



Oklahoma State Department of Health
Creating a State of Health

24/7 Tobacco-Free Schools Act Frequently Asked Questions

What is the 24/7 Tobacco-Free Schools Act?

House Bill 1685, also known as the 24/7 Tobacco-Free Schools Act, was signed into law on May 6, 2015. The Act requires all schools to be tobacco-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on school grounds, in school vehicles and at any school-sponsored or school-sanctioned event or activity.

When does the Act go into effect?

The Act is effective August 20, 2015.

Are e-cigarettes and vapor products covered in the new law?

No, they are not included in the law, however, HB 1685 expressly allows school policies to be stronger than the new law. Schools are encouraged to include e-cigarettes and vapor products in their tobacco-free policies. A number of scientific authorities have recommended vaping not be allowed in places where smoking is not allowed.^{1,2,3} Vaping products and devices mimic conventional cigarettes, normalize their use and youth have the perception they are less harmful.⁴ Adolescent tobacco users are at increased risk for memory loss, depression, cardiac irregularities, and long-term dependence than adults.⁵

What strategies are effective for communicating and increasing awareness of the Act?

Post the policy on your website and be sure to include language about the policy when promoting sporting events or other school-sponsored activities. Signs and door decals may be placed at the boundaries of school property, building entrances, or other high traffic areas. Ask students, staff and community volunteers to assist by distributing written reminders or other promotional materials and make announcements at school-sponsored events.

What strategies are effective for enforcing the 24/7 policy?

Positive reminders, such as announcements during athletic events, make enforcement easier. Include a copy of the tobacco-free policy in your school policy handbook that includes disciplinary procedures. Experience has shown that if people are aware of the policy it is typically self-enforcing. The policy should include provisions for students and school staff to have access to programs to help them quit

¹ Czogala J, Goniewicz ML, Fidelus B, et al. (2013). Secondhand exposure to vapors from electronic cigarettes. *Nicotine Tob Res*, 6:655–62.

² Stillman, F. A., Soong, A., Zheng, L. Y., & Navas-Acien, A. (2015). E-cigarette use in air transit: self-reported data from US flight attendants. *Tobacco Control*, 24(4), 417–418. doi:10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2013-051514

³ WHO Tobacco Control Papers: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/13p2b72n>

⁴ American Academy of Pediatrics: http://www2.aap.org/richmondcenter/pdfs/ENDShandout_Clinicians.pdf

⁵ Clea McNeely, MA, DrPH and Jayne Blanchard. *The Teen Years Explained: A Guide to Healthy Adolescent Development: Effects of Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs on the Developing Adolescent Brain*, 2010.



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using tobacco. The policy should also offer alternatives to suspension for students who violate the policy.

Does the Act apply to private schools and schools that are connected with a church or religious body?

Yes, the new law applies to all public and private schools.

Who is responsible for the implementation of the Act?

Schools are responsible for implementation on their properties and at school-sanctioned activities and events.

Is there help to purchase tobacco-free signs?

Yes, the Oklahoma State Department of Health can assist with providing signage for schools that have not previously received them while supplies last. Schools may also purchase signs directly from the OCI Manufacturing. For more information on how to request signs, please visit:

http://www.ok.gov/health/Wellness/Tobacco_Prevention/24_7_Tobacco-Free_Schools.html

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