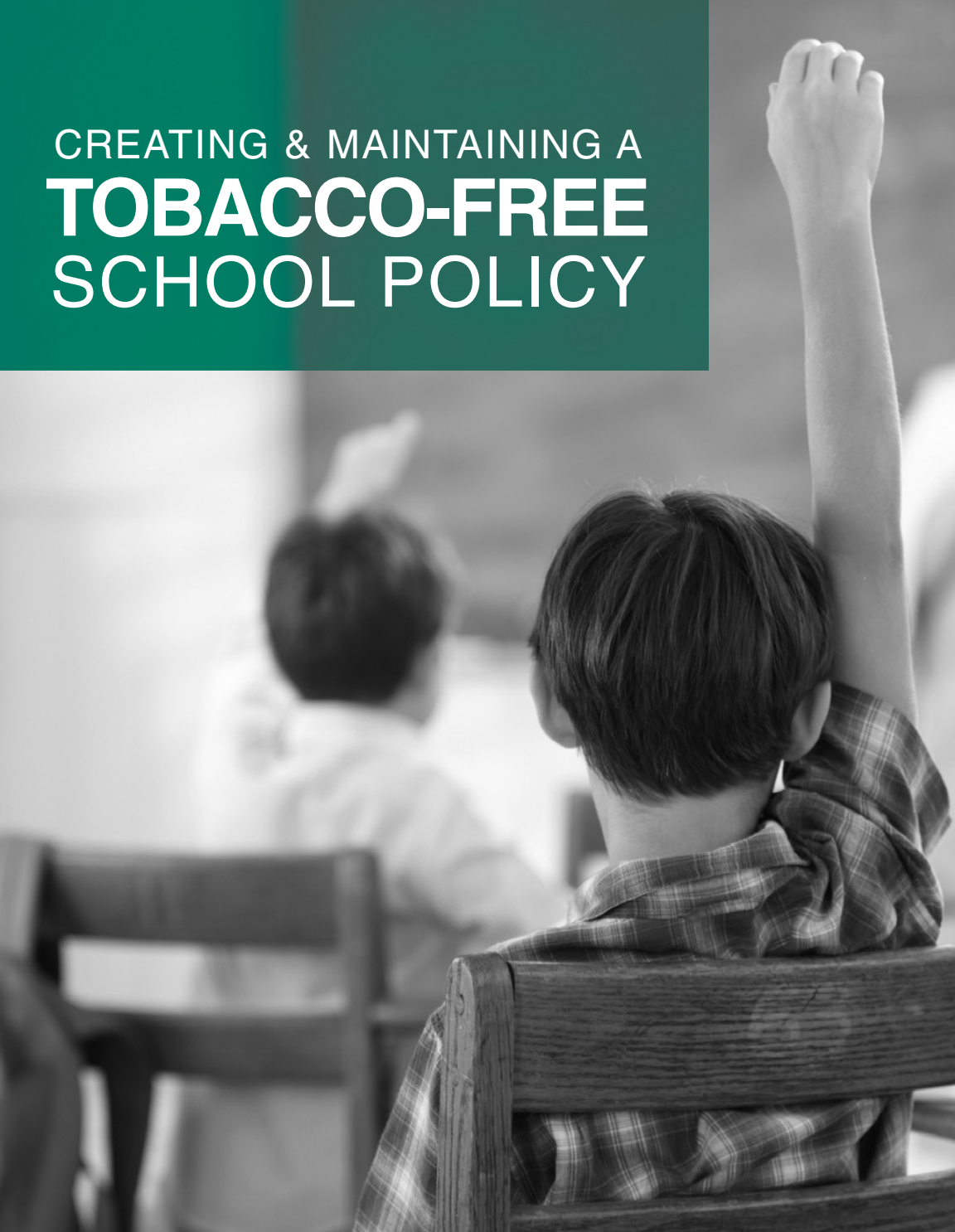


CREATING & MAINTAINING A
TOBACCO-FREE
SCHOOL POLICY



Healthy Maine Partnerships
Partnership For A Tobacco-Free Maine

Why Tobacco-Free Schools?

- It's Maine Law! In the spring of 2007, the Maine Legislature passed legislation that tightens the law regarding tobacco use on school grounds. The statute now reads, "Tobacco use in the buildings or on the grounds of any elementary or secondary school is prohibited." This means that there is no tobacco use by anyone—students, staff or visitors—on school grounds at any time, 365 days per year. The only exception to this law is that tobacco use may be permitted in classrooms only as part of a bona fide demonstration during a class lesson, with prior notice being given to the school's administrator.
- To view Maine law regarding tobacco use on school grounds, go to www.tobaccofreemaine.org and click on Maine's Tobacco Laws on the left-hand side of the web site.
- **Tobacco use is still the number one preventable cause of death and disease in the United States.** Most adults who use tobacco products started before the age of 18, so policies that help to keep youth from starting to use tobacco are vitally important in reducing tobacco use.
- Children and youth spend most of their days at school. Tobacco-free school grounds support the message students receive in the classrooms, creating no conflict between what is taught and what is experienced in the rest of the school environment. Prohibiting tobacco use at all times on school grounds reinforces the norm that most people do not use tobacco products and do not want to breathe secondhand smoke.
- In addition to the health consequences, research shows that tobacco use affects student attendance and academic performance. Policies and procedures that provide positive support for remaining tobacco-free, or that help students to quit, actually help learning.¹ Helping students with health-related needs, such as tobacco use, allows them to become better academic students. If they can be helped to solve non-academic problems, students will be in class more often, have fewer health problems, and feel more connected to their peers.²

¹K. Yolton, K. Dietrich, P. Auinger, B. Lanphear, R. Hornung. 2005. "Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke and Cognitive Abilities among US Children and Adolescents," *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 113:1, p. 98–103. <http://www.ehponline.org/members/2004/7210/7210.html>.

²William Fibkins, *What Schools Should do to Help Kids Stop Smoking*, (Eye on Education, 2000).

- Schools are the major public institutions in most Maine communities. What schools define as important to the well-being of the students and school staff reflects out into the communities they serve. Schools that actively promote tobacco-free living make a strong statement that tobacco use is not acceptable. By setting this example, school and public health advocates collaborate to change environments and improve the health of all Maine citizens.

How to make your school system a tobacco-free environment – PTM Tobacco-Free School Policy Criteria

Since 1998, the Partnership For A Tobacco-Free Maine has implemented the PTM Tobacco-Free School Policy Initiative to encourage Maine school systems to become tobacco-free school environments and meet Recommendation #1 of the U.S. CDC document [Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction](#).

Recommendation #1: Develop and enforce a school policy on tobacco use

A school policy on tobacco use must be consistent with state and local laws and should include the following elements:

- An explanation of the rationale for preventing tobacco use (i.e., tobacco is the leading cause of death, disease, and disability)
- Prohibitions against tobacco use by students, all school staff, parents and visitors on school property, in school vehicles, and at school-sponsored functions away from school property
- Prohibitions against tobacco advertising in school buildings, at school functions, and in school publications (includes clothing worn to school)
- A requirement that all students receive instruction on avoiding tobacco use
- Provisions for students and all school staff to have access to programs to help them quit using tobacco
- Procedures for communicating the policy to students, all school staff, parents or families, visitors and the community
- Provisions for enforcing the policy

The complete CDC/DASH guidelines, all seven recommendations, can be found and downloaded at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/tobacco/guidelines/index.htm>.

PTM selected four of the seven elements of Recommendation #1 in the CDC/DASH guidelines as requirements for an SAU to become a PTM Tobacco-Free School.

PTM Criteria

Tobacco-Free School Environment Policy/Procedures

1. Prohibition against tobacco use by students, all school staff, parents, and visitors on school property, in school vehicles, and at school-sponsored functions on or away from school property. (This means no tobacco use at any time, 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, by anyone on school property or at any school functions anywhere.)
2. Prohibition against tobacco advertising in school buildings, at school functions, and in school publications. (This includes prohibiting tobacco advertising on clothing, such as T-shirts or hats, worn to school or school-sponsored activities.)
3. Procedure for enforcing policy. (There must be a written procedure for the steps to be taken when policy violations occur. Procedure should outline steps to be followed for students, staff, and visitors, along with the procedure for first-time offense, second-time offense, and multiple offenses.)
4. Written procedure for communicating the policy to students, all school staff, parents and families, visitors, and the community. (A good communication plan that is widely disseminated supports compliance to your policy.)

PTM Provides Tobacco-Free School Signage

PTM provides:

- No-cost signage to school systems that submit documentation to PTM that the School Administrative Unit (SAU) meets the PTM criteria for being a tobacco-free school environment.

Signage kits include appropriate signs for school grounds and athletic fields.

Model Policy

The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) has developed research-based model policy language for tobacco-free school policy. The language is free of copyright regulation and can be used to develop local policy and procedure. To view this comprehensive school tobacco use prevention policy, go to http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/tobacco_use.htm.

Sample School Policy

The sample policy below contains elements consistent with the PTM requirements for being a tobacco-free school environment. School Administrative Districts format their policies and write their procedures in a variety of ways, and this is one example.

Rationale for Tobacco-Free School Policy

Research has shown that students addicted to tobacco products do not learn as well because they are focused on the need for more tobacco versus learning.

In order to promote the health and safety of all students and school employees, optimal learning conditions, and the cleanliness of all facilities, the #_____ School Department School Board, hereinafter referred to as the "Board," prohibits the use of all tobacco products in school buildings, facilities, and on school buses during school-sponsored events. The policy will reflect and emphasize the hazards of tobacco use; assure compliance with state and federal laws; protect the health and safety of all students, employees and the general public; and role model a non-tobacco use environment by adults.

Use of Tobacco Products

Tobacco is the number one killer and leading cause of preventable death in Maine. To support and model a healthy lifestyle for our students the Board adopts the following tobacco-free policy.

The #_____ School Department buildings and property shall be tobacco-free 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This includes all days when school is not in session and all functions taking place on school grounds, such as athletic functions and other activities not associated with, or sponsored by, the school.

Maine law prohibits possession or use of tobacco products by anyone less than 18 years of age.

Possession or use of tobacco products by students on district property or in school vehicles and at school-sponsored functions is prohibited.

The use of tobacco products by all school employees on school property or in school vehicles and at school-sponsored functions is prohibited.

The use of tobacco products by all visitors on school property is prohibited. This includes non-school hours and all functions sponsored by the school or by others, including athletics, on or off school property.

Advertising of tobacco products is prohibited in school buildings, on school property, at school functions, and in all school publications. This includes clothing that advertises tobacco products.

Communication of Policy

This policy will be printed in both employee and student handbooks and adult education booklets on a yearly basis.

Tobacco-free school signs will be posted in highly visible places both inside and outside all school buildings including the Central Office. Signs will be posted at all entrances of school buildings, school playgrounds and athletic fields. The maintenance staff will be responsible for maintaining signage.

Parents and guardians shall be sent notification in writing, and the local media will be asked to communicate this tobacco-free policy community-wide.

An announcement of the tobacco-free school policy will be made at all school events, including but not limited to athletics and drama.

Age-appropriate tobacco prevention education will be incorporated into the #_____ School Department's K–HS comprehensive health education curriculum in alignment with the Maine Learning Results' Health Education Standards and will include awareness of the school policy.

Regulations Governing Enforcement

Students

Smoking Regulations for Elementary Schools Grades K–5

Disciplinary Procedures

1. First Incident

- A. Confiscate material.
- B. Parent/legal guardian shall be sent written notice regarding the tobacco violation that shall be signed by the parent/legal guardian and returned to school.
- C. Hold conference with the school administrator.
- D. Refer the student for assessment by the school counselor or health nurse.

2. Second Incident

- A. Confiscate material.
- B. Parent/legal guardian shall be sent written notice regarding the tobacco violation that shall be signed by the parent/legal guardian and returned to school.
- C. Hold conference with the school administrator.
- D. Refer the student for assessment by the school counselor or health nurse.
- E. Refer to police with material confiscated.
- F. Detention which should include a tobacco prevention education component.
- G. Offer student resources for available cessation programs.

3. Third and Subsequent Incidents

- A. Confiscate material.
- B. Parent/legal guardian shall be sent written notice regarding the tobacco violation that shall be signed by the parent/legal guardian and returned to school.
- C. Hold conference with the school administrator.
- D. Refer the student for assessment by the school counselor, health nurse or a person trained in tobacco prevention education.
- E. Refer to police with material confiscated.
- F. Possible suspension and/or community service.
- G. Offer student resources for available cessation programs.

Smoking Regulations for Middle and High School Students Grades 6–12

Disciplinary Procedures

1. First Incident

- A. Confiscate material.
- B. Parent/legal guardian shall be sent written notice regarding the tobacco violation that shall be signed by the parent/legal guardian and returned to school.
- C. Hold conference with school administrator.
- D. Refer student for assessment by the counselor, health nurse or person trained in tobacco prevention education.
- E. In-school suspension, which includes a tobacco prevention component.

2. Second Incident

- A. Confiscate material.

- B. Parent/legal guardian shall be sent written notice regarding the tobacco violation that shall be signed by the parent/legal guardian and returned to school.
- C. Hold conference with school administrator.
- D. Refer to police with confiscated material.
- E. Refer the student for assessment by the counselor, health nurse or a person trained in tobacco prevention.
- F. Offer student resources for available cessation programs.
- G. In-school suspension which includes a tobacco prevention education component.

3. Third and Subsequent Incidents

- A. Confiscate material.
- B. Parent/legal guardian shall be sent written notice regarding the tobacco violation that shall be signed by the parent/legal guardian and returned to school.
- C. Hold conference with school administrator.
- D. Refer to police with confiscated material.
- E. Refer student for assessment by the counselor, health nurse or person trained in tobacco prevention education.
- F. Offer student resources for available cessation programs.
- G. In-school suspension which includes a tobacco prevention component or a cessation program if the student expresses a desire to quit. EXCEPTION: students in grades 9–12 may receive an out-of-school suspension.

Regulations Governing Enforcement

Faculty/Staff

Faculty and staff include administrators, teachers, custodians, maintenance workers, aides, secretaries, teacher assistants, food service personnel, etc. These individuals may not use tobacco products during working hours or at any time on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event. Staff members will be subject to the following procedures:

First offense: A written warning by the appropriate administrator. Refer to cessation program.

Second offense: A formal reprimand by the appropriate administrator and a letter of same to be placed in personnel file. Refer to cessation program.

Third offense: Meeting with the school board and possible leave without pay or dismissal. Refer to cessation program.

Visitors

Visitors to the school facilities must comply with regulations set forth by the #_____ School Department.

The use of tobacco products by visitors is prohibited. This includes non-school hours and all functions of the school. This also includes other organizations using school property.

Persons found using tobacco products will be asked by the appropriate school official to refrain from use while on school property. They will be informed of the school's tobacco-free policy. Persons who do not comply will be asked to leave the property. If they refuse to leave, the police may be called, and they may be charged with trespassing.

How will a tobacco-free school policy be enforced?

Enforcement of Tobacco-Free School Law

It is important to establish written enforcement procedures that are fair and clear, and then consistently carry them out. PTM encourages school administrators to develop violation procedures for students that allow them to remain in school and receive tobacco use education and cessation services if they indicate they want to quit.

Who enforces the policies and procedures?

All school personnel and students are encouraged to support the tobacco-free school policy as a form of pride in their school and a support for the good health of the entire school body. The actual carrying out of policy and procedures can be designated to one person, typically an administrator in each school.

Clear expectations

The intent of a tobacco-free school environment is to promote the health and well-being of students and staff members; therefore, enforcement of the policy is meant to emphasize support for good health rather than punishment.

Consistency

Enforcement should be consistent. Rules need to be consistently followed for students, staff and visitors. Communicate the enforcement process for visitors to students and staff and ask for their support to educate visitors to school property.

Promote tobacco-free living

Engage everyone in promoting living tobacco-free. Celebrate national and state events that support tobacco-free living and provide opportunities to share this vision with the greater community.

Supportive environments are more effective

Procedures that are punitive can cause rebellious attitudes among youth, detracting from any positive learning environment. Tobacco use policy violations could be approached as a health issue rather than a school discipline issue. The disciplinary actions could include:

- Written assignments on health effects of smoking
- Community service related to tobacco use prevention
(Service consequences should be reserved for students who repeatedly violate policy)

Key considerations regarding consequences

- Violations must be taken seriously from the very first violation
- Consequences must be implemented immediately
- Consequences must be fair and concise
- Consequences must be in accordance with relevant codes of conduct and school policy
- The school must have sufficient resources to implement chosen consequences

While it is legal for persons over the age of 18 to possess tobacco, students over the age of 18 do not have the right to violate a school policy, in the same way as they would not be allowed to possess a weapon or alcohol at school.

Communication is a key to enforcement

Communication of Tobacco-Free Law

Develop a written, comprehensive communication plan to inform students, staff and visitors of the tobacco-free school law and the procedures for enforcement and communication. A good communication plan that is fully implemented reduces violations.

Communication Checklist

- Post signage in highly visible places throughout school grounds
- Put policy and procedures in student and staff handbooks and letter to parents or guardians
- Review at student and staff orientation
- Make announcements

- Involve and empower student groups to assist in communicating policy and procedures
- Include in student newspaper and staff newsletter
- Tell students and staff about tobacco use cessation opportunities
- Provide information at school open houses
- Discuss at PTA/PTO meetings
- Announce at all athletic events, meetings, concerts and plays
- Inform all vendors and business volunteers who supervise students during off-campus activities
- Place policy and procedures on school web site

Checklist for Steps to Policy and Procedural Changes

1. Assess current policy and become informed about Maine state law and the changes that need to be made to conform to the law.
2. Form advisory committee to recommend changes to procedures to meet the PTM criteria for being a PTM Tobacco-Free School environment—include the School Health Coordinator and Coordinated School Health Program Advisory Committee—share information and gain support for changes.
3. Develop draft of revisions to policy and procedures that reflect the PTM criteria—keep it simple and specific.
4. Present revisions of current policy/procedures to school board.
5. Plan the implementation and enforcement strategies with administrators—be fair and consistent, plan procedures for violations by students such as an Alternative to Suspension Program for first-time violations, provide cessation programs for both students and staff or identify community cessation programs available to students and staff members.
6. Communicate policy and procedures throughout school system and community. Place signage strategically on school grounds, mail letters to parents, announce in local media, and announce at outdoor school-sponsored events.
7. Implement the policy—use educational rather than punitive strategies for student violations, especially for first-time violations.
8. Maintain and evaluate annually—orient new administrators, teachers, staff and school board members; identify problems with policy implementation and make corrections.

If it's a procedure, put it in writing

Importance of Written Procedures

- Revising and adopting a tobacco use policy are the first steps in creating change. Developing written procedures that support the policy through communication, enforcement and maintenance are important to the success of the policy change.
- Communication and enforcement help reduce the violations of the tobacco-free policy.
- Written procedures help ensure that the implementation of the policy will be carried out as administrators and other staff positions change.
- Written procedures are available to be reviewed by all students, staff and visitors, and all members of the public so that consequences of violations of the policy are clear to all.
- Clear, well thought out procedures for implementation of a tobacco-free school policy will be more easily accepted and challenged less.

Tools & Resources

Helping Those Who Want to Quit

- Maine Tobacco HelpLine – (1-800-207-1230) welcomes youth to call for confidential counseling to help them quit
- “Not On Tobacco” (NOT) – Youth cessation program – for more information go to the American Lung Association web site at: <http://www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=39866>
- Alternative to Suspension Program – “Intervening with Teen Tobacco Users” (TEG), A Research-Based Program for Ages 12–18. For more information go to Community Interventions Inc. at: <http://www.communityintervention.org/category/s&>

Tobacco Facts/Maine – Youth Tobacco Use Data

Smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined—and thousands more die from other tobacco-related causes, such as fires caused by smoking (more than 1,000 deaths/year nationwide) and smokeless tobacco use. No good estimates are currently available, however, for the number of Maine citizens who die from these other tobacco-related causes, or for the much larger numbers who suffer from non-fatal tobacco-related health problems each year.

- In Maine, 1,900 kids under 18 become new daily smokers each year.
- 2.3 million packs of cigarettes are bought or smoked by kids each year in Maine.
- 27,000 kids who are alive in Maine now will die prematurely from smoking.

Web Sites

CDC/Smoking and Tobacco Use

<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>

Tobacco Control Network (TCN)

<http://www.ttac.org/TCN/materials/06.07.06.html>

CDC Healthy Youth

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/tobacco/publications.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/tobacco/tobacco-free.htm>

JAMA – Association Between Cigarette Smoking and Anxiety Disorders During Adolescence and Early Adulthood

<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/284/18/2348>

Environmental Health Perspective - Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke and Cognitive Abilities among U.S. Children and Adolescents

<http://www.ehponline.org/members/2004/7210/7210.html>

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation - A National Survey of Youth Tobacco Cessation Programs

<http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?ia=143&id=15289>

Youth Tobacco Cessation Collaborative

<http://www.youthtobaccocessation.org/>

In Conversation: High School Students Talk to Students about Tobacco Use and Prevention Strategies

<http://qhr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/12/9/1264>

Smokeless Tobacco Use Declining Among Professional Baseball Players – Study Links Steady Decline In Use And Prevalence Of Oral Lesions

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=46873>

Policies to Prevent Tobacco Use

http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/tobacco_use.htm



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