

# SECTION 7: COMMUNICATION

## TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH VISITORS

Even with signs, written materials, and event announcements, some school visitors may not realize that the school district has a tobacco-free school policy in place. This is why all school staff should be trained to communicate the policy one-on-one to the public. Gentle, positive, and clear messages will let violators know that the policy is in place and that it will be enforced. Knowing how to effectively communicate the policy will go a long way toward relieving stress that school staff may have regarding enforcement and will help to avoid the negative confrontations with parents, workers, and other school visitors.

## TIPS FOR VERBALLY COMMUNICATING THE POLICY

- **GENTLE REMINDERS:** Most of the time the person in violation of the policy is unaware that it is in place. This is particularly true if your school district recently strengthened its policy or enforcement of the policy. Politely and firmly let the violator know that the campus or school event – as well as the entire school district – is tobacco-free. Explain that tobacco includes all related products, including e-cigarettes.
- **A RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY:** Inform visitors of the reasons for the policy in a positive manner. Let them know that the school or school board enacted the policy to protect students, school staff, and visitors from secondhand smoke, to ensure a safe and positive learning and work environment for students and staff, and to model healthy and positive behaviors for students.
- **RANGE OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES:** Make sure that other communication strategies are in place to support verbal messages. For example, visitors to outdoor athletic events should see signs and information in event programs that communicate the policy, as well as hear announcements at the start of the game and during breaks to remind them of the policy.

## FREE 24/7 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Here are some ways we can help you communicate your policy – all free of charge:

- Bilingual tobacco-free school signs to promote your policy
- School-based events to raise awareness of your school's tobacco policy and conduct an assessment of its implementation – along with an analysis of what's working, where there's room for improvement, and custom recommendations for your school
- In-person presentations or training for school staff

Visit [247NewMexico.com](http://247NewMexico.com) or contact [info@247NewMexico.com](mailto:info@247NewMexico.com) to request free technical assistance for your school.