

Creating 100 Percent Tobacco-Free Schools in South Carolina

A School Administrator's Guide
to Policy Implementation

FIFTH EDITION



*Revised in April 2025 by the
DPH Tobacco Prevention and Control Unit*

Introduction

Schools are in a unique position to reduce the use of commercial tobacco products among youth and to protect them from exposure to the toxins in secondhand smoke and vaping aerosol. **Children spend almost a third of their waking time in school**, or about 135 hours per month; and much of the peer pressure kids feel regarding whether or not to use commercial tobacco products occurs in school¹. Recent changes to the commercial tobacco product landscape, especially the expanding and evolving range of alternative nicotine products, including dissolvable products and e-cigarettes/vapes, has shifted the types of commercial tobacco products used by youth^{2 3 4}. In South Carolina, e-cigarettes/vapes have been the most commonly used tobacco product among youth since 2017⁵. Studies show that vaping nicotine during adolescence increases risk of early heart disease, asthma, nicotine addiction, and the use of traditional cigarettes, as well as increasing the risk of other substance use⁶.



1 See e.g., Jackson C, "Initial and experimental stages of tobacco and alcohol use during late childhood: relation to peer, parent, and personal risk factors," *Addictive Behaviors* 22(5):685-98, Sept-Oct 1997. See, also, Banks, M, et al., "Adolescent attitudes to smoking: their influence on behavior," *Int'l Jnl of Health Education* 24(1):39-44, 1981.

2 Birch DA, Auld E. Public health and school health education: aligning forces for change. *Health Promotion Practice* 2019;20:818-823.

3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Characteristics of Effective School Health Education Curricula*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2008. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sher/characteristics/index.htm>.

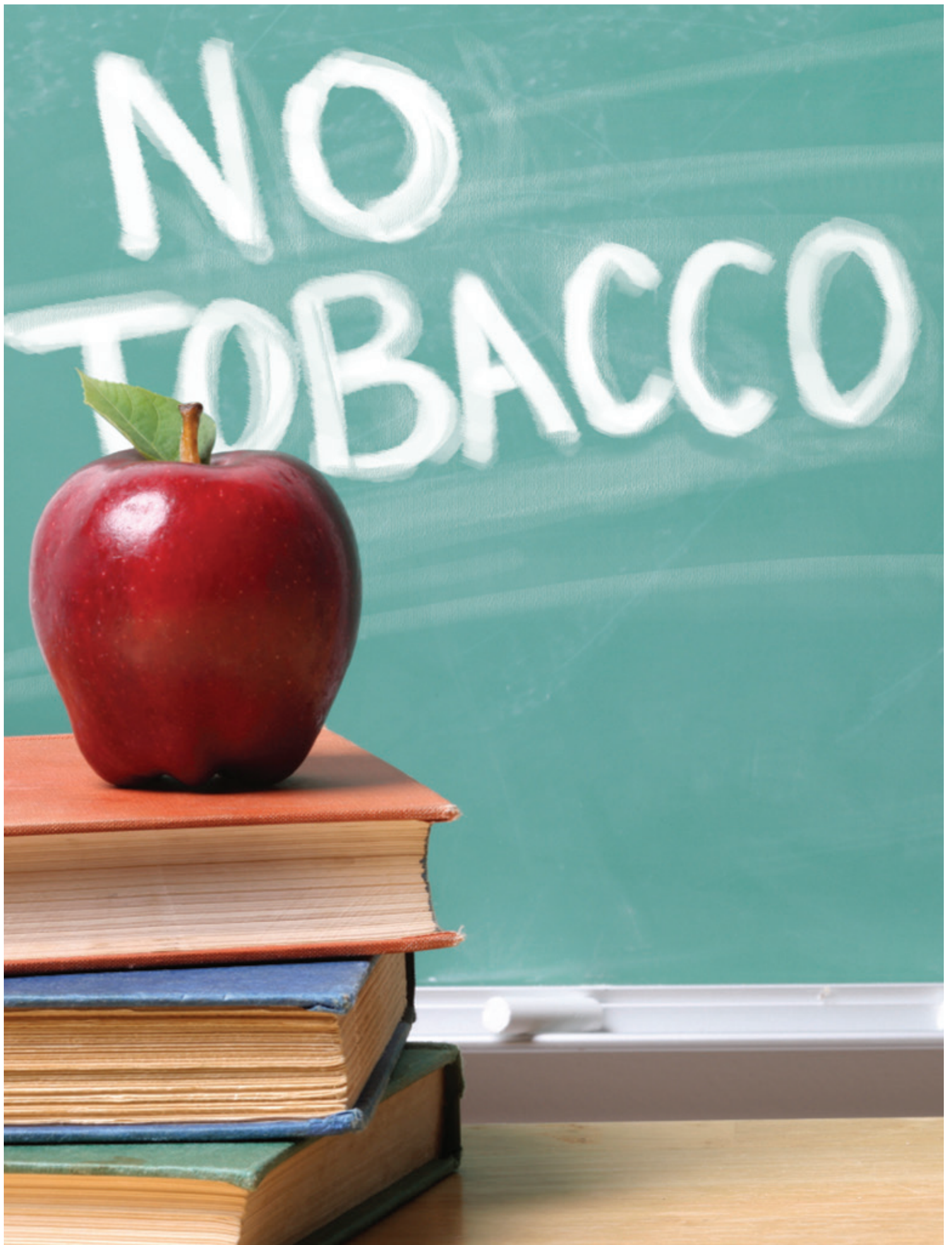
4 US Department of Health and Human Services. *Surgeon General's advisory on e-cigarette use among youth*. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General; 2018. Available at: <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/surgeon-generals-advisory-on-ecigarette-use-among-youth-2018.pdf>.

5 South Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey, 2017. Department of Health and Environmental Control Division of Tobacco Prevention and Control.

6 Khambayat S, Jaiswal A, Prasad R, Wanjari MB, Sharma R, Yelne S. Vaping Among Adolescents: An Overview of E-Cigarette Use in Middle and High School Students in India. *Cureus*. 2023 May 13;15(5):e38972. doi: 10.7759/cureus.38972. PMID: 37313083; PMCID: PMC10259828.

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Tobacco-Free Schools

All public school districts in South Carolina are required by state law to adopt, implement, and enforce tobacco-free school policies that include alternative nicotine products like e-cigarettes/vapes ([Appendix D](#)). These required policies must prohibit the use of all commercial tobacco products by all people, at all times, on all school property and/or at all school-related events.

While this legal protection exists to help protect children from exposure to tobacco products, secondhand smoke and vaping aerosol, and nicotine addiction, each school board has the discretion to do more.

A [model policy](#) provides suggested language to help school districts upgrade to national best practices for tobacco prevention and education. Language used in your district's policy should be reflected in your personnel and student policies, as well. In addition to the state requirements, [model tobacco-free school policies](#):

- Prohibit tobacco advertising of any kind and reject tobacco industry funding, such as event sponsorship, in-kind support, and tobacco prevention education materials or programs;
- Provide in-class tobacco prevention education and instruction;
- Include supportive discipline measures, including alternatives to suspension, that keep students in the learning environment;
- Promote or make referrals to free quit support services for students, school personnel, and visitors who use commercial tobacco products;
- Provide clear and effective tobacco-free policy communication to students, parents, school personnel, and visitors.

We encourage SC public school districts to adopt model policy language that includes all of the above. School-based tobacco prevention efforts coupled with strong tobacco-free school policies move South

Carolina closer to the [national educational goal of becoming drug- and violence-free](#).

This guide is designed to help you expand your tobacco-free school policy in a way that aligns with national best practices for tobacco-free schools. For specific information related to e-cigarette and vaping prevention, you can refer to the [E-Cigarette/Vaping Prevention: Tools for Schools](#) toolkit.

More information about tobacco-free school policy and links to a wide variety of resources are available on the [DPH Tobacco-Free Schools webpage](#). You can also access additional resources at the end of this document in appendices related to:

- Policy review – [Appendix A](#)
- Communication and enforcement – [Appendix B](#)
- Cessation referrals and promotion – [Appendix C](#)
- Youth Access to Tobacco Prevention Act – [Appendix D](#)
- Types of Tobacco Products – [Appendix E](#)



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Tobacco-Free Schools
webpage



Components of a Model Policy

Prohibit tobacco industry sponsorship, advertising, in-kind donations, and tobacco prevention education

School should be a safe space that is free from exposure to harmful, addictive nicotine products and their manufacturers' influence. Evidence shows that tobacco industry advertising and promotion influences young people to start using tobacco products⁷. In addition, children exposed to tobacco industry marketing are more likely to feel positively about tobacco use and to underestimate the harm of tobacco use⁸.

In-class education and prevention curricula sponsored by tobacco companies are common. [The 2012 Surgeon General's report, *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults*](#), reviewed tobacco industry-sponsored youth prevention initiatives in depth, including school-based programs. The report found that "the tobacco industry's youth smoking prevention activities and programs have not provided evidence that they are effective at reducing youth smoking. Indeed, unpublished internal industry documents available to the public because of litigation, and published academic studies, indicate that they are *ineffective or serve to promote smoking among youth*⁹."

Provide in-class tobacco prevention education

School-based tobacco prevention education programs that address psychosocial aspects of tobacco use and that focus on skills training approaches have

proven effective in reducing the onset of smoking. Fortunately, education about tobacco products can be easily included in classrooms as part of a comprehensive tobacco-free school policy. You can find more information about in-class tobacco prevention education and links to evidence-based classroom resources on the [DPH Tobacco-Free Schools webpage](#).

Successful programs provide information and instruction related to¹⁰:

- Immediate and long-term effects of tobacco use;
- Social norms regarding tobacco use;
- Identifying reasons for using commercial tobacco products, including social influences that promote tobacco use;
- Developing behavioral skills for recognizing and resisting tobacco-promotion messages from the media, adults, and peers;
- Developing necessary assertiveness, communication, goal-setting, and problem-solving skills that may enable students to avoid both tobacco use and other health risk behaviors.

While tobacco prevention instruction is important from kindergarten through 12th grade, best practices for school-based tobacco prevention education recommend focusing more intensive instructional efforts in middle school because that is the age at which most youth begin experimenting with commercial tobacco products – especially e-cigarettes/vapes.

7 Joseph R. DiFranza et al., *Tobacco Promotion and the Initiation of Tobacco Use: Assessing the Evidence for Causality*, 117 *Pediatrics* e1237 (2006), <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/117/6/e1237>.

8 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction*. MMWR Recommendations and Reports. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00026213>

9 USDHHS. *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: HHS, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012.

10 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction*. MMWR Recommendations and Reports. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00026213>

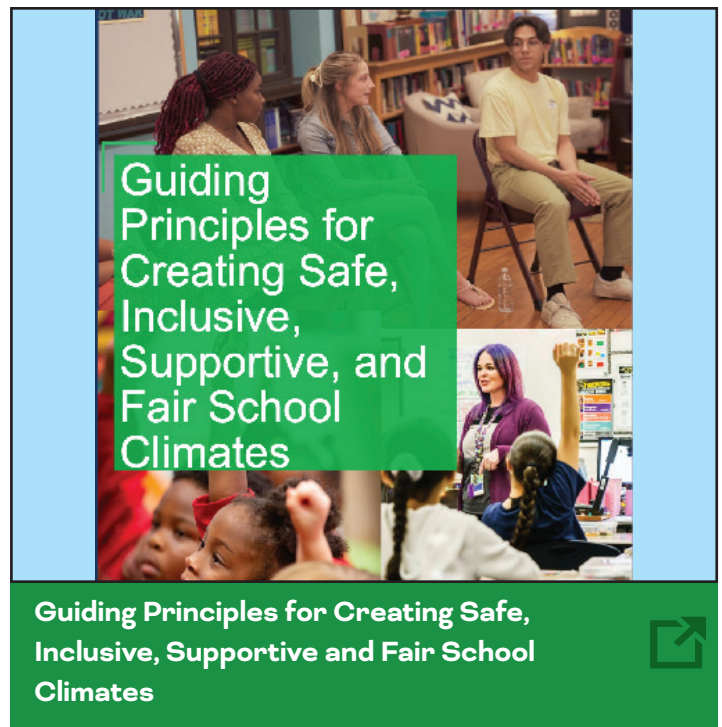
Provide alternatives to suspension

Supportive discipline is an important way to keep students in the learning environment. Most youth who use tobacco products want to quit. Suspending students for violating a school's tobacco-free policy is unlikely to help them quit and could alter their academic and future goals.

In 2023, the U.S. Department of Education released [*Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates*](#). This resource helps schools create positive, safe, and supportive environments that can prevent and change inappropriate behaviors. It recommends using suspension *only as a last resort for serious violations*¹¹. This is because school suspension can have long-term impacts. Students who are suspended miss time in the classroom and are at risk for not graduating on time, repeating a grade, dropping out, or becoming involved with the criminal justice system¹². Suspensions also affect a greater proportion of students of color, students receiving special education services, students from low-income families, LGBTQ+ students, and male students¹³. You can find more information about alternatives to suspension and links to resources on the [DPH Tobacco-Free Schools webpage](#).

Cessation referrals (includes promoting free quit support services)

Referring people to free quit support services is a key component of a model policy. School districts should consider implementing a process for referring people to cessation services as part of the tobacco-free school policy to assist school staff, parents, visitors, and students who want to quit. In this way, the policy is comprehensive from start to finish. Making referrals could be as simple as providing a flyer with quit support options, or as detailed as tracking participation in specific programs among students



and staff as a supportive discipline practice. The goal is to ensure that you are helping people follow the policy by providing information about quitting. Free posters and flyers to help promote cessation services are available ([Appendix C](#)). You can find a listing of available quit support services for youth and adults on the [DPH Tobacco-Free Schools webpage](#).

Provide clear and effective communication to all audiences about the district's tobacco-free school policy

Tobacco-free policy implementation can be challenging. Without effective communication, the policy will be difficult to enforce. Communication must be clear, ongoing, and consistent. We encourage you to work with members of your school and community - students, parents, staff, and visitors – so that they are aware of the policy, understand the rationale behind it, and are clear on the consequences if the policy is violated. [See Appendix B for suggested and sample communication strategies.](#)

11 U.S. Department of Education, *Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates*, Washington, D.C., 2023.

12 Public Health Law Center. *Student Commercial Tobacco Use in Schools - Alternative Measures* | Public Health Law Center. Accessed April 3, 2023.

13 Leung-Gagné M, McCombs J, Scott C, Losen DJ. (2022). *Pushed out: Trends and disparities in out-of-school suspension*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/235.277>. Accessed April 3, 2023.

Communicating and Enforcing a Tobacco-Free School Policy

Communicating the policy and enforcing the policy go hand-in-hand. People can't follow the rules if they don't know the rules. Knowing how to effectively communicate the policy will go a long way toward relieving stress school staff may have regarding enforcement. It can also help to avoid negative confrontations with parents and other school visitors. Working collectively is key to identifying the best strategies for your school district.

You can use a variety of options to communicate your policy to various audiences, including email, letters, school website and social media, and posters in common areas. Communications checklists can be found in [Appendix B](#). Strategies for staff and visitors could include:

In-Service Training

This is a training that should be held for school and community representatives, which may include principals, assistant principals, teachers, community and media relations staff, school resource officers, student leaders, school nurses, law enforcement officials and others deemed appropriate for your respective school district. There should not be a cost associated with the training or any necessary materials.

When the in-service training is held, it is recommended that local and/or state DPH representatives be in attendance to support overall policy and training efforts. Other potential representatives might include:

- [SC Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services \(DAODAS\)](#)
- [Smokefree SC](#)
- [American Cancer Society - Southeast Division](#)
- [American Lung Association](#)

During the training, be sure to communicate:

- ☐ Agreed upon tobacco-free school policy for adoption and enforcement
- ☐ Expectations of all students, staff, parents, and community
- ☐ Rationale supporting tobacco-free schools
- ☐ Policy enforcement guidelines and problem-solving techniques
- ☐ Quit support referrals and resources
- ☐ Positive statements, and
- ☐ Appropriate signage and language supporting overall efforts.

School-Sponsored Event Announcements

School-sponsored athletic events are an opportunity for students, staff and community members to have fun, celebrate student athleticism and enjoy the excitement of competition – not to be exposed to secondhand smoke, secondhand vaping aerosol, or examples of commercial tobacco use. We encourage school district staff to use school-sponsored events to remind students, staff and school supporters that the district has a tobacco-free school policy in place – one that prohibits all tobacco use (including e-cigarettes/vapes) anywhere on campus, at any time, by anyone.

Regular announcements at football, soccer, baseball and other athletic events are a simple and effective strategy for getting the message across, especially when used in combination with signage and information in event brochures. Signage for school districts is available for download on the [DPH Tobacco-Free Schools webpage](#).

Tobacco prevention professionals and school staff provide the following suggestions for using school-sponsored event announcements to effectively communicate a tobacco-free school policy:

- ☐ Announcements should be positive – reminding visitors that the policy exists to protect the health of students.
- ☐ Provide **at least four announcements** – at the beginning of the game, end of the game and at appropriate break periods in play (i.e. halftime, end of quarters).
- ☐ Invite school groups/clubs to create and make the announcements.
- ☐ Prominently display signs and messages in event brochures to reinforce the announcements.
- ☐ 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 communications or include a clause in the written contract agreement.

It is important to include procedures for enforcing your district's tobacco-free school policy. Establishing procedures and reviewing them regularly can increase confidence among school personnel as they work to support the district's tobacco-free efforts. You can access checklists to help develop policy procedures, including enforcement procedures, in [Appendix A](#).

Procedures for students and staff should be included in the policy language and should utilize a tiered, supportive approach that provides links to evidence-based, factual information and quit support services. Procedures should also provide clear directions on communicating the tobacco-free policy to the school community. You can access communication checklists for different audiences in [Appendix B](#).

There should also be a plan for how to handle non-compliance among visitors to school property and events. Most people will comply with requests to refrain from using commercial tobacco products on district property, but it is still helpful to outline a tiered approach. You could consider something like this:

- **First Violation:** Inform visitors of the policy (using a

phrase in the next section of this guide).

- **Second violation:** Inform visitors of the policy again. Suggest that they leave campus if they want to use tobacco. Let them know that they will be asked to leave the stadium if they continue to violate the policy.
- **Third violation:** Ask law enforcement personnel at the stadium to escort visitor(s) off campus.

Even with signs, written materials, and announcements, some school visitors may not realize that the school district has a tobacco-free school policy in place. Positive and clear messages will let people know that the policy is in place and that it will be enforced.

REMEMBER...

Use a Range of Communication Strategies

Make sure that other communication strategies are in place to support verbal messages. For example, visitors to outdoor athletic events should see signs and information in event programs that communicate the policy, as well as hear announcements at the start of the game and between quarters that remind them of the policy. School district signs are available for download on the [DPH Tobacco-Free Schools webpage](#). Communications checklists, and enforcement scripts can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Offer Gentle Reminders

Chances are the person in violation of the policy is unaware that there is a policy in place. Politely and firmly let the person know that the campus – as well as the entire school district – is tobacco-free, and that the policy includes all commercial tobacco products (even e-cigarettes/vapes).

Explain Why the District Approved the Policy

Inform people of the reasons for the policy in a positive manner. Let them know the school board enacted the policy to protect students, school staff, and visitors from secondhand smoke and vaping aerosol, to ensure a safe learning and work environment for students and staff, and to model healthy and positive behaviors for students.

Conclusion

While all South Carolina public schools are required to adopt, implement, and enforce a tobacco-free policy that includes the use of e-cigarettes/vapes and other alternative nicotine products, school districts have the power to implement stronger policies that provide a comprehensive approach to tobacco prevention among youth. Using evidence-based educational programs and practices outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Education creates healthy environments for healthy learners. We hope this guide gives you the tools you need to identify ways to improve and strengthen your school district policy and that you gain confidence and understanding related to the various components of a model tobacco-free policy.

Appendix A: Model Tobacco-Free School Policy Implementation Checklists

Use these checklists to review your current district policy, identify ways to strengthen the current policy, and to build a structure that provides guidance and accountability.

School District Tobacco-Free Policy Team Checklist

Establish a tobacco-free school district policy team to help guide and steer all policy related activities. This team will schedule regular policy review dates and make recommendations for communicating and strengthening existing tobacco-free school policies.

- ☐ Establish the tobacco-free policy team
- ☐ Schedule team meetings during times all members can attend and send invitations and reminders to members.
- ☐ During the first meeting, share the team's purpose and establish team roles, expectations, and agreements.
- ☐ During subsequent meetings, ensure each section of the policy is discussed, as well as model policy components. Consider:
 - When and how will it be put in place?
 - Who is responsible?
 - What resources and training are needed?
 - What programs and services are needed?
 - How will the team assess the policy?
 - What needs to be communicated to the school community and how?
- ☐ Develop action plans that are feasible to implement within the district calendar.

- ☐ Ensure all team members can access meeting agendas and notes.

Model Policy Component Checklist

Define actions needed to put the different components of the policy in place, especially model policy components.

- ☐ Review each section of the policy and write procedures for how to deal with prohibited products, policy enforcement, and confiscation of products.
- ☐ Identify any tobacco industry influences in the school district (youth prevention programs, sponsorship, or other funding).
- ☐ Create referral pathways for tobacco cessation by reviewing current referral procedures (includes simple promotion efforts like posters and flyers for cessation services).
- ☐ Promote quit support options. See [Appendix C](#) for cessation resources.
- ☐ Pursue supportive discipline by removing school resource officers from the discipline process. Consider:
 - Reviewing school resource officer (SRO) contract or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
 - Revise the contract or MOU to limit what the SRO can and cannot do for tobacco-free school district policy violation
 - Limit searches of students
 - Provide SRO training on topics such as substance misuse, adolescent development, the science of addiction, and supportive discipline conversations

- ☐ At least annually, review SRO data on interactions with students for tobacco product use (and other substances).
- ☐ Have regular check-in meetings with SRO.
- ☐ Explore alternatives to out-of-school suspension to keep kids in the learning environment whenever possible. Learn more about alternatives to suspension and find links to resources on the [DPH Tobacco-Free Schools webpage](#).

Policy Assessment Checklist

Assess if the tobacco-free policy is working by creating annual data collection and review processes. Make policy revisions if necessary, especially for model policy components.

- ☐ Identify responsible parties for assessing the policy.
- ☐ Identify what specific aspects of the policy to track.
- ☐ Develop a plan to collect data:
 - What type of data will be collected?
 - Where and when will the data be collected?
 - What sources are used to collect the data?
 - How much and how long will the data be collected?
 - Who will collect the data and where will it be kept?
- ☐ Create a review timeline and schedule meetings to review data.
- ☐ Revise policy and procedures as needed.
- ☐ Obtain leadership approval for revisions.
- ☐ Communicate revisions to the school community.
- ☐ Discuss areas for improvement and create action plans to support changes.

Professional Learning and Partnerships Checklist

Ensure qualified staff are available to provide

commercial tobacco use interventions at your school. Providing staff with the resources they need helps them provide better education and support.

- ☐ Discuss what staff are needed to provide education and cessation support services. Will they be school staff or community partners?
- ☐ Assess professional learning needs related to tobacco prevention and education:
 - What do they need to know or do?
 - What resources will be needed for them to succeed?
- ☐ Hire or appoint staff to provide education and support.
- ☐ Create a staff development plan.
- ☐ Provide professional learning opportunities and training.
- ☐ Schedule check-in meetings to see how things are going and provide follow-up support if needed.
- ☐ Contract or sign MOUs with health providers, organizations, agencies, or individuals who can provide tobacco product education and cessation services. All services should be free of cost to participants and should be accessible during school hours to accommodate students without access to transportation.
- ☐ Review contracts and MOUs annually and update.

Staff Support Checklist

Support staff who want to quit using commercial tobacco products. Educating staff about tobacco product use and providing information about quit support options helps them quit successfully.

- ☐ Provide information about work-related tobacco issues, impact on health, and cessation options to all district employees in the following ways:
 - Guest speakers at staff meetings or training sessions
 - Occupational health and safety materials and presentations

- Links on employer website/intranet to information and cessation services
 - Email communications
 - Posters and flyers in staff break areas
- ☐ Check with DPH for available speakers, posters, signage, sample communications, and quit support options.
 - ☐ Discuss options with Human Resources and district leadership to create, maintain, or enhance tobacco cessation benefits.
 - ☐ Refer employees caught using tobacco on school grounds to free quit support services.

Student Education Checklist

Student education about commercial tobacco products empowers students to make healthy decisions.

- ☐ Review the state and district-level health education standards/guidelines/framework and adopted instructional materials list.
- ☐ Explore what other districts are doing to educate students.
- ☐ Identify curriculum or programs for review and assess against the tobacco product education requirements outlined in the model policy.
- ☐ Select curriculum and purchase materials if needed. All educational services should be free of cost to participants and should be accessible during school hours to accommodate students without access to transportation.
- ☐ Schedule sufficient time with district and school leaders to discuss:
 - The goal of student education
 - The curriculum or program(s) selected
 - When and how it will be taught
 - When and how those teaching the curriculum or program will be trained and supported
 - The curriculum, program, and student assessment

- Students' engagement and leadership related to tobacco-free schools

- ☐ Communicate to teachers how the curriculum or program connects to the goals of the policy.
- ☐ Plan and provide curriculum or program-specific training and follow-up coaching to those teaching students.
- ☐ Provide instruction to all students. All services should be free of cost to participants and should be accessible during school hours to accommodate students without access to transportation.

Supportive Discipline Checklist

Address student violations of the tobacco-free school policy with a graduated set of evidence-based supportive discipline practices. Supporting students with alternatives to suspension is healthier than sending them home.

- ☐ Identify the person responsible for overseeing the supportive discipline process for tobacco policy violations.
- ☐ Work with the policy team to create a tiered set of interventions and the response system for tobacco policy violations, including alternatives to suspension. All services should be free of cost to participants and should be accessible during school hours to accommodate students without access to transportation.
- ☐ Discuss options covering tobacco-branded apparel.
- ☐ Develop sample collaborative conversation scripts staff can use when talking to students.
- ☐ Train staff members on supportive discipline conversations and procedures.
- ☐ Develop statement of understanding and commitment to the policy for students to sign.
- ☐ Train staff on procedures for confiscating tobacco products and the referral to quit support system (can include simple handouts with information on available cessation services).
- ☐ Develop parent/caregiver notification.

- ☐ Develop a list of tobacco education and cessation programs to provide to students. Free resources are available on the [DPH Tobacco-Free Schools webpage](#).
- ☐ Develop agenda, sample script, and materials to use during supportive discipline meetings for third violations.
- ☐ Develop a 60-day plan and checklist to track students' progress. The plan should include:
 - History of past violations
 - Specific challenges and barriers impeding policy adherence and steps to address them
 - Commitment statement to avoid infractions to be signed by student
 - Referral to tobacco education or cessation program (All services should be free of cost to participants and should be accessible during school hours to accommodate students without access to transportation.)
 - Progress of students' education, treatment, or other interventions
 - Description of how students will be supported by staff and caregiver(s) to ensure success
 - Create or adopt an existing alternative to suspension program and educate staff on the program. All services should be free of cost to participants and should be accessible during school hours to accommodate students without access to transportation.

Appendix B: Policy Enforcement Sample Scripts and Communication Checklists

Be sure to provide information about the policy to the school community. Clear communications using a variety of methods are needed to engage students, parents, school personnel, and visitors about the tobacco-free school district policy.

Sample Scripts to Positively Enforce the Tobacco-Free School Policy

General Audiences

“Excuse me, you must not realize that our school district has a tobacco-free school policy in place. This means no tobacco use anywhere on campus, at any time, by anyone. Our school board passed the policy in [month here] to protect students, staff and school visitors from secondhand smoke and vaping aerosol and to create a healthy and positive environment for students. We ask that everyone comply with the policy. Thank you for your cooperation.”

“I’m sorry, but I must ask you to comply with our school district’s tobacco-free school policy by putting out your cigarette. The aim of our policy is to protect our students, staff, and school visitors from secondhand smoke, and to role model healthy behavior for all students. Thank you for your cooperation.”

“Excuse me, I must ask you to put away your chewing tobacco/e-cigarette. We have a tobacco-free school policy in place on our campus. We ask that everyone – including employees and visitors – refrain from using any tobacco products until they leave the campus. I appreciate your cooperation.”

“Excuse me, I must ask you to refrain from vaping while on campus. Our school board has enacted a district-wide tobacco-free school policy. This means no tobacco use, including vaping, anywhere on campus, by anyone, at any time. This policy is designed to ensure a positive and healthy learning and working environment for students. Thank you for your cooperation.”

School-sponsored Event Announcements

“For the safety of our students, [name of school district] is proud to have a tobacco-free school policy. At this time, we would like to remind our home fans and visitors that during tonight’s sporting event, the use of any tobacco product, including e-cigarettes or vapes, is strictly prohibited. We appreciate your support and would like to thank you for keeping our school and stadium tobacco-free. Enjoy the game!”

“Did you know that more than 1,000 nonsmokers in South Carolina will die this year due to exposure to secondhand smoke? This is one reason why all [name of school district] schools are tobacco-free. We remind our visitors and fans that smoking, chewing tobacco, and using e-cigarettes or vapes are prohibited on school grounds – including in and around the stadium. Thank you for your support and enjoy the game!”

“Nearly 7,300 South Carolina kids under the age of 18 become new smokers each year. That’s one reason why [name of school district] schools have a tobacco-free school policy. Tobacco use of any kind is strictly prohibited on all school property – including in and around the stadium. Thank you for your support and for helping us help our students be tobacco-free.”

“Tobacco kills more than 1,200 Americans every day, and 80% of them started smoking before they were 18. This is one reason why [name of school district] schools are tobacco-free. We’d like to remind our visitors and fans that tobacco use of any kind, including e-cigarettes or vapes, during tonight’s game is prohibited. Thank you for your support and enjoy the game!”

“Hey fans! Did you know that tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable death in South Carolina? Every year almost 6,000 people in our state die from the use of tobacco products – more than all those who die from AIDS, alcohol, traffic accidents, illegal drugs, murder and suicide combined. This is one reason why [name of school district] schools are tobacco-free. This means no tobacco use anytime, including e-cigarettes or vapes, by anyone, anywhere on campus – including

stadiums. We appreciate your support and thank you for keeping our school and stadium tobacco-free. Enjoy the game!”

Communications Checklist

Planning

- ☐ Identify the responsible party for communication
- ☐ Review the sections of the policy that address communicating to staff, students, parents, caregivers, and community members
- ☐ Develop a communication plan that includes information and methods outlined in the policy. Consider:
 - Focusing your message on those immediately impacted. What is it you want them to know or understand?
 - How will you get your message out, and with what frequency?
 - Who is responsible for crafting and sending messages out?
 - What resources are needed and who will purchase materials if needed?

- ☐ Implement the communication plan

Students

- ☐ Prominently post tobacco-free school signs at all entrances to school buildings, school grounds, parking lots, athletic facilities, and in school and activity buses.
- ☐ Place details of the tobacco-free policy in student handbooks and orientation guides.
- ☐ Review and discuss the policy at student orientation meetings, including meetings with new and transfer students.
- ☐ Spread information about the policy through student organizations, activities, newspapers and school social media outlets.
- ☐ Make announcements about the policy over morning broadcasts at school and over loudspeaker systems at school events.

- ☐ Have students design posters, banners and signs to communicate the new policy and provide information about how students can access programs to help them quit using tobacco.
- ☐ Encourage, support and empower students to appropriately confront other students and visitors who are violating the policy.
- ☐ Include information in student newspaper articles and on school websites.

Employees

- ☐ Post prominently placed tobacco-free school signs at all entrances to school buildings, school grounds, parking lots, athletic facilities, and on school-owned 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, teacher’s aides, 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 and school social media outlets.
- ☐ Tell staff about opportunities for tobacco cessation support programs in the community and provide information regarding how staff can access these programs.
- ☐ Inform potential employees of the policy in all job interviews. Make sure job applications say the school district is tobacco-free.
- ☐ Involve respected and well-liked school employees in sharing messages with staff groups.

Parents/Guardians

- ☐ Provide information at parent open house 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:
 - Explains the policy change
 - Provides the health, academic and social reasons for the change
 - Outlines the consequences for violators, and
 - 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 and similar meetings.
- ☐ Publish an article outlining the policy and its implications in parent-oriented newsletters and school or community newspapers.
- ☐ Announce the new policy at all athletic events, meetings, concerts and plays and on school social media platforms. Have students develop and/or deliver announcements.
- ☐ Send a letter home or call parents if a student violates the policy.

Public/Community

- ☐ Place an ad in the paper thanking the school board for its decision to strengthen its existing tobacco-free policy.
- ☐ Ask other community groups such as Smokefree SC, local coalitions, PTAs, and PTOs to include an article about the new tobacco-free school policy in their newsletters or an announcement about the change on their Facebook, Twitter or other social media platforms.
- ☐ Post prominently placed 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 and on school social media platforms (like Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- ☐ 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 communications or include a clause in the written contract agreement.

Appendix C: Cessation Referrals/ Promoting Free Quit Support Services

Making a cessation referral may sound complicated but it doesn't have to be. Work with your policy team to establish how you handle referring people who violate the school policy to free cessation services. It can be as easy as handing someone a flyer, palm card, or fact sheet that includes information about available options. Make sure that all options are free of charge to participants. Options for free youth and adult cessation services can be found on the [DPH Tobacco-Free Schools webpage](#).

State Employees

Cessation support for state employees is available through the SC Public Employee Benefit Association (PEBA). The [Quit for Life](#) program covers state employees and their dependents, who are eligible to receive telephone or online coaching and nicotine replacement therapy products such as patches, gum or lozenges. No- and low-cost prescription medicines may also be available depending on coverage. To learn specifics of the state employee cessation benefit, contact SC Public Employee Benefit Authority (PEBA) at (803) 787-6800 or visit the [PEBA website](#). Visit the [Quit for Life website for SC State Health Plan](#) to enroll in the Quit for Life program or call:

- 1-800-652-7230 (SC State Health Plan)
- 1-866-QUIT-4-LIFE (866-784-8454)

Multi-Lingual Cessation Services

Quit support services from the [SC Tobacco Quitline](#) are available in multiple languages. Callers can use the automated phone tree to select the language they need. Spanish speakers can call 1-855-DÉJELO-YA (1-855-335-3569) to be connected directly to a Spanish speaking coach.

Order Free Promotional Materials

Posters, brochures, and rack cards are available to promote the SC Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW) and other quit support services. Please contact the DPH Youth Prevention Coordinator to learn about available items. Materials are also available to assist school staff in talking to youth about vaping and to provide education about tobacco use. Additional free resources:

- [Vape Talk](#) (Smokefree SC)
- [Empower Vape-Free Youth](#) (CDC)
- [Tobacco Education Resource Library](#) (FDA)

Who to Contact

Youth Tobacco Prevention Coordinator
jacksolj@dph.sc.gov

Midlands Public Health Region
Community Engagement Director
(803) 230-4795

Upstate Public Health Region
Community Engagement Director
(864) 982-1260

Pee Dee Public Health Region
Community Engagement Director
(803) 983-9092

Lowcountry Public Health Region
Community Engagement Director
(843) 697-9774

**Free quit support resources and
services include:**

**SC Tobacco Quitline
(1-800-QUIT-NOW /1-855-DÉJELO-YA)**

This is Quitting

Quit the Hit

Become an Ex

Live Vape Free

Smokefree Teen

Smokefree.gov

QUIT Vet

quit START app

Asian Smoker's Quitline



**Scan the QR Code to access
the DPH
Tobacco Cessation
webpage!**



Appendix D: Youth Access to Tobacco Prevention Act

The SC legislature passed the Youth Access to Tobacco Prevention Act in 2006 to address youth tobacco use in the state. In 2013, it was amended to include alternative nicotine products. In 2019, it was amended further to define additional alternative nicotine products, including e-cigarettes. Additional amendments address age verification requirements for retailers and tobacco-free school districts.

In summary the act:

- Defines “tobacco products” as any product that contains nicotine or that is derived from tobacco or nicotine that is intended for human consumption. The definition includes anything that is inhaled, absorbed, or ingested. Electronic smoking devices are included, as well as components and accessories (whether or not they contain nicotine or tobacco).
- Makes it unlawful to sell, furnish, give, distribute, purchase for, or provide a tobacco product to a minor under the age of 18.
- Makes it unlawful to sell a tobacco product or an alternative nicotine product to an individual who does not present proof of age upon demand. (A person engaged in the sale of alternative nicotine products made through the Internet or other remote sales methods shall perform an age verification through an independent, third party age verification service that compares information available from public records to the personal information entered by the individual during the ordering process that establishes the individual is 18 or older.)
- Makes it unlawful to sell a tobacco product or an alternative nicotine product through a vending machine.
- Makes it unlawful for a minor under the age of 18

to purchase, possess or attempt to possess a tobacco product or an alternative nicotine product OR present false proof of age in order to purchase a tobacco product. Minors must be accompanied by an adult in a tobacco retail establishment that has as its primary purpose the sale of tobacco products.

Enforcement for Merchants Who Sell to Minors (Under Age 18)

- **First offense** - \$200-\$300 fine
- **Second offense** - \$400-\$500 fine, 30 days in jail, or both
- Violators may be required to attend a DAODAS approved merchant education program in lieu of fine.
- All tobacco retail establishments must train retail sales employees regarding unlawful distribution of tobacco products to minors.
- Tobacco retail establishments must conspicuously post on all entrances to the establishment a sign in boldface type that states **“NOTICE: It is unlawful for a person under eighteen years of age to enter this store, unless the minor is actively supervised and accompanied by an adult. Age will be verified prior to sale”** along with a sign that displays a toll free number for assistance to callers in quitting smoking, as determined by the Department of Public Health.”



Enforcement for Minors (Under Age 18) Who Violate the Law

- \$25 fine – no criminal or delinquent record and no minor may be taken into custody for failure to pay the fine.
- Law enforcement officers may use a uniform traffic ticket and must immediately seize the tobacco product.
- Violators may complete a DPH-approved prevention or cessation program, a DAODAS tobacco prevention program, or complete five hours of community service in lieu of a fine. Visit the [DPH Youth Tobacco Prevention webpage](#) for a listing of approved programs.
- A violation does not affect participation in state college or university financial assistance programs.
- Jurisdiction to hear a violation is vested in municipal or magistrate's court and is placed on the same docket as traffic violations.

Tobacco-Free School Districts

- Every local school district in the state shall implement and enforce a written policy prohibiting at all times the use of any tobacco product by any person in school buildings, in school facilities, on school campuses, and in or on any other school property owned or operated by the local school administrative unit. The policy must also prohibit the use of any tobacco product by persons attending a school-sponsored event at a location not listed in the Code of Laws subsection when in the presence of students or school personnel or in an area where smoking or other tobacco use is otherwise prohibited.
- Tobacco-free policies must include adequate notice to students, parents/guardians, the public, and school personnel; posted signs; and requirements for the policy to be enforced by school personnel.
 - **For students:** appropriate disciplinary

action that includes but is not limited to conferences, mandatory enrollment in tobacco prevention education, voluntary enrollment in cessation programs, community service, in-school suspension, extracurricular activity suspension, or out of school suspension.

- **For staff:** verbal reprimand, written notification in personnel file, mandatory enrollment in tobacco prevention education, voluntary enrollment in cessation programs, or suspension.
 - **For contractors:** verbal reprimand, notification to contract employer, or removal from district property.
 - **For visitors:** verbal request to leave school property, prosecution for disorderly conduct for repeat offenders.
- Schools are required to collaborate with the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS), and the Department of Education (DOE) to implement the policy and to provide tobacco use education and cessation programs.

Appendix E: Types of Tobacco Products



Combustible Tobacco

- Includes commercially available products like cigarettes, cigars, and cigarillos. Combustible products are lighted and inhaled and produce harmful side stream smoke and exhaled smoke known as secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke is known to trigger severe asthma attacks that require hospitalization, as well as to cause lung cancer and heart attacks in non-smokers.
- Combustible products also leave behind toxic residue known as third-hand smoke. Third-hand smoke clings to fabric and surfaces such as clothing, upholstery, counter tops, and toys – any object in the room where secondhand smoke is being produced.

E-cigarettes/Vapes



- E-cigarettes are electronic devices that produce toxic aerosol when exhaled. Vaping aerosol contains many of the same toxins found in secondhand smoke and can trigger severe asthma attacks.
- E-cigarettes/vapes are available in a variety of fruit, dessert, and candy flavors that appeal to youth.
- Manufactured worldwide, these devices are marketed

as a “safe or healthy alternative to smoking”. The problem is that the majority of e-cigarettes/vapes in the US contain as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes, as well as heavy metals and chemicals such as benzene, acetone, and formaldehyde. Recent studies have shown that vaping creates stress on the heart and can lead to premature heart disease. Vaping nicotine also increases feelings of depression and anxiety among adolescents.

- Recent research has found nicotine in 98% of all products tested, even ones claiming to be nicotine-free.
- Recent data shows that the majority of teens using e-cigarettes/vapes in SC don’t realize how much nicotine is in their device and do not understand the impact of nicotine addiction.

Shisha

- Shisha is a water pipe in which fruit-scented tobacco is burned using coal and passed through an ornate water vessel. It is inhaled through a hose.
- Typically, the smoke produced from a single pipe contains approximately the same amount of nicotine and tar as 20 cigarettes.
- A commonly held belief is that shisha is harmless because the smoke first passes through water before it is inhaled. But even after passing through water, the smoke produced by shisha contains a high level of toxins, including carbon monoxide, heavy metals and other carcinogens.
- Health risks are relatively unstudied but are generally considered to be the same as those associated with tobacco.





Chew and Snuff

- Chew is loose leaf tobacco that is spit out after chewing. Snuff is a powdered form of chew.
- Smokeless products are designed to enhance the social acceptability of tobacco and are addictive. They are not safe alternatives to smoking.
- Adolescents who use smokeless tobacco are more likely to become cigarette smokers.
- Smokeless tobacco contains 3,000 chemicals and 28 known carcinogens.

Snus, Zyn, and Other Dissolvable Tobacco Products

- Snus (pronounced 'snooze') and dissolvable products like Zyn are marketed as "spitless" tobacco products.
- Other dissolvable products include items that resemble mints, toothpicks, and breath freshening strips.
- They are marketed as "fresh and mellow", are easy to conceal, and are available in a wide variety of flavors that appeal to young people.





Contact Us

For more information, please contact the
DPH Youth Tobacco Prevention Coordinator
JacksoLJ@dph.sc.gov