



Addressing Vaping and Nicotine Use in Vermont Schools

AN EDUCATION TOOLKIT



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What is Vaping?

A vape is a battery-powered device that converts liquid, containing nicotine (either naturally derived or synthetic) and other chemicals, into an aerosol. These devices are also used to deliver non-nicotine substances, such as cannabis, THC extract or honey oil.

Vaping devices include electronic vapor products (EVPs), such as e-cigarettes, electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens and mods. Some vaping devices look like regular cigarettes, cigars, pipes, USB flash drives, pens or regular everyday items.ⁱ Other vapes are disguised as toys, asthma inhalers, smartwatches and cell phones. The [CDC's Vaping Products Visual Dictionary](#) is a helpful resource to review.

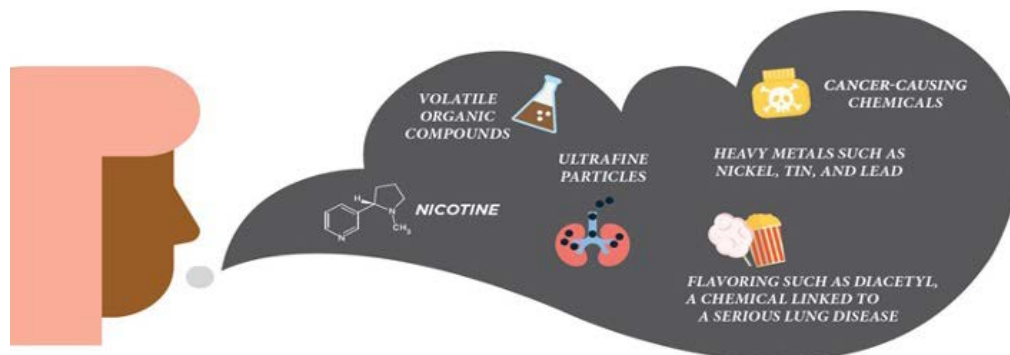


[CDC.gov](#)

Some vape product labels do not disclose that they contain nicotine, and some vape liquids marketed as containing 0% nicotine have been found to contain nicotine.ⁱⁱ Even if a vape product doesn't contain nicotine, there are still other harmful chemicals present. No vape is safe.

Electronic Vapor Products can be just as addictive as traditional cigarettes, and their use increases future risk of smoking traditional cigarettes.

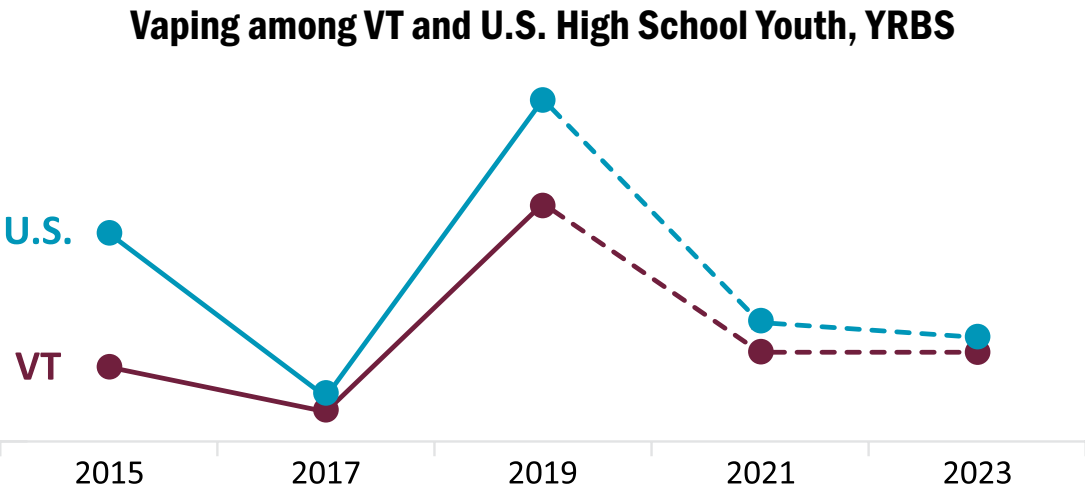
There is growing evidence indicating that e-cigarettes cause lung inflammation and injury, as well as systemic adverse effects in multiple organs.ⁱⁱⁱ The aerosol released from these products is not harmless water vapor. In addition to nicotine, the aerosol inhaled and exhaled from these devices can include heavy metals, volatile organic compounds and ultrafine particles.



[CDC.gov](#)

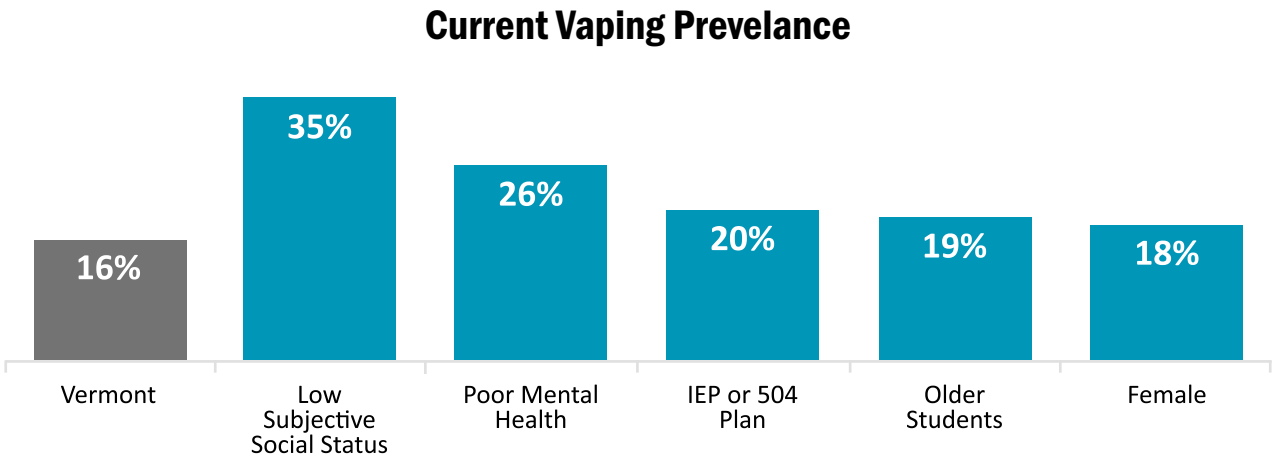
The aerosol of marketed brands (such as Vuse and JUUL have been shown to contain nearly 2,000 unknown and unregulated chemicals.)^{iv}

While it appears rates of vaping have stabilized among U.S. youth, vaping prevention and treatment remain a public health priority.^v As of 2023, 12% of middle school students report trying an electronic vapor product and 16% of Vermont high school students said they used e-cigarettes at least once in the past 30 days. Of those high school students, 37% used daily.^{vi}



Even though Vermont high school youth vape at statistically lower rates than the U.S. in 2019, any use of vape products is unsafe for our youth.^{vii} The Vermont Department of Health is working to protect youth from these products, harmful nicotine exposure and the risk of addiction and long-term harm to brain development.

Vaping disproportionately impacts certain groups of high school students. Female students, older students, LGBTQ+ students and students with an IEP are statistically more likely to use an electronic vapor product during the past 30 days.



*Subjective Social Status is a proxy measure for socioeconomic status.
IEP or 504 Plan = Individualized Education Plan or supports and services for students with disabilities.*

For more data on vaping use among Vermont middle and high school youth, please refer to the [2023 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)](#).

Nicotine and Youth

Nicotine exposure presents significant risks to young people, regardless of how it's delivered. As cigarette smoking has declined, tobacco companies have shifted their focus to alternative nicotine delivery products that appeal to youth.

HEALTH IMPACTS ON DEVELOPING BRAINS

Exposure to nicotine during adolescence through young adulthood disrupts the formation of brain circuits that control attention and learning, as the brain isn't fully developed until the mid-20s. Nicotine activates the limbic system more strongly in adolescent brains than in adult brains, making addiction a significantly greater risk for youth. Young people exposed to nicotine face potential long-term effects including mood disorders and permanent lowering of impulse control.

YOUTH-TARGETED PRODUCTS

Several nicotine products are particularly popular among youth:

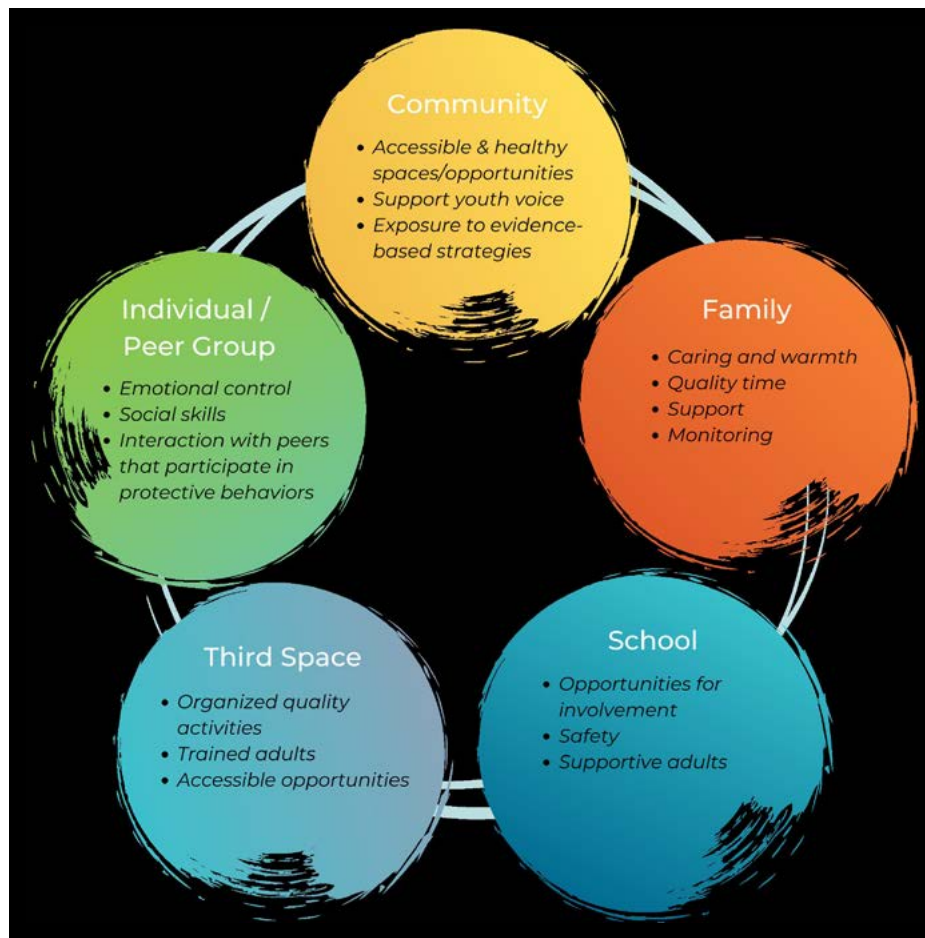
- Oral nicotine pouches^{viii}: Though similar to snus, these contain synthetic nicotine powder instead of tobacco leaf. Due to the absence of tobacco leaf, these aren't classified as smokeless tobacco products by the FDA, creating regulatory gaps despite containing harmful nicotine.
- E-cigarettes and vaping products: Many of these products use nicotine salts, making the nicotine more readily absorbed into the bloodstream. Some have higher nicotine concentrations than traditional cigarettes (a 5% JUUL pod delivers the equivalent nicotine of a pack of cigarettes).^{ix}
- Wellness vapes or vapes marketed as "nicotine-free," "zero nicotine," or "synthetic nicotine" still put users at risk of exposure to harmful chemicals and heavy metals. Inhaling anything other than clean air can irritate the lungs and trigger immune reactions. No Vape is Safe.

YOUTH MARKETING TACTICS

Flavors are a primary way the tobacco industry targets youth:

- In 2022, 85% of U.S. youth who vaped used flavored e-cigarettes.
- In Vermont, youth who tried flavored tobacco products before age 13 are three times more likely to currently vape.^{vi}
- Over 15,000 flavored e-liquids are available on the market, often mimicking candy, sweets and fruits.
- Lower prices for bottled e-liquids compared to pre-filled pods make these products more accessible to price-sensitive youth.

Protective Factors for Youth



Positive youth development emphasizes building on youth's strengths, creating opportunities to help youth achieve goals; fosters healthy relationships; and promotes protective factors. There are many domains that youth interact with frequently and they can have protective impacts on a youth's well-being.^x

Protective factors are effective at reducing youths' risks of using these products. Youth who feel valued in their school or community or who participate in at least one hour of extracurricular activities per week are less likely to vape compared to those who do not have these protective assets.^{vii}

The more a community can do to increase protective factors, support youth voice and engagement and build cross-sector partnerships and collaboration, the more likely they are to succeed in preventing substance use and abuse among youth.^x If your community is interested in assistance in building protective factors, especially into third space programs and youth voice/leadership, please reach out to [Vermont Afterschool](#).

More information about the dangers of tobacco and nicotine use among youth can be found at [CDC](#).

School Administration

What Administrators Can Do

Administrators have a unique role in promoting comprehensive prevention strategies throughout the school or district. You can have a significant impact in preventing and reducing vaping among youth by communicating and reinforcing strong tobacco policies, providing ongoing faculty and staff education and promoting employee cessation resources.

ENFORCE SMOKE- AND VAPE-FREE POLICIES

- The Vermont Department of Health's [Nicotine-Free Schools: A Policy Guide for K-12](#) was created to encourage schools to adopt evidence-based prevention measures to address the youth vaping epidemic. These recommendations include delivering education on the health impacts of vaping, increasing the perception of harm and strengthening social norms.
- Punitive measures, such as suspension for violations and vaping detector placement, are not proven effective and do not support youth in ending their tobacco experimentation or dependency.
- State laws prohibit the use of all tobacco and aerosol generating products on school property at all times by staff, youth and guests. Familiarize yourself with these laws and enforce them. Post smoke-free and vape-free signage at key locations on school grounds. Durable, co-branded [signage](#) is available for order at no cost through the Department of Health Tobacco Control Program.
- Evaluate your school's current smoke- and vape-free policy. Are there areas that need strengthening? All schools should evaluate these on a regular basis. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation and the American Heart Association have created a model [policy toolkit](#) for guidance. The Public Health Law Center has also created a K-12 model school [policy guide](#).
- Communicate policy changes to school personnel, students, parents/guardians and community members.
- Display and articulate the policy in the student handbook and on the school's/district's website.
- Announce the school's tobacco-free policy at the beginning of public events hosted by the school/district.

PROVIDE ONGOING EDUCATION TO FACULTY AND STAFF

- Educate faculty and staff to recognize vaping and oral nicotine products and how to enforce the school's/district's policy.
- Inform faculty and staff about high-use areas and bathroom "meet ups" during class time. Encourage monitoring of these areas between classes.
- Train faculty and staff to recognize nicotine addiction. These symptoms can resemble having an upset stomach, mood swings or feeling anxious.

- [Empower Vape-Free Youth Campaign](#) encourages middle and high school educators to speak with students about the risks of e-cigarettes and nicotine addiction. This CDC campaign includes helpful resources for educators to help students avoid or quit vaping.

OFFER ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION OR CITATION

- [INDEPTH](#): An Alternative to Suspension or Citation was developed by the American Lung Association to help schools and communities address the teen vaping problem in a more supportive way. Instead of solely focusing on punitive measures, INDEPTH is an interactive program that teaches youth about nicotine dependence, establishing healthy alternatives to addiction.
- [Stanford's Healthy Futures/Alternative to Suspension](#) Curriculums are geared for students who have been caught vaping (or using any other tobacco product) and/or for any students who are interested in trying to quit.
 - OUR Healthy Futures is to be taught in small group settings.
 - MY Healthy Futures is a self-paced course for students. Each student will receive a certificate of completion for meeting the requirements.

DISPOSING OF VAPE PRODUCT WASTE

Under federal and state law, vapes, e-liquid containers and batteries are considered hazardous waste and need to be handled and disposed of properly. The Public Health Law Center has created an [FAQ sheet](#) to help schools, businesses and communities understand the environmental hazards associated with these products.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has also released a fact sheet on the safe management of vaping devices in schools. This document can be found in the appendix of this toolkit.

THE VT AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The VT Agency of Natural Resources: The Vermont Legislative Body passed [Act No. 58](#), an act relating to household products containing hazardous substances in 2023. This bill includes vaping devices and requires manufacturers of household hazardous waste products sold in Vermont to provide free collection services. All manufacturers must create collection plans to be approved by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Agency of Natural Resources (ANR). Vermont will be the first state to have a household hazardous waste extended producer [responsibility program](#) in the country.

PROMOTE A NICOTINE- AND TOBACCO-FREE WORKPLACE

- Promoting a smoke-free and vape-free workplace and providing cessation resources to employees ensures that school personnel are modeling healthy behaviors for one another, parents and most importantly youth.
- Begin to create smoke-free and vape-free workplaces by informing employees about the Vermont laws and school district policy that prohibit tobacco and nicotine use on school grounds.
- Promote [802Quits](#), Vermont's FREE tobacco treatment resources, to employees who need support by phone, online or text. It's works. Cash value rewards can be earned for completed coaching calls.

- The Vermont Department of Health offers a free [Quit@Work toolkit](#) for employers. This toolkit offers specific guidance and tools for creating a healthier workplace.
- Encourage faculty and staff to be role models and set positive examples for youth by living tobacco- and nicotine-free.
- Schools, cities, towns and health care providers all play an important role in shaping the health of Vermonters. Our common goal is to make the healthy choice the easy choice where we live, work, learn and play. The Vermont Department of Health's [Worksite Wellness Toolkit](#) is an excellent resource to assist with creating or expanding the wellness culture within your organization.

EDUCATE AND PROVIDE RESOURCES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Use different types of communication – such as the school newsletter, social media and intercom announcements – to send messages. Youth will be more likely to share at home if they hear something multiple times and through different channels.
- Share the school's or district's tobacco policy with parents/guardians. In addition to newsletter and social media posts, make the information available on the school or district website and social media platforms, as well as at in-person educational events.
- Host an information session: Partner with your local office of health or a prevention coalition to present the facts on tobacco and nicotine use and the health consequences associated with youth use. This session should also address how parents/guardians can best support their children in choosing a nicotine-free lifestyle.
- Provide resources to parents and guardians that give them the knowledge to have meaningful conversations with their children. Print or share page 15 and the [Toolkit Appendix](#) resources.

HELP YOUTH QUIT

- Refer teens who may be struggling with nicotine addiction to [My Life My Quit™](#), [EX Program](#), [N-O-T](#), or to talk with their health care provider. More detailed information on cessation resources can be found in the Youth section of this toolkit.
- Inform parents/guardians of tobacco and nicotine treatment options for youth.

Health Educators and Classroom Teachers

What Health Educators and Classroom Teachers Can Do

Classroom teachers, specifically health educators, are instrumental in providing prevention education to youth on nicotine addiction and vape product use. Many schools are updating tobacco policy language to be more inclusive of emerging products, such as oral nicotine pouches. Refer to your school's tobacco and vaping policy. [See a sample policy.](#)

PROVIDE STANDARDS BASED PREVENTION EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

The Health Department recognizes the following resources developed by various partners as comprehensive and effective vaping prevention education. While there are other curricula and resources to address vape use among youth, we advise schools to be cautious and review the source of a curriculum. It is NOT best practice to use tobacco or vape industry-sponsored prevention programming or resources.

- Stanford Medicine's Tobacco Prevention Toolkit contains many resources, including the new [You and Me, Together Vape-Free curriculum](#). This is a theory-based and evidence-informed curriculum created by the Stanford Reach Lab in collaboration with their Youth Action Board and educators from across the U.S. includes:

- Six lessons of middle and high school programs, approximately 50 minutes each.
- A two-lesson elementary school version, approximately 50 minutes each.

Every lesson provides activities, online quiz games and worksheets in addition to presentations, resources, and other materials aimed at addressing key factors associated with youth e-cigarette use, including changing adolescents' attitudes toward and misperceptions about e-cigarettes; increasing their refusal skills to pulls of flavors, marketing and social media; reducing stress and depression, which have been linked to e-cigarette initiation and use; improving coping; and decreasing intentions and actual use of all e-cigarette products.

- Stanford Medicine's [Cannabis Awareness & Prevention Toolkit](#) is an educational resource that can be adapted to fit the individual needs of educators and students. This may be used in all types of settings, including elementary, middle and high schools, as well as community-based organizations and health-related agencies. Educators are encouraged to pick and choose the lessons that will be most useful for their students and adapt activities to suit their needs.
- The Northern New England Poison Center offers a free [lesson plan](#) for high school youth on electronic cigarettes and vapor products. The download comes as a ZIP file, which includes the PDF lesson plan and a Jeopardy game in PowerPoint format.
- [Vaping: Know the Truth](#) is a first of its kind free digital learning curriculum from the Truth Initiative. This curriculum is prevention focused, yet also provides support and resources for youth who are already vaping by linking them directly to This Is Quitting. Whether in class or at home, youth will complete four self-paced lessons and learn facts about vaping, the history of the manipulative tobacco industry marketing tactics, the damaging effects of nicotine addiction and keys to self-care and quitting.

- [CATCH My Breath](#) is a free curriculum for middle/high school youth that is intended to prevent vape use. CATCH My Breath includes a series of classroom lessons, peer-led activities, parent/guardian education and social and community support. This was designed by the CATCH Global Foundation and CVS Health.
- The FDA's [Tobacco Education Resource Library](#) was created to prevent vaping among middle and high school youth. These cross-curricular vaping prevention resources include lesson plans, activities, infographics and videos that help teens learn about the dangers of vaping. These resources can be used to start an open dialogue with youth about vaping nicotine and help encourage a lifetime of healthy behaviors.
- [Know the Risks: A Youth Guide to E-Cigarettes](#) is a presentation created by the CDC to educate youth on electronic vaping products. Topics covered include health risks, factors that lead to vape use and what youth can do to avoid all tobacco products. This resource is intended for use by adults who educate or serve youth between the ages of 11 to 18. Talking points and information are included.
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has created an evidence-based [resource guide](#) for those working to prevent and reduce youth vaping.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO SUPPLEMENT EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS

- FDA's award-winning public education campaign, "[The Real Cost](#)," aims to prevent youth from starting and continuing to use tobacco products. The e-cigarette and cigarette prevention campaigns focus on educating youth about the negative health effects and risks of vaping and smoking. By visiting this site, schools can access videos, free posters and quitting resources.
- [Vaping Prevention Resource](#) offers free resources and information to help communities communicate with the public about the health issues caused by vaping. Their online information hub provides free evidence-based communication tools and media materials and a playbook for policy change.

OUR VOICES XPOSED (OVX) YOUTH TOBACCO & NICOTINE PREVENTION INITIATIVE

[Our Voices Xposed \(OVX\)](#) is Vermont's youth-led movement working to end the influence of tobacco and nicotine on young people. OVX empowers students in grades 5-12 to educate their peers, community members and decision-makers about the tobacco and vape industry's deceptive marketing tactics.



Background

Over the past two decades, the Vermont Department of Health Tobacco Control Program has partnered with the Agency of Education to support local high school chapters of Our Voices Xposed (OVX) and middle school chapters of Vermont Kids Against Tobacco (VKAT), helping to end tobacco's influence on youth.

VKAT was retired in 2024 to unite all Vermont youth under one brand: Our Voices Xposed (OVX), which emphasizes the vital role of youth voice in tobacco and nicotine prevention efforts around the state.

OVX is based on the Positive Youth Development framework that recognizes the individual strengths of Vermont youth and provides skill-building opportunities to prepare young leaders. With the guidance of adult advisors and community partners, OVX youth work to educate and inform their peers, community members and decision-makers at local and state levels. Their focus is exposing the manipulative and deceptive marketing tactics that tobacco and vape companies use to target youth.

What OVX Youth Do

- Play meaningful roles in improving the health of their communities.
- Educate on the tobacco and vape industry's deceptive advertising and price discounting to hook new customers.
- Deliver the facts about the negative health effects and social consequences of smoking, vaping and nicotine use to increase awareness of and support for tobacco policies designed to protect youth.
- Inform local and state decision-makers on tobacco and nicotine-related issues, as seen and experienced firsthand.

OVX Resources

- **Advisor Resource Guide:** This new resource equips advisors and other supporting adults with practical tools and resources to authentically engage youth in tobacco prevention efforts in their schools and communities. It also includes event guidance, meeting resources and more.
- **Activity Guide:** This new resource provides advisors and youth with engaging and educational activities designed to inform students about the risks associated with tobacco and nicotine use.
- [Educational and Action-Oriented Modules for Youth](#) – Tobacco Has a Web of Influence SO DO YOU! Vermont Afterschool, a Tobacco Control Program community grantee, carefully crafted this resource with guidance from the Tobacco Control Program to empower Vermont's young people to take positive action in their local schools and communities. These learning modules were inspired by concerns youth shared related to tobacco's influence on Mental Health, Social Justice, Public Health and Environmental Justice. This youth-led action builds their skills, confidence and resilience to lead by example and hopefully inspire other young people impacted by tobacco to take positive action in prevention efforts for their community.

For more information on starting or integrating OVX activities into an existing youth group in your school or community, or to request OVX resources, reach out to the Vermont Tobacco Control Program at tobaccovt@vermont.gov.

Sign up for our monthly [Youth Forward newsletter](#) to stay in the loop on new and emerging nicotine products, trends, youth prevention and cessation resources, upcoming workshops, webinars and training of interest.

HELP YOUTH QUIT

Refer teens who may be struggling with nicotine addiction to [My Life My Quit™](#), [EX Program](#), [N-O-T](#), or to talk with their health care provider. More detailed information on cessation resources can be found in the Youth section of this toolkit.

School Nurses and Student Assistance Professionals

What School Nurses and Student Assistance Professionals Can Do

Nurses or School Assistance Professionals (SAPs) can assist youth by recognizing symptoms associated with nicotine addiction, discussing these with the student and parents/guardians and referring to the student's health care provider. Nurses or SAPs can also provide ongoing and frequent support to students within the school environment. Collaboration between medical providers, school nurses, SAPs and families, when possible, help all concerned provide wrap-around support to students.

EDUCATE YOURSELF ON VAPE PRODUCTS AND THE EFFECTS OF NICOTINE

- Secondhand smoke and vape emissions are serious asthma triggers for youth. Learn about [simple steps to protect students from exposure](#).
- Tobacco use and vaping have negative effects on oral health. Dental providers are screening and counseling youth users. Get the facts at [802Quits Dental Vaping Screening Toolkit](#) and the [Vermont Department of Health Tobacco and Oral Health Impact Statement](#).
- Oral health and nicotine [CATCH My Breath](#) offers two Core Curriculum Supplements on Oral health for middle and high school Students. Youth will learn about the damage that using tobacco products - specifically cigarettes and e-cigarettes - can do to their oral health. You must create an account to [log in](#), but access to CATCH is free.
- [Vaping Lingo Dictionary](#) provides a list of popular products and terms and phrases that young people may use to describe nicotine use.
- [Clearing the Air](#) - A toolkit to address youth vaping for primary care practices, developed by the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program (VCHIP), is an informational resource to address the impact of vaping on youth health.
- Information on [nicotine poisoning](#) is available from the Northern New England Poison Center.
- Understand how to [Protect Kids from Vape Poisoning](#) with this infographic from SafeKids Vermont.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics provides a [curriculum](#) that focuses on addressing youth vaping prevention and cessation based on best practices, as well as a [fact sheet](#) to encourage clinician use of the 5As screening and counseling technique with teens.
- The National Association of School Nurses' (NASN) [Vanquishing Vaping Toolkit](#) | NASN Learning Center is available to all NASN members.
- Visit the [Stanford REACH Lab](#) resource page for materials, posters and infographics, including the different types of oral nicotine products and Zyn.

EDUCATE YOUTH ON THE RISKS OF ALL NICOTINE PRODUCTS

According to the [CDC](#), there is no safe tobacco or nicotine product for children, teens or young adults.

[Learn more](#) about emerging nicotine products and pouches, such as Zyn.

ESTABLISH YOUTH TOBACCO CESSATION PROGRAMMING IN SCHOOL

The American Academy of Pediatrics has created a useful [guide](#) to help provide detailed information to support pediatricians and other health care providers (such as School RNs) in supporting youth tobacco cessation, using the Ask-Counsel-Treat (A.C.T.) model.

Download the [Asthma Action Plan](#) to help students manage their asthma or reduce exposure to triggers.

GUIDANCE FOR PRESCRIPTION NRT

Support students of any age who have prescription nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) medications - brand name or off label - for the treatment of moderate to severe nicotine dependence. Store these medications, which come in the form of gum, patch, lozenge, nasal spray and inhaler, as any other prescription medication and provide students access as needed. Read the [American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations](#).

- NRT is safer than cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other tobacco products because it delivers nicotine without the toxic chemicals and carcinogens in tobacco and e-cigarette products.
- NRT has low potential for misuse because the nicotine is absorbed slowly.
- Prescription NRT does not break school tobacco-free policy.

HELP YOUTH QUIT

- Refer teens who may be struggling with nicotine addiction to [My Life My Quit™](#), [EX Program](#), [N-O-T](#), or to talk with their health care provider. More detailed information on cessation resources can be found in the Youth section of this toolkit.

Youth

What Youth Can Do

Educating and engaging youth on how and why the tobacco industry targets them and giving them the opportunity to educate others in their community is a powerful strategy to counter big tobacco's influence.

ESTABLISH OR JOIN A YOUTH TOBACCO PREVENTION GROUP

[Our Voices Xposed \(OVX\)](#) is Vermont's youth-led movement working to end the influence of tobacco and nicotine on young people. OVX empowers students in grades 5–12 to lead the way in tobacco prevention—making each voice heard.

If you or your school would like more information on OVX or are interested in starting one in your community, please reach out to the Vermont Tobacco Control Program at tobaccovt@vermont.gov.

APPLY TO THE VERMONT TOBACCO CONTROL YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The Vermont Tobacco Control Youth Leadership Council is an opportunity for youth grades 6-12 to join other peers from across the state in leading the fight for a healthier Vermont. Council members work alongside the Vermont Department of Health to make important decisions on youth engagement strategies, areas of focus and statewide activities for the Our Voices Xposed (OVX) youth initiative program. Applications are accepted every spring. Council members receive a stipend for their time, energy and participation. Contact the Vermont Tobacco Control Program at tobaccovt@vermont.gov for more information.

ESTABLISH OR JOIN A “GETTING TO Y” GROUP

The Health Department partners with [Up for Learning](#) to support this youth engagement project. Vermont public schools that complete the [Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) have an opportunity, with grant support, to send a team of youth to a training where they learn how to analyze data and identify health priorities for their school.

VISIT UNHYPED

[Unhyped](#) is Vermont's health education campaign intended specifically for youth. It is designed to share knowledge about the health consequences of vaping any substance and to correct common misconceptions. Unhyped separates the truth from the hype so young people can understand the facts.

Sign up for the monthly Youth Forward newsletter at [Join the Movement](#) to stay in the loop on new and emerging nicotine products, trends, youth prevention and treatment resources, upcoming workshops, webinars and trainings of interest.

YOUTH QUIT RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

- [My Life My Quit™](#) is a free and confidential text and chat support for youth ages 12-17 who want to quit smoking or vaping. Youth can text START to 36072 to chat with a Coach. There are also free resources for parents/guardians and educators at [MyLifeMyQuit.com](#).
- [EX Program](#): This Truth Initiative app supports youth quitting tobacco and vaping product use. The app provides authentic social media posts from other youth who have successfully quit, free text messages to keep youth quitters on track and quitting exercises that are structured and on-demand.
- [N-O-T For Me](#): A self-guided, mobile-friendly online program that leverages the American Lung Association's Not On Tobacco (N-O-T)® program to help teens break nicotine dependency, whether they vape, smoke or use other tobacco products.
- [Smoke-Free Teen](#): An evidence-based program with free mobile tools that helps teens stop using tobacco.

Parents/Guardians

What Parents/Guardians Can Do

Parents/guardians, like school professionals and other youth influencers, play an important role in educating and influencing youth about the risks of vaping. In addition to being a good role model and not smoking, vaping or using smokeless tobacco yourself, here are some resources that may help:

- Be open and talk with your child about the harms of vaping. Resources, such as [ParentUp](#), [Talk To Your Child About Vaping](#) and the American Lung Association's [Vaping Conversation Guide](#) can help if you are not sure where to begin.
- Encourage conversations among school and community groups. Provide them with resources, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics [fact sheets](#) for parents.
- Be aware of cessation treatment options for your child and resources for you at [My Life My Quit™](#), a free and confidential text and chat service for Vermont youth ages 12-17 who want to quit smoking or vaping. **Text START to 36072**. Consult with your child's pediatrician for additional support.
- Utilize only reputable websites for gathering information. [HealthVermont](#), [Unhyped](#), [The Truth Initiative](#), [The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids](#) and [Stanford Medicine Reach Lab](#), as well as others shared in this toolkit, are all great places to look.
- Helping a child quit vaping can be stressful and confusing. [Become an EX](#) has a suite of resources for parents/guardians and other trusted adults:
 - 24/7 support in the [EX Community](#) from other parents and individuals who can help understand what it feels like to quit.
 - Information about addiction and how quit tools can make quitting more comfortable.
 - Text messages to guide conversations with your child, give you strategies to try together and help you manage stress. **Text QUIT to 202-899-7550** to sign up to receive text messages designed specifically for parents of youth who vape.
 - Interactive tools and videos are available to learn quitting techniques to pass along to youth.
- [Parents Against Vaping](#) (PAVe) is a grassroots organization of passionate parents and concerned individuals committed to protecting children from the dangers of vaping and other flavored tobacco use. PAVe educates and empowers parents and communities to take a stand and safeguard the health of our children by teaching them to advocate for local, state and federal legislation.

Community Coalitions

Community Coalitions Are Working Across Vermont to Help Protect Youth

The Tobacco Control Program funds nine tobacco control and prevention [community coalitions](#). These coalitions work with various partners, such as schools, health care organizations, government, nonprofits, businesses and media, to prevent and reduce tobacco use and exposure in their communities. Through their efforts, strong tobacco-free social norms have been shaped and protective measures passed. The coalitions serve most Vermont communities.

SOME EXAMPLES OF GRANTEE INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

- Working with towns to make public places, multi-unit housing, parks and beaches smoke-free.
- Collaborating with youth groups to educate communities about the impact the tobacco and vape industries have on youth and young adults.
- Promoting the benefits of passing ordinances and updating town plans and zoning districts to reduce the impact of tobacco in local communities.
- Helping businesses and behavioral health facilities incorporate tobacco-free and vape-free policies.
- Collaborating with underserved populations, such as Black, Indigenous and people of color and LGBTQ individuals to make sure their voices are heard and represented.



Vermont Department
of Health

CONNECT WITH YOUR LOCAL TOBACCO CONTROL COMMUNITY COALITION OR OFFICE OF LOCAL HEALTH

Tobacco Control and Prevention community coalitions can provide information, resources and technical assistance to schools on tobacco and other substance use prevention strategies. Some coalitions collaborate with community-based youth groups that may be a resource for parent and peer-to-peer education.

In addition to community coalitions, there are [12 Offices of Local Health](#) located around the state to serve Vermont communities. The school liaison in your local office partners with schools and school districts to support health and wellness. School liaisons can share resources and collaborate with school teams on vaping-related best practices, policy development and assessments.

Appendix

Addressing Vaping and Nicotine Use in Vermont Schools

AN EDUCATION TOOLKIT

Environmental Fact Sheet

Vaping/E-Cigarette Devices and Safe Management in Schools

What are vaping/e-cigarette devices and why are they of concern?

Vaping devices also known as E-cigarettes, vape pens, vapes and e-cigs and other names produce an aerosol by heating a liquid that usually contains nicotine—the addictive drug in regular cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products—flavorings, and other chemicals that help to make the aerosol. Users inhale this aerosol into their lungs. Bystanders can also breathe in this aerosol when the user exhales into the air.

Vaping devices contain lithium or lithium-ion batteries and liquid nicotine. Damaged vaping device batteries have caused fires and explosions, some of which have resulted in serious injuries.

In addition, acute nicotine exposure can be toxic. Children and adults have been poisoned by swallowing, breathing, or absorbing vaping device liquid.¹

How should vaping devices collected by schools be managed?

Vaping devices may need to be managed as a hazardous waste.

If a school is in possession of vaping devices or e-cigarettes that have been left at the school, they should work with their local solid waste management entity or hazardous waste contractor (*search H*) to properly dispose/recycle these devices just like they would with other hazardous waste that is generated at the school.

Schools are considered regulated hazardous waste generators and must follow VT Hazardous Waste Regulations.

Best Management Practices

- ✓ Upon collection immediately bag each vaping device individually in a plastic bag.
- ✓ Place all of the individually bagged vaping device into a sealed five-gallon plastic (polyethylene) pail or bin.
- ✓ Label the pail or bin- **Vaping Devices/Hazardous Waste/Date of First Collection**
- ✓ Check vaping devices for swelling, leaking and damage prior to storing.
- ✓ Place any swollen or damaged vaping devices in a closed, watertight, storage container such as a plastic (polyethylene) pail or bin. Add Sand, kitty litter, vermiculite or another fire containment material such as CellBlockEx to aid in safe storage.
- ✓ When handling damaged vaping devices, always wear safety equipment (e.g., gloves, apron, and eye protection). Liquid nicotine is very toxic and should not come in contact with skin or face. Damaged batteries could cause burn or other injury.
- ✓ Avoid stockpiling vaping devices. Remove for proper recycling/disposal within one year of starting collection.

¹ US Department of Health and Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-CDC.GOV

Environmental Fact Sheet: Vaping Device Management in Schools

- ✓ Store the collection pail in a locked storage area where it can not be accidentally knocked over or easily accessed. Keep a Fire Extinguisher in the storage area.

Resources:

Hazardous Waste Contractors

Please note the state does not endorse any one of these service providers over another. Please see the [VT permitted transporters](#) list and search “H” for a listing of all permitted hazardous waste transporters serving VT.

Solid Waste Management Entities- <https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts>

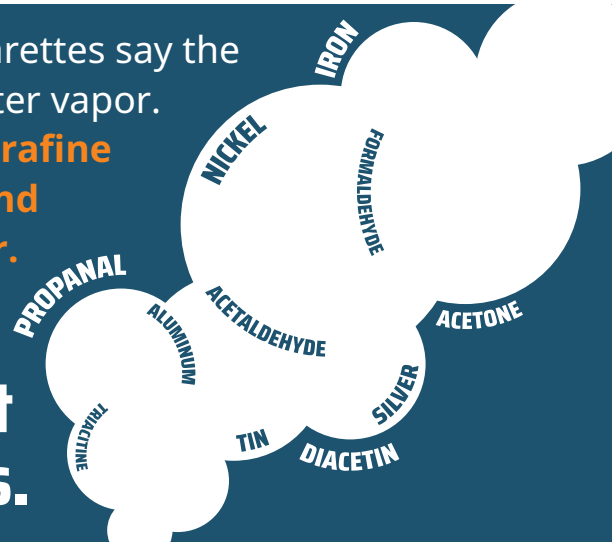
VT Department of Health Tobacco Resources- <https://www.healthvermont.gov/wellness/tobacco/resources>

VT Department of Environmental Conservation Hazardous Waste Program-
<https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/hazardous>

When you vape at home, **your child vapes, too.**

Companies that advertise and sell e-cigarettes say the aerosol from vaping is just harmless water vapor. That's not true. **When you vape, the ultrafine particles you exhale contain metals and toxins that are known to cause cancer.**

You don't need to be a chemist to know they don't belong in your child's lungs.



These toxins don't disappear when you put down your vape. They cling to indoor surfaces like windows, walls, and floors.

Vaping when your kids are at school or in their room doesn't make it safe.



Protect your child. If you vape, don't vape in your home.

Want help quitting?

Visit 802Quits.org, Vermont's resource for quitting tobacco in any form.



Parents who think vaping is safer than regular cigarettes are surprised to learn

Children are exposed to **ULTRAFINE PARTICLES** at a higher rate than if smoking cigarettes

Children absorb similar amounts of nicotine as regular cigarettes

Even short exposure irritates eyes, throat, and airways

Long exposure can cause asthma



Vermont State Statutes and Education Laws

- 16 V.S.A. § 140 states that it is prohibited to use tobacco and tobacco substitute products, including electronic vapor products, on public school grounds and school-sponsored events.
- [16 V.S.A. § 909](#) states that the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council, and, where appropriate, with the Division of Health Promotion, shall develop a sequential alcohol and drug abuse prevention education curriculum for elementary and secondary schools. The curriculum shall include teaching about the effects and legal consequences of the possession and use of tobacco products.
- Act 108, Vermont's Clean Indoor Air Act, prohibits the use of tobacco and tobacco substitutes in indoor places of public access. This includes private and independent schools that are not covered under 16 V.S.A. § 140.
- 7 V.S.A. § 1003 was amended in 2019 to change the legal age for buying and using cigarettes, electronic cigarettes and other tobacco products from 18 to 21 years of age.
- 7 V.S.A. § 1002 was amended in 2019 to prohibit anyone from selling electronic cigarettes, liquids containing nicotine, or other tobacco substitutes without a Vermont tobacco seller license. This effectively prohibits the online sales of such products.
- 32 V.S.A. § 7702 now subjects electronic cigarettes to the wholesale tax on "other tobacco products".

If minor youth disclose purchasing tobacco products on the internet or at a local retail store, report the retailer's non-compliance to the [Vermont Department of Liquor and Lottery, Division of Liquor Control](#). Consider other health activities or policies that can reinforce a healthy school and learning environment, such as arranging after-school programming to give youth opportunities to be engaged.

Vermont School Boards Association Model Policy

CODE C2 (Required)^[1]

STUDENT ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

ADOPTION NOTES – This text box and the disclaimer should be removed prior to adoption.

(a) General – As with all model policies, VSBA recommends that each board carefully review this model prior to adoption to assure suitability with the district's own specific circumstances, internal coding system, current policies, and organizational structures. Highlighted language or blank, underscored spaces indicate areas which Boards must change/complete to reflect local personnel titles, policy references, duty assignments etc. There may also be optional language for the board to consider; in this case the word [OPTIONAL] should be removed.

(b) Legal references are listed for convenience, but do not need to be included in the policy as adopted.

(c) Any model policies listed under "cross-reference" indicate a reference to another related VSBA model policy. A district should check its own current policies to assure internal consistency.

(d) Withdrawn and earlier versions of revised policies should be maintained separately as part of the permanent records of the District.

Statement of Philosophy: This policy shall be concerned with the health and well-being of all students and the policy shall take into consideration the individual needs of students with problems (drug, alcohol, substance abuse problems) as well as the right of the majority of students to an education.^[2]

It is therefore the policy of the _____ School District (District) that no student shall knowingly possess, use, sell, give or otherwise transmit, or be under the influence of any illegal drug, regulated substance, or alcohol on any school property, or at any school sponsored activity away from or within the school.^[3] It is further the policy of the District to make appropriate referrals in cases of substance abuse.

Definitions

1. The term "**substance abuse**" as used in this policy is the ingestion of a substance in such a way that it interferes with a person's ability to perform physically, intellectually, emotionally, or socially.^[4]
2. The term "**drug**" as used in this policy means any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, cannabis or any other controlled substance as defined by state or federal regulation or statute.^[5]

Administrative Responsibilities Related to Alcohol and Drugs

Educational Program. The superintendent or designee shall work with appropriate staff members to develop and conduct an alcohol and drug abuse educational program.^[6] The

[1] This policy is required by 16 V.S.A. 1165(c) and SBE Rule 4212. Unless otherwise noted in the following notes, the State Board rule requires that the policy include the elements contained in this model.

[2] SBE Rule 4212 requires the policy to have this statement of philosophy.

[3] 16 V.S.A. § 1165(a). See also 18 V.S.A. § 4237 making it unlawful for any person to sell or dispense any regulated drug to minors or to any other person on school property or property adjacent to a school. See 16 V.S.A. §140 regarding prohibition of tobacco use on public school grounds or at public school sponsored functions.

[4] Vermont State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices, Rule 4211

[5] See definitions of narcotic drugs and hallucinogenic drugs in 18 V.S.A. §4201; and controlled substances in 41 U.S.C. §706(3) and 21 U.S.C. §812.

[6] 16 V.S.A. §131(9) Definition of Comprehensive Health Education includes drugs, including education about alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, and prescribed drugs.

program shall be consistent with the Vermont Alcohol and Drug Education Curriculum Plan.^[7] If the District is a recipient of federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act funds, the Act will be considered in the development of the alcohol and drug abuse educational program.^[8]

Cooperative Agreements.^[9] The superintendent or designee shall annually designate an individual to be responsible for providing information to students and parents/guardians about outside agencies that provide substance abuse prevention services and to encourage the use of their services and programs when appropriate.

The District shall have a cooperative agreement with at least one provider, approved by the Department of Health, that will provide substance abuse treatment to students who are referred through the school's support and referral system, or who refer themselves for treatment.

Immediate Procedures.^[10] The superintendent or designee shall establish procedures for handling any alcohol/drug related incident until the student has been discharged to the parent, guardian, social service, medical, or law enforcement agency.

Emergency.^[11] The superintendent or designee shall establish procedures for administering emergency first aid related to alcohol and drug abuse. The procedures will define the roles of the personnel involved.

Administrative Responsibilities Related to Student Conduct and Discipline

Any student who violates this policy by knowingly possessing, using, selling, giving or otherwise transmitting, or being under the influence of any illegal drug, regulated substance, or alcohol, on any school property, or at any school sponsored activity away from or within the school shall be subject to discipline consistent with the District's policy on Student Conduct and Discipline and the school's overall discipline plan developed pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 1161a.

[OPTIONAL] Notification. The superintendent or designee shall ensure that parents and students are given copies of the standards of conduct and disciplinary sanctions contained in the procedures related to this policy and are notified that compliance with the standards of conduct is mandatory. Notice to students will, at a minimum, be provided through inclusion of these standards and sanctions in the student handbook distributed to all students at the beginning of each school year or when a student enrolls in the school.^[12]

[7] SBE Rule 4212.2 requiring the education program be consistent with this Plan.

[8] 20 U.S.C. §§7101 et seq. Safe & Drug-Free Schools & Communities Act of 1994

[9] SBE Rule 4212.3 requiring the provision of support and referral system for students in distress.

[10] SBE Rule 4212.3A requiring a policy on the handling of any alcohol/drug-related incident.

[11] SBE Rule 4212.3B requiring that each "...school district policy...establish procedures for administering first aid related to alcohol and drug abuse. The procedures will define the roles of the personnel involved."

[12] This section is not required by law, but could be included in a school board policy to ensure that adequate notice of the school district's policy and procedures related to alcohol and drug abuse is given to students and parents.

<i>VSBA Version:</i>	<i>November 1, 2022</i>
<i>Date Warned:</i>	
<i>Date Adopted:</i>	
<i>Legal Reference(s):</i>	<i>20 U.S.C. §§7101 et seq. (Safe & Drug-Free Schools & Communities Act of 1994)</i>
	<i>16 V.S.A. §909 (Drug & Alcohol Abuse Prevention Education Curriculum)</i>
	<i>16 V.S.A. §131(9) (Comprehensive Health Education)</i>
	<i>16 V.S.A. §1045(b)(Driver Training Course)</i>
	<i>16 V.S.A. §1165 (Alcohol and drug abuse)</i>
	<i>18 V.S.A. §4226 (Drugs: minors, treatment, consent)</i>
	<i>18 V.S.A. § 4237 (Possession and Control of Regulated Drugs)</i>
	<i>7 V.S.A. §1001 (Alcoholic Beverages, Cannabis, And Tobacco Definitions)</i>
	<i>Vt. State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices §§4200 -4212.3B)</i>
<i>Cross Reference:</i>	<i>Student Conduct and Discipline</i>
	<i>Search and Seizure of Students by School Personnel</i>
	<i>Wellness and Comprehensive Health</i>
	<i>Tobacco Prohibition</i>

DISCLAIMER: This model policy has been prepared by the Vermont School Boards Association for the sole and exclusive use of VSBA members, as a resource to assist member school boards with their policy development. School Districts should consult with legal counsel and revise model policies to address local facts and circumstances prior to adoption, unless the model policy states otherwise. VSBA continually makes revisions based on school districts' needs and local, state and federal laws, regulations and court decisions, and other relevant education activity.



Early and prolonged use of tobacco and nicotine products, including electronic vapor products or vapes, can have lifetime health impacts. Schools play a critical role in preventing substance initiation among youth and educating on the dangers of use. Schools can create supportive environments by adopting smoke- and vape-free policies and promoting My Life My Quit treatment resources for those students who currently smoke or vape and need help quitting. Substance misuse among youth is influenced at the individual, peer, family, school, community and societal levels. Engaged communities, involved parents and informed schools increase the likelihood of positive youth outcomes.

Action Steps for Schools

- Vermont state statute protects students, staff and guests by restricting all tobacco products (including tobacco substitutes such as vape pens and e-cigarettes and other nicotine and aerosol generating product use) on school property/grounds and at school-sponsored events. Local school boards have the authority to create policy for enforcement.
- Post smoke- and vape-free signage at key locations on school grounds. Durable signage is available for order at no cost through the Vermont Tobacco Control Program (VTCP).
- Implement supportive disciplinary practices around substance use infractions.
- Implement health education that provides students with the knowledge, attitudes, skills and experiences needed to adopt and/or maintain a tobacco and substance-free lifestyle.
- Ensure tobacco and nicotine prevention education is part of a comprehensive school health education curriculum. The Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT) assessment tool developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that a PreK-12 tobacco-free curriculum should enable students to have a tobacco-free lifestyle through:
 - T-1. Avoiding use (or experimentation) with any form of tobacco.
 - T-2. Avoiding secondhand smoke.
 - T-3. Supporting a tobacco-free environment.
 - T-4. Supporting others to be tobacco-free.
 - T-5. Quitting tobacco, if already using.
- Provide a variety of student identified substance-free activities to promote student connection in a pro-social, peer-structured manner during and after school hours, including intramural activities.
- Provide dietary and physical activity guidance for students interested in quitting tobacco but worried about weight gain.
- Create referral systems for students with signs of tobacco misuse or dependence to the appropriate school staff such as the school nurse, SAP, counselor, psychologist or school social worker.
- Contact the VTCP to learn about its youth engagement and empowerment programs: Vermont Kids Against Tobacco (VKAT) and Our Voices Xposed (OVX).
- Cultivate a school environment that encourages empowerment and expression of students with diverse backgrounds.

Resources

Schools can use any of the ten components of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model to help inform and prevent youth tobacco use. Visit the Vermont Department of Health website for specific examples and to take the next step in making school a safe space for every child.

Addressing Vaping in Vermont Schools: An Educational Toolkit is another helpful resource available to schools and community partners. This is available to view and download on the Health website.

Tobacco and Nicotine Prevention Curriculums

- Tobacco Prevention Toolkit by Stanford Medicine is an evidence-informed set of resources for educators and parents that includes vaping prevention of tobacco and nicotine use among middle and high school students.
- CATCH My Breath is an evidence-based youth nicotine vaping prevention program for grades 5-12 that has been proven to substantially reduce students' likelihood of vaping.
- Vaping: Know the Truth is a free digital learning curriculum from the Truth Initiative. This curriculum is prevention focused, yet also provides support and resources for youth who are already vaping by linking them directly to This Is Quitting.

Alternatives to Suspension or Citation

- INDEPTH: An Alternative to Suspension or Citation was developed by the American Lung Association to help schools and communities address the teen vaping problem in a more supportive way.
- Healthy Futures/Alternative to Suspension Curriculums by Stanford Medicine are geared for students who have been caught vaping (or using any other tobacco product) and/or for any students who are interested in trying to quit.

Quit Programs

- My Life My Quit is a free and confidential text and chat service for Vermont youth ages 12-17 who want to quit smoking or vaping. Text "Start My Quit" to 36072.
- 802Quits is Vermont's tobacco cessation resource for adults 18 and older, offering free support for quitting all forms of tobacco by phone, online or text.
- Smokefree Teen is part of the National Cancer Institute's Initiative to help teens stop using tobacco by providing information grounded in scientific evidence and offering free tools that meet teens where they are—on their mobile phones.
- Not on Tobacco (N-O-T) is a teen smoking and vaping cessation program developed by the American Lung Association.
- This is Quitting is a free and anonymous text messaging program for youth.

Contact the Tobacco Control Program at tobaccovt@vermont.gov for additional support. For more information visit: Tobacco | Vermont Department of Health (healthvermont.gov)

References

- ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. E-cigarette, or Vaping, Products Visual Dictionary. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/pdfs/ecigarette-or-vaping-products-visual-dictionary-508.pdf
- ⁱⁱ American Lung Association. What's in an E-Cigarette? <https://www.lung.org/quit-smoking/e-cigarettes-vaping/whats-in-an-e-cigarette>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Vaping and Lung Inflammation and Injury. Park, J. Alexander, L. C. Christiani, D. C. *Annu. Rev. Physiol.* 2022. 84:611–29 <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-physiol-061121-040014>
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- ^v Cooper, Maria. “Notes from the field: E-cigarette use among middle and high school students—United States, 2022.” *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 71 (2022). <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7140a3.htm>
- ^{vi} Vermont Department of Health. 2023 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey Statewide Report: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/document/hsi-yrebs-2023-statewide-report%20.pdf>
- ^{vii} Vermont Department of Health. Youth Risk Behavior Survey. www.healthvermont.gov/YRBS
- ^{viii} Truth Initiative. 2024. What is Zyn and what are oral nicotine pouches? <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/what-zyn-and-what-are-oral-nicotine-pouches>
- ^{ix} Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. Administration's E-cigarette Policy Leaves Thousands of Flavored E-cigarettes on the Market. https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/media/2020/2020_01_15_what-isnt-covered
- ^x Vermont Afterschool. 2020. Positive Youth Development Prevention Resource Guide for the Third Space. <https://vermontafterschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2020-Prevention-Guidebook-SUPA-2.pdf>