

SECTION 6: RESPONDING TO CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1: WHY DOES THE POLICY HAVE TO COVER ALL SCHOOL PROPERTY, NOT JUST INDOORS?

- Students are aware of what happens on school property and the use of tobacco products anywhere on the school campus reinforces and normalizes tobacco use.
- Tobacco and e-cigarette use on school grounds and off-site school-sponsored events allows students to see role models, such as teachers, using products at school.
- Secondhand smoke, even outdoors, can trigger harmful physical reactions for people with asthma, allergies, and other health conditions.
- Tobacco-free schools prepare students for the increasing number of places with tobacco-free campuses, such as colleges, hospitals, workplaces, and public transportation.

QUESTION 2: WHY STAFF AND NOT JUST STUDENTS?

- Teachers and other staff are powerful role models for students.
- Youth who don't see tobacco use are less likely to think the behavior is acceptable and are less likely to start using tobacco products.

QUESTION 3: WHY ATHLETIC EVENTS?

- Tobacco use has been historically promoted by the tobacco industry through sporting events such as baseball, rodeo, and football. Refraining from tobacco use at school athletic events supports a healthy environment for everyone and helps de-normalize tobacco use.
- The majority of event attendees appreciate knowing they will not be exposed to secondhand smoke or vapor in the stands.

QUESTION 4: HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET PEOPLE TO COMPLY WITH THIS POLICY?

- Communication is key. Most people will comply with the policy if they know it exists. Keep reading this section of the toolkit for communication strategies and resources.
- Enforce the policy. When enforcement is consistent, people are much more likely to comply (see page 25 for compliance and enforcement resources).

QUESTION 5: WHY DOES IT HAVE TO INCLUDE VISITORS, CONTRACTORS, CONSTRUCTION CREWS, AND MAINTENANCE, AND HOW CAN WE GET THEM TO COMPLY?

- Allowing any service provider or visitor an exception to the policy creates a mixed message.
- Ensure compliance with the tobacco-free policy in the same way that other policies are enforced, such as those prohibiting the use of alcohol or firearms.
- Maintenance staff members are an important part of the school staff. Their support of student health and respect for school policies is essential for tobacco-free schools.

QUESTION 6: WHAT ABOUT NICOTINE-FREE E-CIGARETTES?

- E-cigarette possession and use is against school policy, regardless of whether the liquid used in the device contains nicotine.
- E-cigarettes model nicotine/tobacco use for youth, with or without nicotine.
- Staff cannot definitively determine whether an e-cigarette contains nicotine or possibly other chemicals (such as THC).
- The health risks associated with the use of e-cigarettes and the associated aerosol (aka vapor) have not yet proven to be safe; therefore e-cigarettes are not part of a truly tobacco-free school.