

# Checklist for Communicating a 100% Tobacco-Free School Policy

Use these ideas and tactics to develop a communication strategy that will work for your district. Communication should ensure that all members of the school and community know about your 100% tobacco-free school policy and that they understand why the policy is in place, how it will be enforced, and what happens if the policy is violated.

**INFO  
YOU'LL  
NEED**

**CREATING A  
TOBACCO-FREE  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

*Developed By*

**Ohio Tobacco Prevention  
Foundation**

## **COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS:**

- Prominently post tobacco-free school signs at all entrances to school buildings, school grounds, parking lots, athletic facilities, and in schools and on buses.
- Place details in student handbooks and orientation guides.
- Review and discuss the policy at student orientation meetings including meetings with new and transfer students.
- Spread the information through student organizations, activities, and newspapers.
- Make announcements over morning broadcasts at school and over loudspeaker systems at school events.
- Have students design posters, banners, and signs to communicate the new policy.
- Tell students about opportunities for tobacco cessation support programs in the community and provide information about how students can access these programs.
- Involve student groups or clubs, such as **stand**, to assist in communicating the policy.
- Encourage, support, and empower students to appropriately communicate the policy to other students and visitors who are violating the policy.
- Include information on school websites including those that target students.

## **COMMUNICATING WITH EMPLOYEES:**

- Prominently post tobacco-free school signs at all entrances to school buildings, school grounds, parking lots, athletic facilities, and on vehicles.
- Provide every school district employee with a copy of the policy and a letter of explanation from the school board.
- Discuss the policy at staff meetings and new staff orientation.
- Hold in-service training on tobacco-related school policies for all staff, including teaching staff, bus drivers, aids, food service workers, and maintenance staff.
- Post information, along with a copy of the policy, in staff lounges or offices.
- Include information in staff newsletters.
- Tell staff about opportunities for tobacco cessation support programs in the community and provide information on how to access these programs.
- Inform potential employees of the policy in all job interviews.
- Include a statement that the school district is tobacco-free on all job applications.
- Involve respected and well-liked school personnel in sharing messages with staff groups.

### **COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS:**

- Provide information at parent open houses at the start of the new school year.
- Prominently post tobacco-free school signs at all entrances to school buildings, school grounds, parking lots, and athletic facilities.
- Send a letter to each parent or guardian that: 1) explains the policy change; 2) provides the health, academic, and social reasons for the change; 3) outlines the consequences for violators; and 4) asks for support in enforcement.
- Ask parents to sign student-school contracts that address the tobacco policy for participation in extra- and co-curricular activities.
- Discuss the policy changes at PTA, PTO, or similar meetings.
- Include an article outlining the policy and implications of the policy in parent-oriented newsletters and school or community newspapers.
- Announce the new policy at all athletic events, meetings, concerts, and plays. Have students develop and/or deliver announcements.
- Send a letter home or call parents if a student violates the policy.
- Post an announcement on the school district's website, as well as individual school websites.

### **COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC/COMMUNITY:**

- Place an ad in the paper thanking the school board for their decision to make the school district 100% tobacco-free.
- Ask other community agencies such as PTAs, PTOs, and Asthma Coalitions to include an article about the new tobacco-free school policy in their newsletters. (Provide them with a short article, if necessary.)
- Prominently post tobacco-free school signs at all entrances to school buildings, school grounds, parking lots, and athletic facilities. Other places to post signs include gathering places, restrooms, loading areas, and stairwells.
- Remove all ashtrays from school property, especially those outside the entrances to school buildings.
- Announce the new policy at all athletic events, meetings, concerts, and plays. Include announcements in event bulletins.
- Train students, staff, and community volunteers to politely ask community members to respect school policy. Avoid communicating in a way that sounds judgmental or that would create or escalate conflict.
- Ask students, staff, and community volunteers to assist in distributing informational flyers regarding the policy at school events.
- Communicate the policy to parent and business volunteers who assist in supervising youth during off-campus activities, including field trips, job shadowing, or community service.
- Inform vendors who provide supplies, materials, and services on a regular basis to the school about the policy. Use an official memo, face-to-face communication, or include a clause in the written contract agreement.