# SECTION 4: COMMUNICATION

## COMMUNICATING YOUR TOBACCO-FREE POLICY

In order to comply with a policy, people need to be aware of it. Students, staff, parents, and the public/community are all impacted by a tobacco-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-free policy. Aim for clear, positive messages that motivate people to comply. Here are some suggestions from schools across the country.

* **SIGNAGE:** Post tobacco-free school signs at all entrances to school buildings, school grounds, parking lots, athletic facilities, as well as in the school building, school vehicles and buses.
* **TEACHER-SPECIFIC SIGNAGE:** Post tobacco-free school signage, along with a copy of the policy, in staff lounges or offices.
* **IN-SCHOOL STUDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Ask students to read daily announcements. Involve student groups or clubs in developing and delivering these 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- free campus policy in event bulletins/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:** Clear expectations help 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-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 to the school about the policy via an official memo.
* **PARENT LETTERS:** Send a letter to each parent or guardian explaining the policy; providing the health, academic, and social reasons; outlining the consequences for violators; and requesting support in enforcement 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.

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