

Examples of Positive Statements to Communicate a 100% Tobacco-Free School Policy to the Public

Even with signs, written materials, and event announcements, some school visitors may not realize that the school district has a 100% tobacco-free school policy in place. This is why all school staff should be trained to communicate the policy – one-on-one – to the public. Gentle, positive and clear messages will let violators know that the policy is in place, and that it will be enforced. Knowing how to effectively communicate the policy will go a long way towards relieving stress school staff may have regarding enforcement, and will help to avoid negative confrontations with parents, workers and other school visitors.

Following are some tips for verbally communicating the policy:

- **Gentle reminders:** Chances are, the person in violation of the policy is unaware that it is in place. This is particularly true if your school district recently adopted the policy. Politely and firmly let the violator know that the campus – as well as the entire school district – is now 100% tobacco-free.
- **A rationale for the policy:** Inform violators 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, to ensure a safe learning and work environment for students and staff, and to model healthy and positive behaviors for students.
- **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.
- **A process for consistent violators:** Have a plan in place in the unlikely event that school visitors will not comply with requests to refrain from tobacco use while on campus. An example would be a school supporter at an outdoor athletic event who refuses to stop smoking.
 - **First violation:** Inform the visitor of the policy (using one of the phrases below).
 - **Second violation:** Inform the visitor of the policy again. Suggest that they leave campus if they want to smoke. Let them know that they will be asked to leave stadium if they continue to violate the policy.
 - **Third violation:** Ask law enforcement personnel at the stadium to escort the visitor off campus.

Examples of positive statements to communicate the policy:

- *"Pardon me, you must not realize that our school district now has a 100% tobacco-free school policy in place – this means no tobacco use anywhere on campus, at anytime, by anyone. Our school board passed the policy in May 2003 to protect students, staff and school visitors from secondhand smoke 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 100% tobacco-free school policy by putting out your cigarette. The aim of our policy is to protect our students, staff, and school visitors from second-hand 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. We have a 100% tobacco-free school policy in place on our campus. We ask that everyone – including staff 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 smoking while on campus. Last May, our school board enacted a district-wide 100% tobacco-free school policy. This means no tobacco use anywhere on campus, by anyone, at any time. This policy is designed to ensure a positive and healthy environment learning and working environment for students. Thank you for your cooperation."*