

Tobacco-Free Schools

Checklist 1: Current Policy Language



Use this checklist to assess whether your district's current Tobacco-Free Schools Policy:

1. Meets all required elements outlined in Colorado law ([C.R.S. 25-14-103.5](#)).
2. Clearly defines expectations for students, staff, families, and visitors.
3. Incorporates best practices that support prevention, safety, fairness, and compliance.
4. Provides a foundation for consistent enforcement and communication across all schools.

Note: Tobacco-Free Schools policy is commonly coded **ADC**. Additional requirements or guidance may be included within IHAM/IHAMA, JICH, or policies within Section G, addressing school and district personnel and Section K, addressing community and home relations.

Required by Colorado Law: The sections below reflect the minimum policy requirements under Colorado's Tobacco-Free Schools law. District policies must include these elements to remain compliant with state statute.			
Policy Language	Yes	No	Notes
<p>Prohibits Tobacco, Nicotine, and Retail Marijuana Use: Prohibits the use of all tobacco products, nicotine products (including vapes), and retail marijuana on all school property (with definitions of school property).</p> <p><i>Note: Retail marijuana provisions may be detailed in Policy JICH.</i></p>			
<p>Defines Tobacco: Defines tobacco product consistent with C.R.S. 18-13-121 (5)</p>			
<p>Audience: Applies to all students, staff, and visitors and all federally funded pre-K-12 schools, including nursery schools, childcare centers, and Head Start programs.</p>			
<p>Signage: Requires signage in prominent locations on school property.</p>			

<p>Discipline: Outlines disciplinary procedures aligned with Colorado law, including the prohibition of expulsion solely for tobacco use (C.R.S. 22-32-109), and encourages restorative practices (C.R.S. 22-32-144).</p>			
<p>Education: Includes language or legal reference regarding the requirement to teach about substances. <i>*May be in an IHAM or IHAMA policy</i></p>			
<p>References: Include legal and cross references to applicable state statutes and district policies.</p>			
<p>Best Practices-The sections below reflect CDC-recommended best practices for developing strong, sustainable policies that support effective nicotine use prevention and intervention.</p>			
<p>Policy Language</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Notes</p>
<p>Rationale: States clear rationale for maintaining a tobacco and nicotine-free environment.</p>			
<p>Discipline: Uses restorative, educational responses that keep students in school and connect them to appropriate cessation and support resources.</p>			
<p>Communication: Establishes a protocol for communicating both the policy and the rationale to all students, staff, and visitors. Example: Requires policy to be published in all employee and student handbooks and announced in staff meetings.</p>			
<p>Items that Contribute to Acceptability: Includes language restricting items from school property that might contribute to tobacco use and acceptability (such as lighters, clothing with tobacco logos).</p>			

No Industry Funds: Includes provisions against accepting funding or resources from the tobacco or nicotine industry.			
Advertising or Distribution of Products: Prohibits tobacco advertising and/or distribution of tobacco-related products.			
Promote Quitting: Includes information about connecting students and staff to free quitting resources and support for underlying reasons for use.			
Screening: Includes language that students with a tobacco policy infraction will be screened and connected to intervention and referral, as appropriate.			
Cultural Implications: Acknowledges a cultural difference between commercial tobacco use and tobacco use as part of an indigenous practice or a lawfully recognized religious, spiritual, or cultural ceremony or practice.			
Disparities: Acknowledges that differences in tobacco use and impact may vary based on identity, especially racial/ethnic identity, sexual orientation, and gender), and that people of color, women, youth, and members of the LGBTQ+ community are subject to disproportionate marketing of tobacco products.			
Other: Document other language included in ADC or related policies.			

If your district's ADC or related policies do not meet the minimum standards of Colorado law, or if you would like support in advocating for the addition of best practices, please reach out to your Action for Healthy Kids contact to discuss next steps.

You may also reference the [Tobacco-Free Schools sample policy language document](#) as a resource when your district is ready to explore or adopt updated policy language.

Action Planning

Use the tables below to:

1. Identify strengths and gaps
2. Prioritize areas for improvement
3. Document action steps, responsible parties, timelines, and resources needed to support implementation and ensure ongoing progress

Strengths	Gaps	Priority Areas for Improvement

Action Step	Person/Team Responsible	By When	Notes