

DRUG AND ALCOHOL MISUSE AND HARM REDUCTION – UPDATE ON PROCEDURES

This circular will remain in effect unless rescinded or superseded by a subsequent version

EDUCATION OF STUDENTS IN THE PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL, MARIJUANA, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUG DEPENDENCY

While substance misuse prevention and harm reduction should be a part of a comprehensive health education program, certain curricula should be used to complement and supplement health education curriculum materials for grades K-12. Substance misuse prevention and harm reduction may also be integrated into reading/language arts, social studies, and science classes. The National Health Education Standards and performance expectations provide the functional health knowledge, beliefs, and skills necessary for students to adopt and maintain healthy behaviors, reduce risk behaviors associated with substance misuse, achieve health literacy, and enhance health outcomes.

The Boston Public Schools scope and sequence for Health Education recommends the following substance prevention curriculum, including:

- CATCH Curriculum Grades K-6: Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention (contact the Office of Health and Wellness for access);
- Essential Health Skills for Middle Schools & High Schools, G-W Publisher: Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention (contact the Office of Health and Wellness for access);
- Stanford University K-12, Tobacco Prevention Toolkit, which includes e-cigarette use of any type, including nicotine, cannabis/THC, and/or non-nicotine products;
- Stanford University Grades 6-12, Cannabis Awareness and Prevention Toolkit.

EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION

Even though a student may not possess or use substances *at school*, they may still have serious problems involving alcohol or drugs that demand the attention and assistance of school personnel. School nurses, school counselors and social workers have been trained in identification and the medical effects of substance use or addiction. The District will continue to provide in-service programs and workshops, to raise staff awareness, understand the protocols and procedures in place when dealing with a student who is suspected of using or has been identified as needing support regarding substance abuse.

School staff should be alert to those symptoms in students which may indicate problems with substance abuse and follow the protocols outlined in this circular.

These symptoms may include one or more of the following:
abrupt change in mood or attitude; sudden decline in attendance

or performance in school; sudden resistance to discipline; impaired relationships with family or friends; drowsiness or inattention to discussion or surroundings; weight loss; inattention to dress; unusual flare-ups of temper; stealing; heightened secrecy about actions or possessions; and association with new friends, especially with individuals known to be substance users.

SCREENING

Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) focuses on prevention, early detection, risk assessment, brief counseling and referral for assessment that can be utilized in the school setting. This tool is frequently used by the school nurse to assess the acuity of the problem and to develop next steps. Use of a validated screening tool will enable BPS school teams to detect risk for substance use related problems and brief intervention strategies will help to address these concerns at an early stage in adolescents.

In March 2016, the Massachusetts Legislature enacted an Act relative to Substance Use, Treatment, Education and Prevention (STEP Act), which outlines the requirements for public schools in the Commonwealth to engage in substance use screening and education. Legislation can be found at <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2016/Chapter52> (see Sections 15, 63, 64, 66).

BPS has implemented the use of the approved and validated CRAFFT-II screening tool that is approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Per legislation, SBIRT screening will be provided annually to students in grades 7

and 9. Parents/guardians must be notified about the screening prior to the start of the year and must be given the option to opt out in writing. Please Refer to [SBIRT in Schools](#). Staff conducting the SBIRT screening must complete a mandatory training through the MA Department of Public Health/BU Shield.

[SBIRT in Schools Resource Toolkit](#)

COUNSELING/REFERRAL

When it is suspected that a student is either using or abusing marijuana, alcohol or other drugs, or there are strong indications that such is the case, the student should be referred to the school nurse for a wellness check, the school social worker and the parent/guardian/caregiver shall be notified. The student may be referred to the Student Support Team(SST) and/or the school administrator for a referral to the voluntary Substance Use Program (SUP) at Succeed Boston. The Substance Use Program (SUP) is a voluntary program for students whose use of drugs or alcohol is of concern. The program provides education and counseling about the effects of drugs, alcohol, and vaping and provides students with alternative ways to deal with stress. Referral for outside services will be provided as needed. The student may participate in the voluntary intensive program for up to five days and upon discharge will be referred to appropriate outside services. Students may be referred to the Student Support Team (SST) by teachers or by any other school staff member. Students may self-refer because of a problem with substance abuse. The team should be prepared to assist the student by providing them with a source of early intervention in

the form of individual or group counseling by a provider agency which serves the school or is available in the community.

RE-ENTRY

Follow-up is a crucial phase of a student's recovery after returning from treatment for substance abuse. An after-care program should be devised by school staff in collaboration with the facility which has provided treatment services. The plan should include a review of the student's school program with parents, guidance counselor, and case manager; placements in an appropriate class schedule; and follow-up meetings.

REPORTING OF INCIDENTS RELATED TO DRUG/ALCOHOL USE

1. All School Department personnel are under obligation to report to the principal, head of school, or other designated administrator any and all incidents or suspected incidents involving the use, possession, or distribution of any drug, alcoholic beverage, while they are under the authority of the Boston School Department.
2. All School Department personnel are to understand that in the event they are subpoenaed to testify in a court of law or other proceeding, they are obligated to reveal any information pertaining to drug, alcohol, and weapons incidents, even if such information was given to them in confidence.

3. All School personnel are to understand that they are prohibited from "making deals" with students whereby they agree not to notify law enforcement agencies of known or suspected illegal activities involving drug, alcohol,
4. Each and every incident or suspected incident is to be reported immediately to the appropriate principal, head of school or designated administrator, in accordance with School Department policy and procedure.
5. Students are considered to be under the authority of the Boston School Department when they are on School Department property, on School Department buses, at or near school bus stops, while on their way to or from school, or participating in school sponsored activities conducted off school grounds.
6. Any student who is suspected of or who has admitted to being under the influence of drugs or alcohol must be immediately escorted to the office of the principal, head of school, or designated administrator.
7. Students involved in incidents described in items 1, 5, and 6 shall be considered in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 94C (Controlled Substances Act), Chapter 138 (Alcoholic Liquors), Chapter 119 (Protection and Care of Children and Proceedings against Them), and Chapter 169-10 (Dangerous Weapons, Unlawfully Carrying).

8. Use of drugs and/or alcohol is prohibited. Students deemed to be in violation of school rules after an investigation by the principal, head of school or designated administrator will be appropriately disciplined, but law enforcement and EMS assistance may be requested in cases where it is apparent that the student is engaging in disorderly or dangerous behavior.
9. In some cases, if a student is found to be in possession of drugs, alcohol or weapons or to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol is to be considered in violation of Massachusetts General Law. In such cases the principal, head of school, or designated administrator is obligated to summon the Boston Police Department, which will assume responsibility for criminal prosecution in the event that such prosecution is warranted.
10. In all such cases where students are found or suspected to be involved in any incident involving substance abuse, a safety specialist will take custody of any and all evidence including drugs and alcohol.
11. The Department of Safety Services will coordinate record-keeping functions.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES RELATING TO DRUG/ALCOHOL ABUSE

1. Sections 7.7 .1 of the Code of Conduct requires that sale, distribution, or possession with intent to sell or distribute of any prescribed or non-prescribed controlled substances in school, on school grounds, or while under school jurisdiction may result in expulsion.
2. Section 7.4.2 of the Code of Conduct allows for suspension, long term suspension, alternative program placement, or expulsion if a student is found in possession of any non-prescribed controlled substance, narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.

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