



Healthy Missoula Youth
Coalition

SCHOOL POLICIES

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SCHOOL POLICIES

Purpose of the Section

- Create a basis of knowledge for prevention best practices in terms of school policies
- Provide In-School Suspension resources
- Recommend policy signage

What Educators Can Do

- Positively enforce ATOD policies
- Decrease truancy rates
- Increase awareness of campus policy

Why is this important?

Effective school policies work with students to educate and make positive behavioral changes. This increases commitment to school and lessens the likelihood of recidivism.

Choosing a single policy is likely to have a limited public health impact, if any, unless implemented with fidelity. If the policy is written, but not enforced or part of a comprehensive plan, it will be significantly less effective. Pair school ATOD-free policies with other practices that will create a positive impact on the school environment, such as expanded hours for gymnasium, library or other settings for after school ATOD-free activities.⁶

SCHOOL POLICIES

School Policies

The tiered approach to policy enforcement & discipline.

School Policy Guides & Examples

A variety of student handbooks, policy guides, and code of conduct examples.

In-School Suspension Programs

Alternative to suspension programs that are easily accessed and/or free for schools to utilize.

School Policy Signs

Examples of school policy signage throughout Missoula County.

INTRODUCTION

As an educator, you have the opportunity to play a powerful role in the prevention of underage drinking and drug use among your students¹. One method of preventing, and perhaps decreasing, substance use in schools is establishing an effective alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) policy. The goal of this policy should not be to severely punish the students or 'get them in trouble,' but rather focus on changing student behavior. Effective school policies work with students to educate them about the dangers of ATODs as well as provide them with tools to help overcome their own substance use.

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It is crucial that your school has clear expectations for each violation. Some policies can be ambiguous, stating that consequences can be assigned by administrators (and in severe cases, this is necessary). However, if the goal is to change student behavior, then consistency within the policy is necessary to ensure that each student receives the same education and interventions.

Recently, many schools have shifted their policies to include multi-tiered approaches in discipline in which the first two tiers are focused on education and rehabilitation. For example, if a student is caught vaping for the first time, the first tier is focused on behavior change intervention and education. The first tier can include interventions such as: a meeting with the student, their principal, a school counselor, and the student's parents to discuss a behavior change plan; enforcing a three-visit policy with a school counselor or Licensed Addiction Counselor (LAC); one day of in-school suspension (ISS) that provides the student with online training and education about substance use (this includes quizzes, tests, and an essay); remove special privileges (i.e. if students are allowed to leave during lunch, this student loses their privilege to do so); and discuss utilizing the Youth Diversion Program at Providence in cases where the student has a diagnosed substance use disorder.

EXAMPLES OF MULTI-TIERED APPROACHES

- [Columbia Falls High School: Parent-Student Handbook](#)
- [Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools - AR 5131 Code of Student Conduct: Disciplinary Measures](#)

SCHOOL POLICIES

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention created a School Substance Use Policy Guide that outlines each step in establishing an effective school policy. "This guide is based on current research and best practice strategies to prevent and address substance use among young people."² The Healthy Missoula Youth Coalition **highly recommends** using this document as a guide when the school reviews and/or revises substance use policies: [School Substance Use Policy Development Guide](#)

Schools should also consider reviewing and updating extracurricular and co-curricular activity policies on alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Participating in extracurricular activities and sports is a privilege, and students must be held accountable when caught using substances. As mentioned, a multi-tiered approach that aligns with each violation may be beneficial. In addition to having a period of time in which the student is ineligible to participate (20 pupil instruction days or 10 pupil instruction days if self-reported, for example), coaches and administrators should work with the student to also provide them with education and behavior change strategies, such as meeting with an LAC or school counselor. During their time of ineligibility, students should still report to practice, but coaches must ensure that the student is not participating.

EXAMPLES OF POLICIES

- [Billings School District 2 - Policy 2325: Student Drug and Chemical Use](#)
- [Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools - School Policy: Student Behavior - Alcohol & Drugs \(highly recommend\)](#)

SCHOOL POLICIES

What about drug testing?

Due to the increase in substance use among athletes in some schools, schools in Montana and across the nation are implementing a drug testing policy for extracurricular and co-curricular activities. Drug testing students in sports and co-curricular activities is used as a deterrent to prevent students from using substances. Additionally, the use of ATODs may affect a student's cognitive function, coordination, and physical performance which increases the risks of injuries to themselves or others³. Again, the aim of this policy is to prevent substance use, injuries, and provide assistance to students who are using a substance regularly. To learn more about drug testing policies, visit the following school's drug testing policies:

EXAMPLES OF POLICIES

- [Roundup School District: Extracurricular Activities Drug-Testing Program](#)
- [Forsyth Public Schools \(MT\): Extra-curricular Activity Drug/Alcohol Testing Policy](#)

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

In-School Suspension (ISS), also known as Alternative-To-Suspension (ATS), is a better option for students than an after-school detention, out of school suspension, or expulsion because it keeps youth involved in the educational process. Research has shown that students who are suspended out of school are more likely to fall behind academically, drop out, or become involved with the juvenile justice system⁴. However, in order to be an effective alternative, there needs to be a support system in place for the students who participate. Daniel Losen, director of the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at UCLA's Civil Rights Project, says that "The goal should be to get to the root of the problem and get kids back in class as soon as possible. What's counterproductive is if kids are sent to sit in a room with someone who's just there to babysit and they're not getting any support."⁵

The change of a school's policy to incorporate in-school suspension programs addresses this issue. Implementing an ISS program that specifically targets the risky behavior that caused the infraction in the first place helps mitigate the risk of recidivism and maintains an educationally oriented approach. There are many programs that address substance use infractions in particular, as seen in the following graphic.

QUICK LINKS TO THE PROGRAMS REFERENCED

- [INDEPTH: An Alternative to Teen Nicotine Suspension or Citation](#)
- [Catch My Breath - Vape Education - Tobacco Youth Prevention](#)
- [Online Marijuana Curriculum: Johnny's Ambassadors \(johnnysambassadors.org\)](#)
- [Marijuana Education Initiative Toolkit: eLearning 20 - MEI \(marijuana-education.com\)](#)
- [Our Healthy Futures | Tobacco Prevention Toolkit | Stanford Medicine](#)
- [MY Healthy Future Course | Tobacco Prevention Toolkit | Stanford Medicine](#)
- [Remote-Learning Curriculum | Cannabis Awareness and Prevention Toolkit | Stanford Medicine](#)

ATS & ISS PROGRAMS



American Lung Association

INDEPTH

Instead of solely focusing on punitive measures, INDEPTH is an interactive program that teaches students about nicotine dependence, establishing healthy alternatives and how to kick the unhealthy addiction. This is an in-person course that would require an instructor to go through an hour-long training in order to become a facilitator.



CATCH
COORDINATED APPROACH TO CHILD HEALTH

CATCH My Breath

A youth nicotine vaping prevention program for grades 5-12 that has been proven to reduce students' likelihood of vaping. This has four 35-minute lessons for each grade group. Includes a lesson plan with learner outcomes, detailed directions, and all materials including corresponding PowerPoint presentations. This course can be conducted asynchronously online.



Johnny's Ambassadors

Targeted to middle and early high school students (with a parallel track for parents and concerned adults), the program works to prevent marijuana use, and reduce the gap between the perceived and actual harm of marijuana use. This is an online asynchronous course made up of 8 modules, that last 60-90 minutes total.



Marijuana Education Initiative

A collection of 45-minute learning modules for kids, parents, coaches, and educators who want to be informed regarding youth marijuana use. MEI's eLearning opportunities offer engaging and interactive certificated online courses that are self-paced and self-directed with quizzes throughout the lesson to assess for understanding.



OUR Healthy Futures

As part of the Stanford Tobacco Prevention Toolkit, this in-person course is taught using principles of motivational interviewing to encourage cessation and educate about the harms of use. **MY Healthy Future** is the online version, which also contains content on how marginalized folks are targeted by tobacco and vaping companies.



Stanford Cannabis Toolkit

The Stanford Cannabis Prevention Toolkit features a Remote-Learning Curriculum that can be taught over Zoom as a class or as a self-paced course. The Self-Paced version has student worksheets and a pre and post survey you can access

SCHOOL POLICY SIGNS

While it is good to have a solid structure for school policies, this is less effective if these policies are not well known or reinforced throughout the school grounds. Posting signage throughout the campus will increase awareness of the policies, and serve as a consistent reinforcement for students and visitors. The purpose of these signs is to remind students and the surrounding adults of the community that youth are not meant to partake in substance use and substance use is not permitted on school grounds, even by adults.

This method of prevention is considered an environmental approach, and is aimed at influencing community conditions and standards that shape behaviors. Prevention best practice in this instance would be to have signs that list the expectations for students and visitors while on campus - list what they should do, rather than what they should not do. Create signs that are designed to have the greatest impact on this specific community by using the school logo and school colors, with the intent to embrace the significance of positive school attachment, a known protective factor. Similar wording should be utilized on all signage to send a cohesive message as well. An example of what this may look like for a main entrance sign is shown below:

WELCOME TO CLINTON

SCHOOL DISTRICT #32

**AS YOU ARE VISITING, PLEASE KEEP IN
MIND THIS CAMPUS IS**

- ALCOHOL FREE**
- WEAPON FREE**
- DRUG FREE**
- TOBACCO FREE**
- MARIJUANA FREE**
- SMOKE FREE WITHIN 25 FEET OF CAMPUS**



Missoula County Ordinance 3604 restricts smoking tobacco and marijuana within 25 feet of doorways, vents, and other openings.
Montana State Law 20-1-220 prohibits use of tobacco or vapor products in public school building or on public school property. This includes school playgrounds, school steps, and parking lots.
Drug Free Schools & Campuses Act 1989 prevents the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees.
US Federal Law 18 U.S.C. 922 prohibits any person from purposely and knowingly carrying a firearm in a school zone.

SCHOOL POLICY SIGNS

These policy compliance signs will be distributed throughout the school grounds to bring greater awareness to the safe and healthy school policies in place, and serve as a reminder that youth are not meant to partake in substance use. Use strategic placement in areas of the school that will reach the greatest audience, and target specific areas where substance use occurs:

Main Entrance Signs

This sign should be placed at the main gates of the building, where buses and parents drop off and pick up students. This placement will impact students as they come in the morning and again as they depart for the day. A large size will ensure that students, staff, parents, and visitors to the school will all see it upon arrival. This main gate is also the entrance for visitors, so the detail on it is meant to be a welcoming, but firm reminder that school policies do not just apply to the students attending the school during school hours. This is crucial in the event that a school also hosts after-hours activities and events, such as PTSA meetings, sports events, and graduation ceremonies.

WELCOME TO CLINTON **SCHOOL DISTRICT #32**

AS YOU ARE VISITING, PLEASE KEEP IN

MIND THIS CAMPUS IS

ALCOHOL FREE

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DRUG FREE

TOBACCO FREE

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SCHOOL POLICY SIGNS

Playground Perimeter Signs

These signs will be placed intermittently on the perimeter fence of the playground. If the playground is available during after-school activities or to the public for use after school hours, it is important to address the policies for those who do not have access to the school handbook or are unaware of the rules on school grounds. The specific details regarding the laws ensure that visitors know that these policies are enforced on a county, state, and federal level as well, and are not only intended for the students of the district.

Safe & Healthy School Policies

ALCOHOL FREE

WEAPON FREE

DRUG FREE

TOBACCO FREE

MARIJUANA FREE

**SMOKE FREE WITHIN 25 FEET OF
CAMPUS**



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SCHOOL POLICY SIGNS



Entry Door Signs

These entryway signs are designed to go on the inside of the door window, facing the exterior of the building. They are intended for placement on the side entrances to the building, so that staff, students, and recurring visitors with access will continuously see the message, even when not using the main building entrance. For example, when the staff and students come back inside from recess, this message will be posted on the door they use to re-enter the building.

SCHOOL POLICY SIGNS

**Prevention funding can help support the implementation or purchase of policy signs. Contact the Healthy Missoula Youth Coalition for more information at: info@healthymissoulayouth.org



**ALCOHOL FREE
SMOKE FREE
DRUG FREE
WEAPON FREE**

*This includes tobacco, vapor, and marijuana products

**THIS IS A
ALCOHOL
DRUG
TOBACCO
MARIJUANA
FREE CAMPUS**



Student Bathroom Stalls/Mirrors

They will be strategically placed in the school bathrooms so that students will have a continuous reminder, even when adults are not present. This specifically targets an area where there is a greater risk of youth substance use.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Conclusion

Effective alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) policies focus on education, changing student behavior, and providing access to resources. Tiered discipline systems that utilize in-school suspension or alternative to suspension programs are highly recommended by the Healthy Missoula Youth Coalition. Raise awareness of these policies for both students and staff alike.

Action Items

- **READ** your school's current policies in the student handbook.
- **THINK** about whether these policies are being enforced.
- **ASSESS** whether these policies are effective.
- **TALK** to administration to gauge capacity and/or need for change.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Below are free online resources for substance use education:

- [Steered Straight Inc. Learning Center](#)
 - The Steered Straight Learning Center provides three free courses for students: 1) Straight Talk, 2) Vaping Me Crazy, 3) Fentanyl: Fake & Fatal.
- [Johnny's Ambassadors: Online Marijuana Curriculum - Marijuana Suspension Alternative Program](#)
 - Must submit a request form (scroll to the bottom of the page). There are two trainings available: one for teens and one for parents. Be sure to select "Teen Version" when submitting your request form. If parents want a resource, they can also request access to the training.

1: [SAMHSA](#)

2: [Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019](#)

3: [Office of Justice Programs, 1998](#)

4: [American Civil Liberties Union: Washington](#)

5: [Jones, 2019](#)

6: [NCDHHS, 2014](#)

