

SMOKING, TOBACCO USAGE AND POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA PROHIBITED

Cigarette smoking is considered the chief preventable cause of premature disease and death in the United States. Public schools have a responsibility to help prevent tobacco use for the sake of students' and staff members' health and the wellbeing of their families. Research conclusively proves that:

- Regular use of tobacco is ultimately harmful to every user's health, directly causing cancer, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, adverse pregnancy outcomes, and premature death;
- Second-hand smoke is a threat to the personal health of everyone, especially persons with asthma and other respiratory problems;
- Nicotine is a powerfully addictive substance;
- Tobacco use most often begins during childhood or adolescence;
- The younger a person starts using tobacco, the more likely he or she will be a heavy user as an adult; and
- Many young tobacco users will die an early, preventable death because of their decision to use tobacco.

Additional reasons why schools need to strongly discourage tobacco use are that:

- The purchase and possession of tobacco products is illegal for persons under age 18;
- Use of tobacco interferes with students' attendance and learning;
- Smoking is a fire safety issue for schools; and
- Use of spit tobacco is a health and sanitation issue.

Therefore, in accordance with Connecticut General Statute (CGS) 19a-342, the Ledyard Board of Education prohibits any student, District employee or other person from smoking or using tobacco in school buildings or other facilities controlled by the Board, on school property, in school vehicles, or at any school-related event at any time, regardless of whether or not students are present.

For the purpose of this policy, "use of tobacco" shall mean all uses of tobacco, including but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, snuff, blunts, bidis, pipes, chewing tobacco, or any other substance that contains tobacco or nicotine, and all other forms of smokeless tobacco, rolling papers and any other items containing or reasonably resembling tobacco or tobacco products.

Although possession and use of marijuana for certain medical conditions, consistent with Connecticut's Public Act 12-55, "*An Act Concerning the Palliative Use of Marijuana*," is no longer a crime in Connecticut, the possession and use of marijuana remains illegal under federal law. Consistent with federal law, including the *Controlled Substances Act* and the *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act*, the use and or possession of marijuana continues to be prohibited in school buildings, on school property, in school vehicles, or at any school-related event at any time, regardless of whether or not students are present.

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The advertising of smoking or tobacco-related products is prohibited on school grounds, in all school-sponsored publications, and at all school-sponsored events.

The Superintendent shall notify students, their parents and guardians, District employees, and visitors to school facilities and grounds of the requirements of this policy through inclusion in staff and student handbooks and school newsletters and via posted notices or signs at every school entrance and other appropriate locations.

“No Smoking” signs, meeting the requirements of CGS 19a-342, shall be posted at the entrances to all facilities under the control of the Board.

It is the responsibility of all students, District employees, and visitors to enforce this policy through verbal admonition. Any tobacco product found in the possession of a minor student shall be confiscated by staff and discarded. Students and employees found to be in violation of this policy also may be subject to disciplinary actions as delineated in other applicable school policies. Visitors to school facilities and grounds who fail to comply with this policy when verbally admonished by a District employee shall be asked to leave school grounds; if necessary, Ledyard Police shall be called to assist in removing those individuals.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes:

19a-342. Smoking prohibited. Exceptions. Signs required. Penalties.

53-198. Smoking in motor buses, railroad cars and school buses.

53-344. Sale or delivery of tobacco to minors. Purchase or misrepresentation of age to purchase tobacco or possession of tobacco in public place by persons under eighteen. Transaction scans. Affirmative defense.

Public Law 107-110, the *“No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,”* Section 4303, *“Nonsmoking Policy for Children’s Services”*

Title 20, United States Code:

Sections 4001-4206, *“Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act”*

Sections 7181-7184, *“The Pro-Children Act of 2001”*

Title 21, United States Code, Sections 801-889, *“Controlled Substances Act”*

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