



School Sign

The Bureau of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control works with local partners to reduce health and economic burdens caused by tobacco use in New York State.

# TOBACCO FREE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

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## Tobacco Free Schools Initiative

“The goal of this statewide initiative  
is to have 1,000 schools tobacco free by 2009!”

The **Tobacco Free Schools Initiative** assists schools in reviewing, updating and implementing comprehensive tobacco-free policies and procedures. School policy specialists are available to provide schools with resources and technical assistance. This service focuses mainly on middle and high schools, unless entire school districts can be engaged. Developing and enforcing comprehensive policy is a powerful approach to promote and maintain a healthy school setting.

### Why focus on school tobacco policy?

- Schools must be in compliance with state and federal laws that prohibit tobacco use in school buildings and on school grounds.
- 73.5% of high school students report having seen students smoking on school property in the last 30 days. (*Youth Tobacco Survey, 2004*)
- 90% of adult smokers began in their teens and nearly two-thirds become daily smokers before the age of 19. (*Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2005; CDC, 1994*)
- In NYS, 5.4% of middle school children and 18.5% of high school children smoke. (*Independent Evaluation of NY's Tobacco Control Program Final Report 2005*)
- Students who attend schools with enforced tobacco-free policies are less likely to use tobacco. (*Am. Journal of Public Health 1989*)
- Tobacco-free policy prepares students for tobacco-free workplaces and communities.
- Tobacco-free policy reinforces and supports instruction in the classroom and other programs.
- Schools play a key role in creating attitude and behavioral change among students, their families and community.

### Benefits for Participating Schools: (There is no cost to participating schools.)

- Opportunity to earn positive community recognition for your school's dedication to health as a priority issue.
- Training and resources for school committee members.
- Ongoing technical assistance and support to revise current policy to reflect best practices in prevention.
- Provide signs and other promotions for your school.
- Support and resources to communicate and implement tobacco-free policy to students, staff and community.
- Referral information regarding tobacco cessation programs for school staff, families and the community.
- Staff training opportunities for alternatives to student suspensions for tobacco policy violations.

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