



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](mailto:tobaccovt@vermont.gov) for additional support. For more information visit: [Tobacco | Vermont Department of Health \(healthvermont.gov\)](https://healthvermont.gov)