



"School programs to prevent tobacco use among young people can make a major contribution to the health of the nation, particularly when these programs are combined with community efforts."

School Tobacco Policy

✚ AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION®
of Wisconsin



Case Studies

Examples of Effective Practices



If you would like more information on how to obtain materials for your school call the American Lung Association of Wisconsin at 1-800-LUNG-USA/(800) 586-4872 or the Department of Public Instruction at 1-608-267-9244.





Tobacco policy communication and enforcement on school campuses is challenging. To help in this effort, the American Lung Association of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction have aligned to provide schools with the necessary tools and support by providing information, statistics, ideas, signs, stickers, and other related resources.

This brochure is an overview of several schools that have shown a strong commitment to comprehensive tobacco control through communicating and enforcing their tobacco policy. They have also taken a leadership role in providing education, support, and cessation programs. In addition, these case studies highlight schools that are in different stages in the process, from collaborative approaches to getting started to creative communication and balanced enforcement efforts.

Admittedly, there are many more schools throughout Wisconsin meeting the challenge and we are proud of every effort made. Congratulations to all of you!*

*Schools throughout Wisconsin were invited to be interviewed. Our thanks to those who agreed to participate.

Smoke-Free Policy Communication

Lake Holcombe Public School

Lake Holcombe Public School, located in northern Chippewa County, serves a rural and slightly impoverished community. The majority of its students are Caucasian, with a mix of Hmong and Hispanic. Constructed as a single building, Lake Holcombe Public School provides education for kindergarten through high school grades. There are approximately 257 students in the elementary level, 77 in the middle school level, and 143 students at the high school level (grades 9 through 12).

*"Communication efforts are a team issue for the school. In order for Cadott High School to be successful in our tobacco policy the staff must work together."
Matthew J. McDonough,
principal – Cadott High School*

Lake Holcombe Public School communicates its tobacco policy through written, verbal, and visual methods. The school has incorporated its tobacco policy into their activity code and is in the process of requiring an activity meeting for both parents and students, in which the tobacco policy is discussed. Outdoor signage further communicates the tobacco-free policy to all who enter the building. The school's website and newsletter highlight tobacco policy issues on a regular basis. The school's tobacco-free policy is also announced at all athletic events, and printed in athletic bulletins and rosters. To further ensure students' awareness of the policy, Lake Holcombe surveys the high school students to measure their attitude toward and understanding of the policy. The school recognizes the need to work with and depend upon parents, teachers, administrators and guidance counselors as well as students to administer and enforce the school's tobacco policy.

Contact: Roz Gates, AODA Coordinator at 715-595-4241 x 235

Cadott High School

Cadott High School is located in a very rural area of Wisconsin near Chippewa Falls, approximately 25 miles from Eau Claire. The school has an enrollment of approximately 340 students attending grades 9 through 12.

Cadott High School publishes its tobacco-free code in its handbook. The school has also adopted a policy in which all students partaking in any school activity must sign a code that describes the tobacco policy rules, regulations, and violation procedures. Athletic participants as well as other extracurricular participants – forensics, drama club, and student government – sign this document. Cadott also uses signage posted on the school's front entrance. These signs are visual reminders to students, staff, and visitors of the school's tobacco-free policy. New students and staff are made aware of the school's tobacco-free policy through orientation meetings and take-home materials.

Contact: Matthew McDonough, Principal at 715-289-4211 x 427

Eau Claire School District

The Eau Claire school district is located in northwestern Wisconsin and is a district of about 10,000 students. There are 2 high schools (approximately 1,800 students each), 2 middle schools and 16 elementary schools. Eau Claire is the largest community and school district in the county.

A focal point of the Eau Claire school district's tobacco-free policy communication and enforcement efforts is a newly developed brochure. A steering committee made up of the local sheriff, police chief, both high school principals, director of the health department and the district ATODA Coordinator came together to draft a brochure, "Youth, Schools and Tobacco," to clearly communicate the district's tobacco-free school policy. The steering committee also met with various other groups including neighbors, health teachers and the school board to keep them informed, get additional feedback and ideas and solicit their support.

Included in the brochure are the tobacco-related state statutes, the school district board policy on tobacco and a clear statement that these will be enforced. Information on smoking and health as well as school and community resources for quitting are included. These resources not only focus on the youth, but also include resources for adults – resources that parents or faculty might use. While the school district takes ownership of the policy, the brochure strongly acknowledges the community partnership with the local tobacco-free coalition, reinforcing that this is a community issue and community effort. The brochure is mailed to all students and parents and is distributed at new student and new staff orientation. The brochure is designed for guidance counselors, teachers or other staff to distribute as needed. Local law enforcement officers also distribute them as appropriate. The local media expressed an interest in the issue and printed school policy information in the newspaper.

Contact: Jean Christenson, ATODA Coordinator at 715-839-6290 x 540.

"Regardless of the method of communication, the manner in which a policy is presented has an effect on its acceptance."

Longfellow Middle School and School of Technology and Arts II

Longfellow Middle School and School of Technology and Arts II (SOTA II) are located in La Crosse, Wisconsin. SOTA II is a charter school with 50 students in grades 6-8 which is housed at Longfellow Middle School (a public school). Longfellow Middle School has a population of 730 students. Students from both schools "blend" for various special classes like language, art, music and technology.

"Adequate signage is an essential part of communicating tobacco-free policies."

The tobacco policy is published in written materials including the school handbook and is a part of its conduct code. At the start of a new school year, there is an orientation session. During this orientation, the school's tobacco-free policy, conduct code, and activity code are discussed. The activity code outlines the tobacco policy and extends over all school activities, not solely athletics. Both the students and their parents must sign the code ensuring their awareness of the policy and its violation protocol. Signage on the building and grounds, including its athletic fields is also used.

Communication of the tobacco policy is not aimed solely at the student body. During a three-day orientation for new staff, the school's tobacco policy is thoroughly discussed. Additionally, new staff meets with the human resource director and the school principal to discuss the school's tobacco policy communication and enforcement efforts.

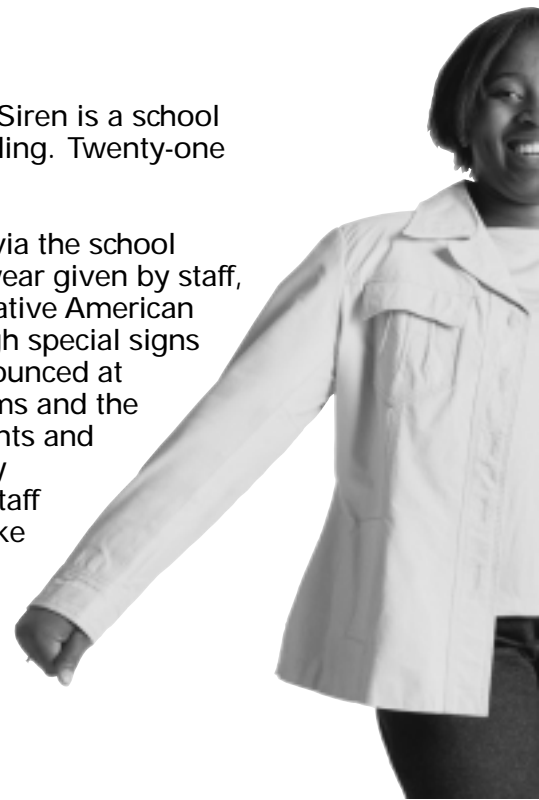
Contact: Barb Schultz at 608-789-7670

School District of Siren

Located in the far northwestern part of the state, Siren is a school district of 500 students, K-12, housed in one building. Twenty-one percent are Native American.

The tobacco policy is communicated to students via the school handbook, presentations at the beginning of the year given by staff, and signs in the building. The unique issues of Native American tobacco use are recognized and addressed through special signs in the school office. The smoke-free policy is announced at football games and it is printed in athletic programs and the programs of plays, concerts and other school events and activities. Visitors are primarily aware of the policy through signs that are posted. If in violation, all staff is encouraged to gently confront a visitor and make them aware of the policy.

Contact: Charles Stanislaw,
AODA Coordinator at 715-349-2278 x 117



Ellsworth Community School District

Ellsworth is a community located in Pierce County, west of Eau Claire and approximately 25 miles from the Minnesota boarder.

Tobacco-free school signs are posted at the entrances to the buildings and off-site at the athletic field and football stadium. Plans are underway to install an in-house TV system that will include tobacco prevention/education messages at the main entrance, in the gym and cafeteria. Students will be empowered to write these messages themselves in order to maximize the potential impact. Regarding visitors, they are aware of the policy because they will see the same signage and messages as they enter the building. If they enter while smoking, they are politely confronted and informed of the policy.

During a recent in-service, an overview of tobacco-related policies was presented to district employees. Employee attendance was required, including bus drivers, aides, food service workers, as well as teaching staff. A policy-related survey along with a review of district policies was given in homeroom for all middle and high school students at the beginning of the school year. These policies are also included in all student and staff handbooks. Discussions of tobacco-related policies, enforcement issues, and cessation opportunities also occur during grade level orientations. Tobacco education programs are offered after school as an alternative to suspension. In addition, voluntary cessation programs, TATU (Teens Against Tobacco Use) and involvement in FACT are encouraged.

Contact: Leona Johnson at 715-273-3900

Other tips to consider

- Frame the school tobacco policy as a children's health issue. "For the safety and sake of our kids this is a tobacco-free environment."
- Ensure full staff commitment and that consequences are immediate and consistent
- Engage students in the development, communication, and enforcement of the policy

"Effective, pro-active communication of the tobacco-free policy prevents, or at least reduces, the problem of student violation."

*"Because it can be such an emotional issue, they (parents) need to be well informed."
– Leona Johnson,
Ellsworth School*

Smoke-Free Policy Enforcement

River Valley School District

The River Valley high school and middle school are located in the village of Spring Green bordering Iowa and Sauk Counties. There are approximately 945 students in grades six through twelve. The River Valley school district is one of four schools in the area that is sharing a school tobacco grant generated through the tobacco settlement dollars.

Working with the Tobacco-Free Iowa County Coalition, the Sauk County Court system, the police school liaison, parents, faculty, and administration, River Valley has recently made several major changes in its tobacco policy enforcement. These policy changes prohibit all tobacco products from the school's property including parking lots, property surrounding the school, and any property rented by the school. The new guidelines also focus on an alternative to citation. This program allows students that receive a tobacco violation the option of attending four educational sessions based on the Alternatives to Suspension (ATS) curriculum developed by the American Lung Association, rather than paying a fine. After successfully completing the educational portion of the ATS program, students can take the next step – cessation. The youth cessation classes have been designed to educate and support students' decisions to stop using tobacco. For the River Valley school district, this has been an option that the vast majority of tobacco policy violators choose.

Under the new policy enforcement changes, River Valley is experiencing an increased awareness of tobacco related issues as well as a reduction in youth smoking violations.

Contact: Cynthia Green, AODA Coordinator 608-588-3244 x 245.

Eau Claire School District

At times, parents, visitors or new staff simply forgets that they cannot smoke as they enter school grounds. In these situations, a verbal reminder or a copy of the tobacco policy brochure, is all it takes to achieve compliance. For students, the main issue is "smokers corner" just off school grounds. It is believed that the problem can be reduced and eventually eliminated through three approaches: clear communication that smoking on or off-campus is a violation of the statutes, consistent enforcement, and continued diligence on the part of both the district and community partners. When violations do occur on campus, they are referred to the principal and can result in a suspension and/or fine. Off-campus violations can also result in fines. The goal is not to be overly punitive, but to also provide students with options to help them quit if they are ready to take that step. N-O-T (Not On Tobacco), a teen cessation program is implemented at both the middle and high school for students who voluntarily enroll.

Contact: Jean Christenson, ATODA Coordinator at 715-839-6290 x 540.

School District of Siren

Occasionally, students test the limits of the policy and gather just off school property to smoke. However, local law enforcement knows where to look to find these groups and disperse them. Student awareness of potential citations helps to further reduce the violations. The county sheriff is a former DARE officer and this adds to the support from law enforcement. Students are encouraged, supported, empowered and are willing to report other students who are smoking.

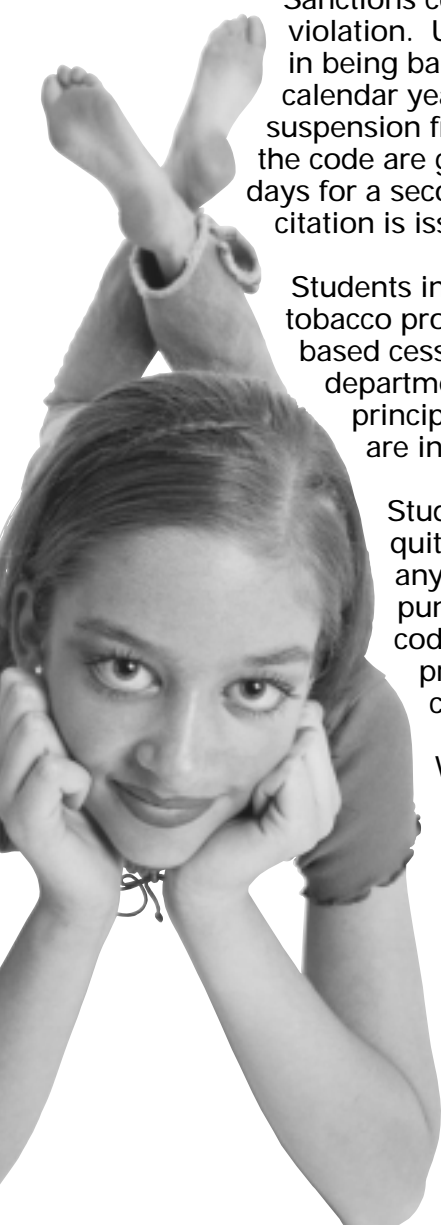
Sanctions connected with this policy increase in severity with each violation. Under the Co-Curricular Code, a first offense could result in being barred from any co-curricular activities for up to one calendar year. A second offense results in an automatic one-year suspension from all sports/activities. Students not covered under the code are given a one-day suspension for a first offense and three days for a second offense. Law enforcement are involved and a citation is issued for any and all offenses.

Students in violation have three options: attend an educational tobacco program, decide to quit smoking and enroll in a school-based cessation program or a program through the local health department, or accept a one to three-day suspension. The principal, teachers, guidance counselors, coaches and parents are involved in the process as needed.

Students are given assistance and support in their efforts to quit but all policies and codes are still upheld. For example, any student who self refers to a cessation program is not punished for previous violations of policy or conduct codes, but neither does enrollment in a cessation program provide policy or code immunity - during or after the cessation program.

While there is no formal procedure for faculty or staff violations, cessation assistance is available through the Wisconsin Education Association insurance plan.

Contact: Charles Stanislaw, AODA Coordinator at 715-349-2278 x 117



Madison Metropolitan School District

Five high schools, 11 middle schools, 29 elementary schools, and 5 alternative schools make up the Madison Metropolitan School District, which serves 25,120 students. Over 8,000 are high school students.

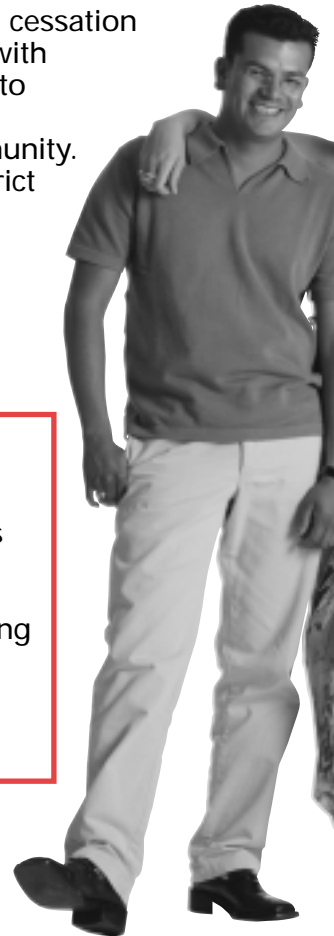
The Madison Metropolitan School District tobacco-free school policy clearly prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco products by students and staff on school property. Board policy and procedure further requires signs be posted to clearly communicate the policy. Suspension codes specify a one-day suspension for possession and up to a three-day suspension for use of tobacco. Policy enforcement has been the biggest hurdle at the high school level. Students tend to congregate to smoke in groups around the school and just off-campus. This has raised concerns among the neighbors as well as parents of younger students who see this inappropriate role modeling. To respond, a committee of high school students, parents, school administrators, tobacco coalition members, and other tobacco control partners was formed to explore the complex issues and draft a plan that was presented to the school board. The plan recommended a comprehensive approach which included: implementing a youth cessation program throughout the district, consistently infusing curricula with tobacco prevention and education, implementing an alternative to suspension program, posting signs at school/city bus stops and enhancing communication within the school and with the community. The plan developed by the committee was approved by the district management team, and then went to the common council and school board. Full implementation of the comprehensive plan rests with the principals.

Contact Sally Schultz, Principal,
Malcolm Shabazz City High School 608-204-2440

Other Tips to Consider

- Policy should be clear and concise. Students, staff and visitors need to understand the expected behavior as well as the consequences of failure to comply.
- Visible law enforcement around school grounds, the surrounding neighborhood and at off-campus events is advised.
- Whatever the sanctions are, the CDC recommends students be offered assistance with cessation.

"Student involvement can be very effective in some schools. Students not only help develop the policies, but they are expected to enforce them."



Cadott High School

The school's tobacco policy enforcement efforts, involve an eight-step system for violators. Every time a policy is violated, the penalties increase in severity. The eighth step results in a recommendation for expulsion that is sent to the school board. Tobacco policy violations are divided into two categories – use and possession. Both carry equal penalties. The penalties extend over all school events, including extracurricular activities that are held on and off-campus.

A minimum of a three-day suspension is assigned in each case but there is also a community service option available. With every policy violation, the student is referred to the principal, the guidance counselor, and/or law enforcement where students have an opportunity to discuss as well as receive education and counseling about their tobacco use. The student's parents are also contacted either by a letter mailed to the home or by a phone call.

In the instance of a staff member demonstrating a lack of compliance, the administration gives the violator a verbal reprimand. Recurring violations involve a written warning. The principal and the school's board agree that there should not be any disparities in the level of commitment, compliance, and enforcement.

Contact: Matthew McDonough, Principal at 715-289-4211 x 427



The following additional partners were instrumental in the very early phases of this project:

- American Cancer Society
- American Heart Association
- Tobacco Control Resource Center for Wisconsin
- Tobacco-Free Dane County Coalition
- Wisconsin Department of Health & Family Services

"The support must come not only from the superintendents, but also from other administrators, board members, teachers, and staff throughout the district so a united front exists."