

SECTION 5: COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Policies need to be enforced in order to be effective. It is up to each school or division to determine its specific discipline procedures for students, staff, and visitors, including parents.

One recent study found that when schools enforce their tobacco- and e-cigarette-free policies, students are less likely to be current smokers or use tobacco or e-cigarettes on school grounds.¹⁰

While not required, the 24/7 campaign strongly encourages utilizing supportive (non-punitive) discipline options for positive student outcomes. This recommendation aligns with the U.S. Department of Education's Supportive School Discipline initiative, which aims to support effective alternatives for policy violations and reduce suspensions and expulsions.

SIMPLY STATED: Enforcement of school tobacco- and e-cigarette-free policies makes a positive impact on reducing student tobacco and e-cigarette use.

ENFORCING YOUR SCHOOL'S TOBACCO- AND E-CIGARETTE-FREE POLICY

WRITE DOWN ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES

As with all school policies, it is important to establish written enforcement procedures that are fair, clear, and consistently implemented. Procedures need to be developed for all potential violators: students, staff, and visitors. Many schools find that developing a written checklist outlining these procedures facilitates consistent implementation.

USE PROGRESSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE DISCIPLINE FOR STUDENTS

School administrators are strongly encouraged to develop supportive discipline procedures for students that emphasize education and restorative consequences as opposed to suspension. The main purpose of consequences for violating the tobacco- and e-cigarette-free policy is for students and others to learn from their mistakes and make better decisions in the future. Through required educational interventions, voluntary cessation support, and parent communication, students can be supported as they learn to honor the policy and make positive changes in their tobacco and/or e-cigarette use.

ENSURE THAT ALL STAFF MEMBERS ENFORCE THE RULES

All school personnel are required to enforce the tobacco- and e-cigarette-free school policy. This includes food service workers and custodial staff as well as security, teachers, and administrators. The main role for most school staff is to refer students who are suspected of violating the policy to the appropriate personnel. Some staff may believe that either ignoring violations or warning students to stop using tobacco and/or e-cigarettes is better than making a referral. Unfortunately, this leads to inconsistency and unfairness, and it undermines a culture of respect and safety.

DESIGNATE SOMEONE TO OVERSEE IMPLEMENTATION

The direct implementation of the policy and procedures can be designated to one person, typically an administrator at the school site. This individual should immediately confiscate the tobacco or e-cigarette product and related paraphernalia from the student who has violated the policy. Consequences should be tracked.