

III. Human Resources

H. Smoking Policy

1. Tobacco-Free Schools

Rationale and Intent: It has been determined that smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States. In addition, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has classified environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) as a Group A (known human) carcinogen. The EPA has concluded that exposure to ETS presents a serious and substantial public health risk. Therefore, in light of this scientific evidence and in compliance with Rhode Island General Laws § 23-20.9-1 et seq. “Smoking Restrictions in Schools Act” (Public Law 92-230) and § 23-20.6-1 et seq. Smoking in Public Places, effective September 1, 1993, the Narragansett School System is committed to protecting the health and welfare of both employees and students from the known hazard of exposure to ETS. Being concerned about the health of its students, the school committee feels very strongly that it must be promoting and modeling healthy behaviors for the youth of Narragansett, Rhode Island.

Tobacco use prohibited: The smoking or use of any substance or item which contains tobacco, including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, or other smoking tobacco, or the use of snuff or smokeless tobacco, or having in one's possession a lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, or other substance or item containing tobacco by any person or persons including but not limited to contract or other workers on school property, school students, school administrators, school employees, school faculty, and school visitors in all areas of all schools is prohibited. As used herein, the term "school or schools" shall also include but not be limited to school playgrounds, school administration buildings, indoor school athletic facilities, school gymnasiums, school locker rooms, school buses, other school vehicles, other school buildings whose use is not primarily residential, and outside areas within twenty-five (25) feet of any school building. In addition, tobacco use is prohibited on school grounds, athletic grounds, or parking lots; or at any school-sponsored event off campus. In addition, no student is permitted to possess a tobacco product.

Visitors: Visitors who are observed smoking or using tobacco products will be informed about the “Smoking Restrictions in Schools Act” and will be asked by anyone in the school to refrain from smoking or using tobacco products. If the individual fails to comply with the request, his or her violation of policy shall be referred to the administrator for the area in which the violation occurred. The administrator will make a decision on further action, which may include a directive to leave the school property. In extreme cases of resistance or non-compliance, assistance may be sought from the police department. Repeated violations may result in a recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools to prohibit the individual from entering the school building or other school property for a specified period of time.

Tobacco promotion: Tobacco promotional items, including clothing, bags, lighters, and other personal articles, are not permitted on school grounds, in school vehicles, or at school-sponsored events. Tobacco advertising is prohibited in all school-sponsored publications and at all school-sponsored events.

Tobacco-Free Schools (continued)

Notice: The superintendent/principal/other shall notify students, families, education personnel, and school visitors of the tobacco-free policy in handbooks, newsletters, and by other efficient means. As stated in RI Public Law 92-230, all school areas where tobacco product usage is prohibited shall be clearly marked with "nonsmoking area" signs with bold block lettering at least three inches (3") high stating "Tobacco-Free School – Tobacco Use Prohibited". There shall be at least one "nonsmoking area" sign, in conformance with the above, at every building entrance and in other areas as designated by the governing body. (Signs as detailed above are provided, without charge, by the department of health.) Signs shall also be posted in every school bus, in every school vehicle, and on school grounds.

Educational reinforcement: Tobacco use prevention education shall be closely coordinated with the other components of the school health program. Tobacco use prevention concepts shall also be integrated into the instruction of the other subject areas to the greatest extent possible. To send consistent messages to students and their families, school instructional staff shall collaborate with agencies and groups that conduct tobacco use prevention education in the community.

Student disciplinary action: Whenever a student is found to be in violation of this policy, any tobacco product in their possession will be confiscated. The student's parent/guardian may claim the product at the school principal's office within five (5) school days after which the confiscated material will be discarded.

First offense – The principal will inform the student of the “Smoking Restrictions in Schools Act”. The student will receive a one day in-school suspension. A conference will be held with the principal (or designee) and the student's parent/guardian. The conference with the parent/guardian may be conducted over the telephone but must be held within three days of the violation. Student will be encouraged to enroll in a smoking cessation program.

Second offense – The student will receive a three (3) day suspension with a conference before the student can resume classes. If agreed in writing by the student, parent/guardian and principal, fifteen (15) hours of documented school or community service may be substituted for the three (3) day suspension. Student will be encouraged to enroll in a smoking cessation program.

Third offense – The student will receive a five (5) day suspension with a conference before the student can resume classes. If agreed in writing by the student, parent/guardian and principal, twenty-five (25) hours of documented community service may be substituted for the five (5) day suspension. Student will be encouraged to enroll in a smoking cessation program.

Fourth offense – The principal will recommend long-term suspension for the student.

Tobacco-Free Schools (continued)

Employee disciplinary action:

First offense – The principal will inform the employee of the “Smoking Restrictions in Schools Act”. The principal will give the employee a verbal warning and hold a conference. Employee will be encouraged to enroll in a smoking cessation program.

Second offense – The principal will provide written notification to the Superintendent with a copy to the employee’s personnel file. Employee will be encouraged to enroll in a smoking cessation program.

Third offense – The principal will provide written notification to the Superintendent with a copy to the employee’s personnel file. The principal will report the repeated violations to the bargaining unit representing the staff member. The employee will be subject to disciplinary action as delineated by the Superintendent with notice to the bargaining unit. If necessary, further action up to and including suspension and dismissal may occur. Employee will be encouraged to enroll in a smoking cessation program.

Program availability and attendance: Information relating to smoking cessation programs for all employees who smoke shall be posted in each building in the school district. Smoking cessation programs will be offered to students on a voluntary basis. Attendance or completion of a tobacco use cessation program shall not be mandatory for anyone or used as a penalty. Attendance or completion of a tobacco use cessation program is allowed as a voluntary substitute to suspension for possession or use of tobacco.

Reference:

Rhode Island General Law § 23-20.9-1 et seq. “Smoking Restrictions in Schools Act”
Rhode Island General Law § 23-20.6-1 et seq. Smoking in Public Places

(also V.C.1.k. in “Students” section)

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Narragansett School System
Narragansett, Rhode Island