

# TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOL



**NO SMOKING  
E-CIGARETTES  
DIPPING**

SCHOOL POLICY PROHIBITS SMOKING OR USING  
E-CIGARETTES AT SCHOOL-RELATED OR SCHOOL-SANCTIONED  
ACTIVITIES ON OR OFF SCHOOL PROPERTY

# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

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## Say What!

Say What! stands for Students, Adults and Youth Working Hard Against Tobacco!, and was created by Texas youth to give credit to everyone working towards reducing tobacco use through the Lone Star State. Youth leaders saw a need to connect the various tobacco prevention efforts happening statewide and unify them under their common goal of making Texans healthier regarding their tobacco use. The Say What! movement provides an umbrella organization to connect, learn, share, and inspire others to make a positive difference in their schools and communities. Visit [www.txsaywhat.com](http://www.txsaywhat.com) for more information and to join this statewide movement!

### **A truly tobacco-free school means that**

- 1) Tobacco in any form (including e-cigarettes) is not being used in any school building, on any school property, or at any school-sponsored event by anyone, at anytime
- 2) The policy is clearly communicated to students, staff, and visitors
- 3) There are consistent rules and consequences for any violation

This tool-kit is a guide to help your school become truly tobacco-free. Information and resources are available to help your school district or campus clearly communicate, enforce, and support a truly tobacco-free campus.

# SECTION 2: WHY TOBACCO-FREE? WHY E-CIGARETTES?

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## Why Tobacco-Free?

### **A better learning environment for students:**

- 1) Tobacco use at school distracts students from learning. Student tobacco use is linked to school failure and truancy. <sup>1</sup>
- 2) A tobacco-free school represents a firm commitment to health by the school administration and staff by protecting their students, employees, and campus visitors.

### **Positive role modeling:**

- 1) A 2003 study found that students were more likely to smoke in a location where they saw other students and adults smoking. Tobacco-free schools provide opportunities for adults and peers to serve as tobacco-free role models. <sup>2</sup>
- 2) All school staff members have the responsibility to serve as positive role models for students by not using any tobacco products (including e-cigarettes) at school.

### **Eliminates exposure to secondhand smoke:**

- 1) More than 64% of Texas middle and high school students are exposed to secondhand smoke at home. School should be a place where they are safe from the toxins of secondhand smoke. <sup>3</sup>
- 2) There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. <sup>4</sup>

### **Compliance with federal and state regulations:**

- 1) The Federal Pro Children Act of 1994 states: "No person shall permit smoking within any indoor facility utilized for services to kindergarten, elementary, or secondary education or library services to children." This applies to all schools and programs that are funded by the federal government or through state and local government.

- 2) The Texas Education Code Section 38.006(b)(1) prohibits smoking or using tobacco products including e-cigarettes at a school-related or school-sanctioned activity on or off school property; (2) prohibits students from possessing tobacco products at a school-related or school-sanctioned activity on or off school property; (3) ensures that school personnel enforce the policies on school property.
- 3) The Texas Health and Safety Code Section 161.082 prohibits (1) the sale of e-cigarettes to persons under the age of 18; (2) the sale of e-cigarettes to a person with the intent to deliver the product to a person under the age of 18.

#### Why include e-cigarettes?

- 1) During the 84th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature, e-cigarettes were included in the list of prohibited products on school campuses or at school-sanctioned events in the Texas Education Code in addition to smoking and other tobacco products;
- 2) The Texas Legislature also revised the Health and Safety Code Section 161.081 to prohibit the sale and possession of e-cigarettes to persons under the age of 18;
- 3) While many studies are still being done to evaluate e-cigarettes, we do know: <sup>5</sup>
  - a) E-Cigarettes pollute the air with tiny particles that can lodge in lung tissue;
  - b) E-Cigarette vapor is not only water; it also includes nicotine, formaldehyde, metal, and silicate particles, and propylene glycol;
  - c) The higher concentrations of nicotine in e-cigarettes can be harmful if spilled on skin, or deadly if ingested;
  - d) E-cigarettes appeal to youth, even non-smokers, who are more likely to use e-cigarettes than smoke regular cigarettes;

## SECTION 3: COMMUNICATING YOUR TOBACCO-FREE POLICY

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In order to comply with a policy, people need to be aware of it. Students, staff, parents, and the public/community are all impacted by a tobacco-free school policy. Therefore, each of these audiences needs to understand the policy.

There are many ways to effectively communicate positive messages about the tobacco-free policy. Aim for clear and positive messages that motivate people to comply. Here are some suggestions from schools across the country.

- **Signage:** Post tobacco-free school signs at all entrances to school buildings, school grounds, parking lots, and athletic facilities, as well as in the school building, school vehicles, and buses (Signs provided by Texas SayWhat! meet the signage standards for accessibility as required by Texas law provided they are hung between 40 and 70 inches from ground level).
- **Teacher-Specific Signage:** Post tobacco-free school signage, along with a copy of the policy, in staff lounges or offices.
- **In-School Student Announcements:** Ask students to read daily announcements. Involve student groups or clubs in developing and delivering these announcements about the policy.
- **Event Announcements:** Announce the policy at athletic events, meetings, concerts, and plays. Involve student groups or clubs in developing and delivering these announcements about the policy. Include a mention of the tobacco-free campus policy in event bulletins/flyers.
- **Student-Designed Publicity:** Ask student groups or classes to design posters, banners, and signs to communicate the policy.
- **Staff Education and Training:** Discuss the policy at staff meetings and new staff orientations. Provide annual in-service training on tobacco and e-cigarette related school policies for all staff, including teachers, administrators, bus drivers, aides, food service workers, and maintenance staff.
- **Student Education:** Clear expectations help everyone follow the rules. At the start of each school year, during school-wide or grade-level assemblies or in a specific class, all school rules should be reviewed, including policies about tobacco and e-cigarette use and possession.

- **Newspaper Advertisement:** Place an ad in the newspaper publicizing the policy.
- **Community Groups:** Ask community groups such as local coalitions and parent-teacher organizations to include an article about the tobacco-free school policy in their newsletters. Provide them with a short article, if necessary.
- **Memo or Email:** Inform school staff – or remind them throughout the year – about the policy and enforcement via an official memo or email. Inform vendors who provide supplies, materials, and services on a regular basis to the school about the policy via an official memo.
- **Parent Letters:** Send a letter to each parent or guardian explaining the policy; providing the health, academic, and social reasons; outlining the consequences for violators; and requesting support in enforcement with students and visitors.
- **Parent Telephone Calls:** Use automatic calling to inform parents of the policy. This may be particularly appropriate prior to the first sporting event of the year.
- **Communicate Violations:** Call or meet with parents if a student violates the policy. Send a letter home with a summary of the policy, details of their student’s policy violation, and consequences of this and future violations.

## SECTION 4: COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

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Enforcing tobacco and e-cigarette free school rules consistently and fairly strengthens a culture of respect and caring at a school. Schools that enforce this policy do not accept or allow violations to occur without appropriate action. Enforcement helps maintain a safe and healthy environment in which authority is respected and rules are followed.

### **Enforcement:**

Write down enforcement procedures. It is important to establish written enforcement procedures that are fair, clear, and consistently implemented. Procedures need to be developed for all potential violators: students, staff, and visitors. Many schools find that developing a written checklist outlining these procedures facilitates consistent implementation.

### **Ensure All Staff Members Enforce the Rules:**

All school personnel should be able to enforce the tobacco-free school policy. This includes food service workers, custodial staff, security, teachers, aides, and administrators. The main role for most school staff is to refer violators to appropriate personnel. Some staff may believe that warning students to stop using tobacco and/or e-cigarettes is better than making a referral, unfortunately this leads to inconsistency and unfairness.

### **Enlist Student Help:**

Students can be encouraged to support the tobacco-free school policy as a form of pride in their school and support for the good health of the entire study body. Groups of students, such as Student Council, can be trained to remind their peers and visitors about the policy if they observe someone using tobacco or e-cigarettes at school.

### **Promote Tobacco-Free Living:**

Engage everyone in the community in promoting tobacco-free and e-cigarette free lifestyles. Celebrate national and state events that support tobacco-free living, and provide opportunities to share this vision with the greater community.

## SECTION 5: RESOURCES

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- Sample Letter to Parents
- Sample School-Sanctioned Event Announcements
- Sample Statements for Visitor Enforcement
- Texas Education Code (as amended during the 84th Regular Session)
- Texas Health and Safety Code: (as amended by the 84th Legislature)

# Sample Letter to Parents:

Dear Parents,

Since *(date)*, the *(name of school district)* School Board has had a tobacco-free school policy in place. This policy prohibits all tobacco and e-cigarette use by everyone, everywhere on campus, at all times, including school events after regular school hours. This policy also prohibits students from bringing tobacco products and e-cigarettes on campus. *[Note: Tailor this sentence to your district's policy.]* A copy of the policy is attached.

The School Board put this policy in place for three reasons:

- **Help Students Be Tobacco-Free:** Youth spend a great deal of their time at school and school events. Allowing the use of tobacco products on campus implies school approval of such use. Keeping tobacco off campus means students do not see their friends and teachers using tobacco, which helps make tobacco use seem less socially acceptable. They also have less access to tobacco products. This means they will be less likely to try and then become addicted to nicotine.
- **Provide A Safe Environment For Students And Staff:** Breathing secondhand smoke can make others sick. It can trigger an asthma attack or worsen breathing problems. Staff and visitors smoking on campus or at school events place others at risk. We want to keep our schools healthy for everyone.
- **Comply With Federal And State Legislation And Regulations:** Federal and state law prohibit smoking in elementary, intermediate, and secondary schools. Additionally, state law directs school boards to develop policies prohibiting the use of electronic cigarettes on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity.

Tobacco-free schools provide positive role modeling for students. Schools are a place where children develop lifelong behaviors – and we are committed to ensuring smoking or chewing tobacco and/or using an e-cigarette is not one of these behaviors.

We have placed signs about the policy on all school campuses. We will also make announcements at school events to remind people that tobacco and e-cigarette use is not allowed at these events or on school property.

There are many helpful resources for teens or adults in our community who use tobacco and want to quit. Texas funds a free telephone Quitline, 1-877 YES-QUIT (1-877-937-7848), that anyone can use at no charge. Teens can receive online and texting support from the Quitline and at [www.yesquit.org](http://www.yesquit.org).

We appreciate your help in supporting this policy. If you have questions or comments about the policy, please call the principal at your child's school at *(insert school phone number)*.

Sincerely,

# Sample School-Sanctioned Event Announcements:

School-sponsored events, such as athletic events, concerts, and theater performances, are an opportunity for students, staff, and community members to have fun and celebrate student talent while not being exposed to secondhand smoke or seeing tobacco use. We encourage school staff to use these events to remind students, staff, and school supporters that the division has a tobacco-free school policy in place – one that prohibits tobacco and e-cigarette use anywhere on campus, at any time, by anyone. Regular announcements at athletic games, concerts, performances, and other events are a simple and effective strategy for getting the message across, especially when used in combination with signage and information in event brochures.

## Effective Use of Announcements:

Advocates and school staff provide the following suggestions for using announcements to effectively communicate a tobacco-free school policy:

- **Positive, pro-health announcement:** Announcements should be positive – reminding visitors that the policy exists to protect the health of students.
- **Provide at least four announcements:** For example, at the beginning of the game, end of the first quarter, halftime, and end of the third quarter – to ensure everyone is aware of the policy.
- **Youth participation:** Invite student clubs and organizations to create and make the announcements.

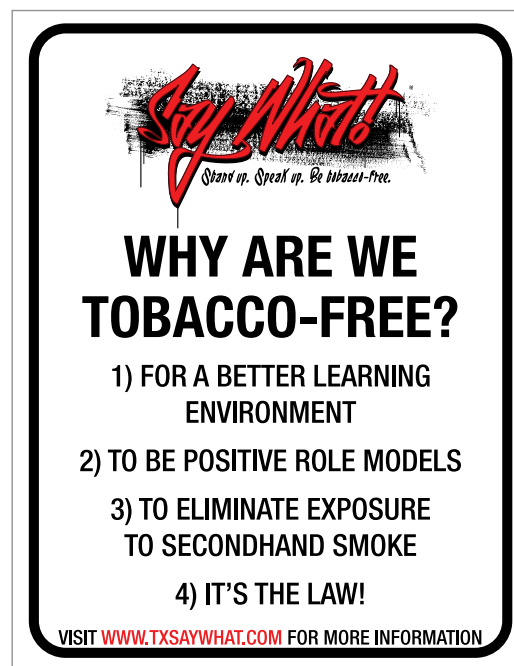
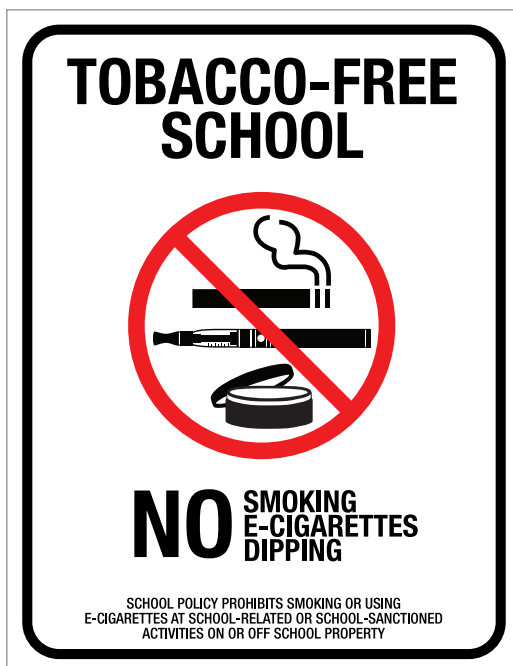
## Sample Announcements:

The following are sample announcements you can modify and use at your school-sponsored athletic events. These are easily adaptable for other events, such as concerts and theater performances: 6

- 15 SECONDS: For the safety of our students, *(name of school district)* is proud to have a 100 percent tobacco-free school policy. At this time, we would like to remind our home fans and visitors that the use of tobacco products or electronic cigarettes during tonight's sporting event is strictly prohibited. We appreciate your support and would like to thank you for keeping our school and stadium tobacco-free. Enjoy the game!
- 15 SECONDS: About 24,200 Texas kids under 18 become new smokers each year. Ninety percent of adult smokers began at or before age 18. That is one reason why *(name of school district)* schools have a 100% tobacco-free school policy. Tobacco and e-cigarette use of any kind is strictly prohibited on all school property – including in and around the stadium and parking lots. Thank you for your support and for helping us keep our students tobacco-free.
- 15 SECONDS: Tobacco kills more than 77 Texans every day. This is one reason why *(name of school district)* schools are 100 percent tobacco-free. We would like to remind our visitors and fans that tobacco and e-cigarette use of any kind during tonight's game is prohibited. Thank you for your support, and enjoy the game!
- 30 SECONDS: Hey, fans! Did you know that tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable death in Texas? Every year more than 28,000 people in our state die from the use of tobacco products – more than those who die from AIDS, alcohol, traffic accidents, illegal drugs, murder and suicide combined. This is one reason why *(name of school district)* schools are 100 percent tobacco-free. This means no tobacco or e-cigarette use anytime, by anyone, anywhere on campus – including stadiums and parking lots. We appreciate your support, and thank you for keeping our school and stadium tobacco-free. Enjoy the game!

## Sample Statements for Visitor Enforcement:

- “Pardon me, you must not realize that our school division has a tobacco-free school policy in place that includes e-cigarettes – this means no tobacco use anywhere on campus, at any time, by anyone. Our school board passed the policy 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 division’s tobacco-free policy by putting out your cigarette / e-cigarette. The aim of our policy is to protect our students, staff, and school visitors from secondhand smoke, and to model healthy behavior for all students. Thank you for your cooperation.”
- “Excuse me, I must ask you to put away your chewing tobacco / e-cigarette. We have a 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.”
- “We need to ask all visitors to comply with our school’s tobacco-free schools policy. Our goal is to model healthy behaviors to our students and to protect students, staff and visitors from secondhand smoke. Thank you for your help.”
- “Our students, staff, and the PTA agree that the best way to create a healthy, positive environment for our students is to ask everyone to comply with our tobacco-free policy. We appreciate your help by putting away your chewing tobacco/cigarette/e-cigarette now.”
- “You may not have noticed our signs indicating that the school is tobacco-free and e-cigarette free. If you wish to smoke/chew, you are welcome to leave the grounds and come back when you are finished. Thank you.”
- “Our tobacco-free school policy extends to school events off school property. To keep our message consistent, please do not use tobacco of any kind during this event. Thanks for your cooperation.”



*Pushcard available for downloading at [www.txsaywhat.com](http://www.txsaywhat.com)*



# Texas Education Code: (as amended by the 84th Legislature)

## Sec. 38.006. E-CIGARETTES AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY.

- (a) In this section, “e-cigarette” means an electronic cigarette or any other device that simulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver nicotine or other substances to the individual inhaling from the device. The term does not include a prescription medical device unrelated to the cessation of smoking. The term includes:
- (1) a device described by this subsection regardless of whether the device is manufactured, distributed, or sold as an e-cigarette, e-cigar, or e-pipe or under another product name or description; and
  - (2) a component, part, or accessory of the device, regardless of whether the component, part, accessory is sold separately from the device.
- (b) The board of trustees of a school district shall:
- (1) prohibit smoking or using e-cigarettes or tobacco products at a school-related or school-sanctioned activity on or off school property;
  - (2) prohibit students from possessing e-cigarettes or tobacco products at a school-related or school-sanctioned activity on or off school property;
  - (3) and ensure that school personnel enforce the policies on school property.

# Texas Health and Safety Code: (as amended by the 84th Legislature)

## Sec. 161.082. SALE OF CIGARETTES, E-CIGARETTES, OR TOBACCO

- (a) A person commits an offense if the person, with criminal negligence:
- (1) sells, gives, or causes to be sold or given a cigarette, e-cigarette, or tobacco product to someone who is younger than 18 years of age; or
  - (2) sells, gives, or causes to be sold or given a cigarette, e-cigarette, or tobacco product to another person who intends to deliver it to someone who is younger than 18 years of age.

## References:

1. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults, Surgeon General 2012, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/preventing-youth-tobacco-use/full-report.pdf>
2. Smoking visibility, perceived acceptability, and frequency in various locations among youth and adults, Alesci et al, March 2003, Preventive Medicine, Volume 36, Issue 3.
3. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5208a2.htm?mobile=nocontent>
4. [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/2006/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/2006/index.htm)
5. [http://tobaccofree.ucsc.edu/pdf-only/E-cig%20Campus%20New%20Brief\\_v%203-30-14.pdf](http://tobaccofree.ucsc.edu/pdf-only/E-cig%20Campus%20New%20Brief_v%203-30-14.pdf)
6. Stats in announcements: [http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts\\_issues/toll\\_us/texas](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/texas);



**VISIT [TXSAYWHAT.COM](http://TXSAYWHAT.COM)  
FOR MORE INFORMATION**

The Say What! movement is funded by the Texas Department of State Health Services through a contract with the Texas School Safety Center at Texas State University.