordinators, even if you miss a meeting.

Be on the coalition mailing list.

Let your coalition know what your needs and issues are.

Internet Contacts:

www.tobaccofreeactioncoalition.org (Ulster)
www.smokefreedutchess.net (Dutchess)
www.sctobaccofree.org (Sullivan)
www.powragainsttobacco.org (Putnam, Orange, Westchester & Rockland)
www.realitycheckny.com



CDC Recommendations for School Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use

1. Develop and enforce a school policy on tobacco use.
2. Provide instruction about the negative physiologic and social consequences of tobacco use, social influences on tobacco use, peer norms, and refusal skills.
3. Provide tobacco-use prevention education in grades K-12.
4. Provide program-specific training for teachers.
5. Involve families in supporting school-based programs to prevent tobacco use.
6. Support cessation efforts among students and staff who use tobacco.
7. Assess the tobacco-use prevention program at regular intervals.

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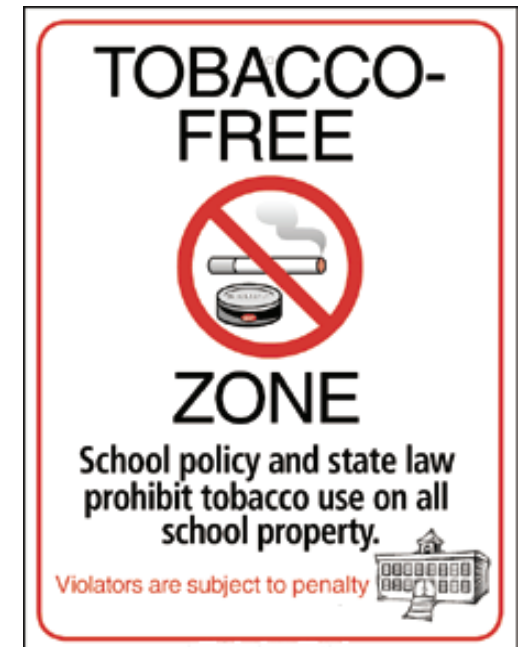
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HUDSON VALLEY STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES CENTER

Tips for School Tobacco Policy Implementation



Common challenges exist in implementing school tobacco policies. Tobacco is still viewed as the lesser of student problems rather than gateway risk behavior. In practice, enforcement often does not apply to staff and visitors, sending a mixed message. Many policies only react punitively, rather than provide meaningful positive intervention. To maximize efficacy, policies should include prevention programs and family support.

This pamphlet focuses on challenges, contributing factors, and effective solutions concerning the implementation of the NYS law prohibiting the use of all tobacco products on school grounds by visitors, students, and staff.

VISITORS—Challenges

Lack of awareness. Adults may not fully understand that the state law and school policy applies to them.

Difficulties in suppressing the urge to use tobacco such as at athletic events or school concerts.

Hesitancy to confront violators for fear of troubled encounters; others may feel “it is not their job.”

VISITORS—Solutions

Communicate Policy Effectively

Publicize in local newspapers, parent packets, newsletters, and through committees (PTA and PTO).

Install adequate signage at all key areas.

Include public announcements, cheerleaders’ cheer, and notices in event programs.

Use clear statements such as: helps discourage kids from starting to smoke; is for the health and safety of our kids; demonstrates good role modeling.

Tactfully Confront Violators

Use a calm verbal reminder, pointing to posted policy signs, or handing out policy palm cards and saying “maybe you are not familiar with the state-wide school policy...”

Presence of Law Enforcement Personnel

Violations are usually unintentional, but when adults refuse to comply, the visibility of an officer may be a useful deterrent.

STUDENTS—Challenges

Need to “fit in” with a peer group; cigarettes provide a physical socializing vehicle.

Rebellion and asserting independence—typical of adolescent stage.

Addiction to nicotine—makes it difficult to quit tobacco.

Stimulant—nicotine counters teens’ delayed melatonin sleep cycles at mornings.

Family smoker—poor role models; exposure to secondhand smoke.

Sporadic enforcement—lessens compliance.

Use just outside school boundaries—creates butt litter and neighborhood nuisance.

STUDENTS—Solutions

Commitment to Policy

Consistently follow policy guidelines with all school community members.

Involve students in the development and implementation of policies.

Communicate policy by using signs, handbook, orientations, newsletters, and announcements.

Consider having parents and students sign contract stating they have read and understood policy.

Present policy with emphasis on health and safety benefits, e.g., the dangers of secondhand smoke.

Have a closed campus policy. Some schools extend tobacco-free zone to “within proximity of school grounds.”

Provide Student Services

Have social workers and counselors trained in tobacco prevention, practice the 5 A-s, and make local or school-based referrals to cessation programs.

Design Progressive Discipline

Increasing the degree of consequences whenever a person’s violations continue. Penalties could range from a warning, to parent conference, to suspension.

Alternative-to-suspension educational programs provide positive support to address problem. Goals: encourage compliance with policy and consider cessation.

Even if school has a “zero-tolerance approach” to policy violations, offer assistance with cessation.

Policy can include possession as a violation.

COMMUNITY-WIDE APPROACH

Developing relationships and collaborating with community stakeholders regarding tobacco issues can make the efforts of all concerned more effective.

In addition to Student Support Services Centers, other valuable resources are: tobacco-free coalitions, youth organizations (Reality Check), local county health departments’ Public Health Educators.

Utilize Advantages of Building Partnerships

Some county health department codes prohibit possession of tobacco on school grounds by underage youth.