

SECTION 4:

COMMUNICATION FOR SCHOOLS

COMMUNICATING YOUR TOBACCO- AND E-CIGARETTE-FREE POLICY

You can't comply with a policy that you don't know exists. Students, staff, parents, and the public are all impacted by a tobacco- and e-cigarette-free school policy. Therefore, each of these audiences needs to understand the policy.

There are many ways to effectively communicate positive messages about the tobacco- and e-cigarette-free policy. Aim for clear, positive messages that motivate people to comply. Here are some suggestions from schools across the country.

- **SIGNAGE:** Post tobacco- and e-cigarette-free school signs at all entrances to school buildings, school grounds, parking lots, and athletic facilities as well as in the school building, school vehicles, and buses.
- **TEACHER-SPECIFIC SIGNAGE:** Post tobacco- and e-cigarette-free school signage along with a copy of the policy in staff lounges and offices.
- **IN-SCHOOL STUDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Ask students to share information about the policy in their daily announcements. Involve student groups or clubs in developing and delivering announcements about the policy.
- **EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Announce the policy at athletic events, meetings, concerts, and plays. Involve student groups or clubs in developing and delivering these announcements about the policy. Include a mention of the tobacco- and e-cigarette-free campus policy in event bulletins and flyers.
- **STUDENT-DESIGNED PUBLICITY:** Ask student groups or classes to design posters, banners, and signs to communicate the policy.
- **STAFF EDUCATION AND TRAINING:** Discuss the policy at staff meetings and new staff orientations. Provide annual in-service training on tobacco and e-cigarette related school policies for all staff, including teachers, administrators, bus drivers, aides, food service workers, and maintenance staff.
- **STUDENT EDUCATION:** Setting clear expectations helps everyone follow the rules. At the start of each school year, during school-wide or grade-level assemblies or in a specific class, all school rules should be reviewed, including policies about tobacco and e-cigarette use and possession.
- **NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT:** Place an ad in the newspaper publicizing the policy.
- **COMMUNITY GROUPS:** Ask community groups such as local coalitions and parent-teacher organizations to include an article about the tobacco- and e-cigarette-free school policy in their newsletters. Provide them with a short article if necessary.
- **MEMO OR EMAIL:** Inform school staff — or remind them throughout the year — about the policy and enforcement via an official memo or email. Inform vendors who provide supplies, materials, and services on a regular basis about the policy via an official memo.
- **PARENT LETTERS:** Send a letter to each parent or guardian explaining the policy. Provide the health, academic, and social reasons for the policies. Outline the consequences for violators and request support enforcing the new policy with students and visitors.
- **PARENT TELEPHONE CALLS:** Use automatic calling to inform parents of the policy. This may be particularly appropriate prior to the first sporting event of the year.
- **COMMUNICATE ABOUT VIOLATIONS:** Call or meet with parents if a student violates the policy. Send a letter home with a summary of the policy, details of their student's policy violation, and consequences of this and future violations.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- Free signage: Page 22
- Sample event announcements: Page 25
- Sample staff memo: Page 24
- Sample parent letters: Page 23

For free signs communicating the tobacco- and e-cigarette-free policy, contact info@247CampaignVA.com or visit 247CampaignVA.com/signage.