

# SECTION 3: RESPONDING TO CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

## QUESTION 1: WHY DOES THE POLICY HAVE TO COVER ALL SCHOOL PROPERTY, NOT JUST INDOORS?

- Students are aware of what happens on school property and the use of tobacco and e-cigarette products anywhere on the school campus reinforces and normalizes tobacco and e-cigarette use.
- Tobacco and e-cigarette use on school grounds and off-site school-sponsored events allows students to see role models, such as teachers, using tobacco products.
- Secondhand smoke, even outdoors, can trigger harmful physical reactions for people with asthma, allergies, and other health conditions.
- Tobacco- and e-cigarette-free schools prepare students for the increasing number of facilities with tobacco- and e-cigarette-free campuses, such as colleges, hospitals, workplaces, and public transportation.

## QUESTION 2: WHY STAFF AND NOT JUST STUDENTS?

- Teachers and other staff are powerful role models for students.
- Youth who don't see tobacco and e-cigarette use are less likely to think the behavior is acceptable and are less likely to start using tobacco and e-cigarette products.<sup>9</sup>

## QUESTION 3: WHY ATHLETIC EVENTS?

- Tobacco use has been historically promoted by the tobacco industry through sporting events such as baseball, rodeo, and football. Refraining from tobacco and e-cigarette use at school athletic events supports a healthy environment for everyone and helps de-normalize tobacco and e-cigarette use.
- The majority of event attendees likely appreciate knowing they will not be exposed to secondhand smoke or vapor in the stands.

## QUESTION 4: HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET PEOPLE TO COMPLY WITH THIS POLICY?

- Communication is key. Most people will comply with the policy if they know it exists (see pages 15-16 for communication strategies and resources).
- Enforce the policy. When enforcement is consistent, people are much more likely to comply (see page 17-19 for compliance and enforcement resources).

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## **QUESTION 5: WHY DOES IT HAVE TO INCLUDE VISITORS, CONTRACTORS, CONSTRUCTION CREWS, AND MAINTENANCE, AND HOW CAN WE GET THEM TO COMPLY?**

- Maintenance staff members are an important part of the school staff. Their support of student health and respect for school policies is essential for tobacco- and e-cigarette-free schools.
- Allowing exceptions for service provider or visitors creates a mixed message.
- Visitors, contractors, construction crews, and maintenance are not subject to certain school rules and exempt from others. Enforce school tobacco and e-cigarette policies just as you enforce all other policies, such as those prohibiting the use of alcohol and firearms.

## **QUESTION 6: WHY DOES THE POLICY PROHIBIT ELECTRONIC SMOKING DEVICES (E-CIGARETTES) REGARDLESS OF WHAT THEY CONTAIN?**

- E-cigarette possession and use is against school policy, regardless of whether the liquid used in the device contains nicotine.
- Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which causes addiction, may harm brain development, and could lead to the use of other tobacco product among youth.
- E-cigarettes model nicotine and tobacco use for youth, with or without nicotine.
- Staff cannot definitively determine whether an e-cigarette contains nicotine or other chemicals (such as THC).
- E-cigarette aerosol is not water vapor. In addition to nicotine, e-cigarette aerosol can contain heavy metals, ultrafine particulates that can be inhaled deep into the lungs, and low levels of toxins known to cause cancer.<sup>1,2</sup>

## **QUESTION 7: WHY DOES THE POLICY REQUIRE SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE REFERRALS TO CESSATION RESOURCES?**

- Many cessation resources are available over the phone or online. Providing the websites and phone numbers to these resources is a simple way for schools to demonstrate their commitment to the health of students, staff, and visitors.