

Louisiana Tobacco-Free Schools



Why is it important to have Tobacco-Free Schools in Louisiana?

Louisiana's youth are at risk of becoming addicted to the harmful substance tobacco which can increase their potential of developing multiple chronic diseases. Tobacco use is considered the number one preventable cause of premature disease and death in the United States. The tobacco industry is determined to reach Louisiana's youth with the \$23 million per month they spend marketing in our state. School leaders have an important role in countering the tobacco industry's influence with efforts to promote healthy lifestyles and discourage all use of tobacco products by students, staff, and school visitors.

What makes a Tobacco-Free School?

According to the *CDC's Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction*, there are 7 components that make an effective and comprehensive program.

- **Policy:** Tobacco-Free Environments
- **Instruction:** Program-specific for teachers
- **Curriculum:** Program-specific for teachers
- **Training:** Program-specific for teachers
- **Family Involvement:** Parental support
- **Cessation:** Referring those who want to quit
- **Evaluation:** Program's effectiveness

What are the benefits of being a Tobacco-Free School?

- Your students and staff will be protected from the dangers of tobacco.
- Your students and staff will be aware of the tobacco industry's tactics and gain skills needed to resist tobacco use.
- Your school will provide a safe learning environment that promotes healthy lifestyles.
- By promoting healthy lifestyles, you will notice a positive change in student's attendance and learning, as well as in your teacher's productivity.

What can we do to support Tobacco-Free Schools?

The most important thing schools can do to support this initiative is to send a clear, consistent non-use message to your students, staff, and community by implementing a 100% Tobacco-Free policy. Please inform your school board that your school supports their efforts in making the school district 100% Tobacco-Free.

What are the elements of a 100% Tobacco-Free School Policy?

- Consistency with state law, Louisiana Smoke-Free Air Act 815
- Tobacco use prohibited by all on all school property
- Tobacco promotion and advertising prohibited at all school-sponsored events
- Awareness of new school policy
- Enforcement
- Intervention or referral provided for those addicted to tobacco

For a sample policy, please send email to contact below.

How can our school become a Louisiana School of Excellence in Tobacco Prevention?

Those school districts successfully implementing all components of the CDC Guidelines will be recognized by Louisiana's Department of Health and Hospitals as having "Louisiana Schools of Excellence in Tobacco Prevention." In order to give Louisiana schools time to execute each component, Louisiana's Department of Health and Hospitals will begin to certify school districts in 2010. Those schools interested in this honor should contact their school boards.

How will we know the effect of this program on our youth?

There are currently several statewide surveillance systems in place to monitor Louisiana youth's initiation, knowledge, and use of tobacco.

- *Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)*
- 2007 data to be released in 2008
- *Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS)*
- 2007 data to be released in 2008
- *Caring Communities Youth Survey*
- Data recently released for 2006

How can I get more information?

To get more information, please contact Tiffany Netters, Youth Program Monitor, at 225-342-2664 or tnetters@dhh.la.gov.

