



# Tobacco-Free Schools

Policy and Practice Checklist

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## Overview

District, schools, and community partners such as local public health agencies can work together to assess policy language and practices.

This document below outlines a four-step Checklist to assess policy language, consider district actions, review school practices, as well as document actions that can be taken based on the findings. [Access background information at the Take Action Toolkit: Tobacco-Free and Nicotine-Free Schools site.](#)

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### Step One: Review Policy Language

Access and review the Tobacco-Free Schools Policy language, often coded in Board of Education Policies as ADC, and other related policies.

Policy Language	Yes	No	Notes
<b>Prohibits Tobacco &amp; Retail Marijuana Use:</b> Prohibits use of all tobacco and nicotine products on all school property (with definitions of school property). Also prohibits use of retail marijuana. <i>(Required by Law)</i> <i>*Marijuana use may be addressed in JICH policy</i>			
<b>Defines Tobacco:</b> Defines tobacco to mean all forms of tobacco and tobacco use, including vaping. Also view <a href="#">18-13-121 (5) C.R.S</a> for definition of “tobacco product.” <i>(Required by Law)</i>			
Policy Language continued	Yes	No	Notes
<b>Audience:</b> Applies to all students, staff, and visitors and applies to all federally funded pre-K-12 schools, including nursery schools, childcare centers, and Head Start programs.			

<i>(Required by Law)</i>			
<b>Signage:</b> Requires signs to be posted in prominent places on all school property. <i>(Required by Law)</i>			
<b>Discipline:</b> Disciplinary measures for students, teachers, staff and visitors, in violation of policy, are outlined. Per <a href="#">C.R.S. 22-32-144</a> Each school district is encouraged to develop and utilize restorative justice practices that are part of the disciplinary program of each school in the district. Per <a href="#">C.R.S. 22-32-109</a> and CASB sample policy, no student shall be expelled solely for tobacco use. <i>(Required by Law)</i>			
<b>Education:</b> Includes language or legal reference regarding the requirement to teach about substances. <i>(Required by Law)</i> <i>*May be in an IHAM or IHAMA policy</i>			
<b>References:</b> Include legal and cross references to applicable laws or policies. <i>(Required by law)</i>			
<b>Rationale:</b> Includes background or rationale for being tobacco-free and nicotine-free. <i>(Additional Best Practice, included in ADC Sample Policy)</i>			
<b>Discipline:</b> Includes consequences for violating school tobacco policy beyond suspension and expulsion, including consequences that are equitable, educational, non-punitive, or progressively punitive. <i>(Additional Best Practice)</i>			
<b>Communication:</b> 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, posted			

on bulletin boards, and announced in staff meetings. (Additional Best Practice, included in ADC Sample Policy)			
<b>Items that Contribute to Acceptability:</b> Includes language restricting items from school property that might contribute to tobacco use and acceptability (such as lighters, clothing with logos). (Additional Best Practice)			
<b>No Industry Funds:</b> Includes provisions against accepting funding or resources from the tobacco or nicotine industry. (Additional Best Practice)			
<b>Advertising or Distribution of Products:</b> Prohibits tobacco advertising and/or distribution of tobacco-related products. (Additional Best Practice)			
<b>Promote Quitting:</b> Includes information about connecting to free quitting resources for students and staff. (Additional Best Practice)			
<b>Screening:</b> Includes language that students who have violated policy will be screened and connected to intervention and referral. (Additional Best Practice)			
<b>Cultural Implications:</b> 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. (Additional Best Practice)			
<b>Disparities:</b> 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.			

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<i>(Additional Best Practice)</i>			
<b>Other:</b> Document other language included in ADC or related policies.			

School and District Personnel related requirements may be covered in Section G policies  
 Community and Home Relations related requirements may be covered in Section K policies

If your district's ADC or other policies do not meet the minimum standards of Colorado's law or, you would like support in advocating for the addition of best practices, please reach out to your contact at RMC Health to discuss next steps. [Access a Google Document with example policy language here.](#)

## Step Two: Review District-Level Communication & Resources

Consider and discuss actions completed in the district over the past 12 months or ongoing approaches in the district.

Action	Yes	No	Notes
<b>Advisory Team:</b> The district works with an advisory team for input on Tobacco-Free Schools Policy and Practices or other health and wellness initiatives. <i>(NOTE: Tobacco and nicotine could be a topic to address with a District Health Advisory Council or other similar group)</i>			
<b>Signage Posted:</b> The district posts signs in district buildings and locations where use may occur. <b>See Signage Checklist in Step 3.</b>			
<b>Signage Provided:</b> The district has provided tobacco-free schools signs to all schools, which includes use of nicotine products such as vapes.			
<b>Contract Language:</b> The district has no-tobacco and nicotine use agreements included in contracts with outside vendors or groups using school facilities (e.g., landscaping companies, construction companies, youth groups, recreation departments and others).			
<b>Cessation Resources:</b> The district provides schools with information about free quitting resources.			
<b>Reminder Language:</b> The district provides schools with reminders about Tobacco-Free Schools Law and Policy, the rationale for being tobacco-free, consequences for violations and available resources to share in communications to parents/guardians.			
<b>Discipline Language:</b> The district shares equitable, clear and consistent procedures for handling tobacco and nicotine discipline.			

<b>Alternatives to Suspension:</b> The district promotes use of alternatives to suspension such as Second Chance, and other restorative practices for addressing infractions.			
<b>Guidance and/or Resources for Safe Disposal:</b> The district provides guidance to schools on how to dispose of tobacco or nicotine products, particularly vaping devices.			
<b>Information on Vape Detectors:</b> The district shares with schools that use of vape detectors on school grounds is not a best practice and should not be used.			
<b>Shares Educational Requirements:</b> The district informs schools about the requirement to teach about substances in pre-K-12.			
<b>Provide Educational Resources:</b> The district provides schools with prevention education curriculum or resources that are age appropriate, culturally relevant, and evidence-based.			
<b>Community Linkage:</b> The district links with available community-based tobacco prevention and policy activities (e.g., works with the local health agency on community policies or programs, joins community coalitions, works with student advocacy groups or state-wide media campaigns).			
<b>Training:</b> The district provides schools with a protocol for training staff regarding tobacco policy and enforcement strategies.			

## Step Three: School-Level Communication & Resources

If time and resources are available, consider assessing practices with schools in your district or county. In larger districts or areas that cover a large number of schools, consider which schools should be prioritized for assessment.

Complete Step Three with each identified school, if desired.

Action	Yes	No	Notes
<b>School Team:</b> The school has a team or group that addresses the Tobacco-Free Schools Policy and implementation. <i>(NOTE: Can include staff, students, families, community and meet to discuss one-two times annually, integrate this topic into existing committees/groups, etc.)</i>			
<b>Code of Conduct/Handbook:</b> The school includes information about tobacco-free schools in their school-level code of conduct or handbooks.			
<b>Reminders:</b> The school shares reminders about tobacco-free and nicotine-free environments during school events (particularly those taking place outside).			
<b>Signage:</b> The school posts signage about the Tobacco-Free Law at all main entrances or sections of the building, event locations (sports fields, auditoriums, etc.) and on district buses/vehicles. <b>See Signage Checklist below.</b>			
<b>Communication on Consequences:</b> The school shares information with students and families on the consequences for tobacco and nicotine use and available resources via newsletters or other communication.			



<b>Discipline Communication:</b> The school has a procedure for communicating school tobacco and nicotine use and associate discipline with parents or guardians.			
<b>Equitable and Clear Procedures:</b> The school equitably enforces Tobacco-Free Schools Policy with students and utilizes clear procedures for handling violations (e.g., providing information about the law and providing cessation information).			
<b>Discipline Plan and Alternative to Suspension:</b> The school utilizes a supportive discipline plan to address the policy with students. The school uses alternatives to suspension such as Second Chance, and other restorative practices for addressing infractions.  Share the discipline approach in the notes.			
<b>Designated Staff:</b> Staff are identified to monitor and enforce the policy.			
<b>Training:</b> The school uses a protocol for training staff regarding Tobacco-Free Schools Policy and enforcement strategies.			
<b>Education:</b> The school offers comprehensive health education curriculum, including tobacco and nicotine prevention concepts and student skill development. The school includes this education in the schedule throughout the year.			
<b>Assess Education Offerings:</b> The school assesses prevention education curriculum or resources to ensure content is age appropriate, culturally relevant, and evidence-based.			
<b>No Use of Vape Detectors:</b> The school does not use vape detectors, as they are not considered a best practice.			

<b>Cessation Resources and Assistance:</b> The school has resources visibly available to encourage tobacco and nicotine cessation for students, staff, visitors, and parents/guardians (e.g., posters, tip cards, brochures for telephone-based counseling, web-based programs, local resources or state resources).			
<b>Consequences for Athletics or Activities:</b> The school has consistent procedures for addressing tobacco and nicotine use by those in athletics or activities.			
<b>Athletic Contracts:</b> The school includes no-tobacco or nicotine use requirements in athletic contracts and requires parent/guardian signature.			
<b>Family/Community Engagement:</b> The school provides information regarding vaping/tobacco education & cessation resources for adults and youth.			
<b>Secondhand Smoke:</b> The school provides information to students, staff, visitors, and parents/guardians regarding the dangers of secondhand smoke.			
<b>Use on School Property:</b> Are students, staff, or visitors seen or caught using tobacco products on school grounds or in vehicles? Document in notes where use most often occurs.			

## Signage Checklist

Colorado Tobacco Free Schools law (C.R.S. 25-14-1035) requires the posting of signs, informing students, staff and visitors that all tobacco products, including vaping devices, are prohibited on school property. Strategically placed signs encourage a community commitment to uphold district policies and Colorado law.

Use the Tobacco Free Schools Signage Checklist to determine potential needs for Tobacco Free Schools signage in your school communities.

### Checklist Tips

- ✓ Complete this checklist with school community members, including students and staff, in order to determine current signage location and any gaps.
- ✓ Use the “Notes” sections to identify where signage exists, where it could be added, as well as noting signage that needs to be replaced and/or updated.
- ✓ Use a variety of signs & communication messages that meet the needs of different audiences, including messages that inform the community of the district policy, promote quit support, educate about the harms of tobacco and nicotine use, and promote healthy habits, including mental health resources.
- ✓ Free signage can be ordered through CDPHE. Contact Chelsea Andrews at [chelsea.andrews@state.co.us](mailto:chelsea.andrews@state.co.us) for assistance.
- ✓ Offer to coordinate the hanging of signs with facilities/building managers to ensure follow through and that signage is hung securely.

**NOTE:** This tool is meant to help to determine where signage is located and where it should be considered. It is not meant to imply that signs need to be in all of these locations.

Signage is clearly posted	Yes	No	Notes
At main entrances to the building			
At perimeters of the school/district property			

In parking lots			
At major walkways			
At all major entryways			
Near the main office			
In all auditoriums and/or gymnasiums			
At all athletic fields, especially in the spectator area			
At major student gathering places			
In all restrooms			
In loading areas			
In major stairwells			
In school or district vehicles/buses			
In cafeteria			
Signs are posted in Spanish or other languages needed by the community  <i>(Check with the district communication office for common languages used &amp; translation services)</i>			
Other:			

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## Step Four: Actions Steps

Utilizing the information in Steps One-Three, document potential actions.

Action	By When	Notes

## Contact for Questions and Support

- [Contact RMC Health](#) for technical assistance and support.

## Accessibility statement and support