

SECTION 600 – Students

POLICY 634: BANNED SUBSTANCES

BACKGROUND

The possession, selling, distribution, offering or consumption of banned substances (alcohol, narcotics, cannabis, tobacco, nicotine and any other drug not prescribed to the holder) in the school setting has a negative effect on the individual user and the school learning environment.

POLICY

MHPSD is committed to promoting the health and well-being of all students; creating a learning environment where all students feel safe and cared for. The Board believes that the possession and/or use of banned substances/paraphernalia on school grounds, in school buildings and facilities, on school property or at school-related or school-sponsored events is a health, safety, and environmental hazard for students, employees, visitors, and school facilities. The Board acknowledges that employees and visitors serve as role models for students. The Board recognizes that it has an obligation to promote positive role models in schools and to promote a healthy learning and working environment, free from substance use for the students, employees, and visitors on the school campus.

NOTE

For direction regarding student conduct as it relates to all aspects of behavior see policy 600: Student Roles and Responsibilities-Student Conduct, and Policy 632 School Discipline.

GUIDELINES

1. Suspected criminal offences must be reported to police authorities for further investigation.
2. Referrals to support agencies will be made available to students and staff.

Banned Substance Use Prohibited

No student, staff member or school visitor is permitted to use any banned substance at any time, including non-school hours (24/7):

- in any building, facility, or vehicle owned, leased, rented or chartered by the Medicine Hat Public School Division;

- on any school grounds and property – including athletic fields and parking lots – owned leased, rented or chartered by Medicine Hat Public School Division; or
- at any school-sponsored or school-related event on-campus or off-campus.

In addition, Medicine Hat Public School Division employees, school volunteers, contractors or other persons performing services on behalf of Medicine Hat Public School Division also are prohibited from using banned substances at any time while on duty and in the presence of students, either on or off school grounds.

Further, no student shall be permitted to possess a banned substance while in any school building; while on school grounds or property; or at any school-sponsored or school-related event, or at any other time that students are under the authority of school personnel.

Tobacco products may be included in instructional or research activities in public school buildings, if the activity is conducted or supervised by the faculty member overseeing the instruction or research project, and the activity does not include smoking, chewing, or otherwise ingesting the tobacco product.

With the prior approval of the school principal, the use of traditional tobacco products and smoking materials may be permitted as part of religious/ceremonial events.

With the exception of school sites, adult employees and visitors may consume alcohol on Medicine Hat Public School Division property or property leased or chartered by the Division and so long as no students are present, restraint is exercised and prior approval for the event has been received from the Superintendent or designate.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definition applies to the term “banned substance”: “Banned Substance” means any substance accepted by the Board, due to statute or scientific evidence, that, if possessed or consumed, may have a negative impact on the welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environment.

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions each constitute a “banned substance”:

1. “Alcohol” means any drink that contains any level of alcohol.
2. “Drugs” means all substances people take to change the way they feel, think or behave. This, for the purposes of this policy, encompasses legal drugs held by an individual to whom they were not prescribed, over the counter drugs held in quantities or combinations intended to produce impairment, volatile (sniffable) substances and all illegal drugs.
3. “Cannabis” means any medium for the delivery of THC that has not been prescribed to the holder. This includes, but is not limited to, cannabis cigarettes, candies and chewables, e-cigarette juice, oils and all other derivatives.
4. “Electronic Smoking Device” means any electronic device, the use of which may resemble smoking, which can be used to deliver an inhaled dose of nicotine or other substances to the user. “Electronic Smoking Device” includes any such electronic smoking device, whether



manufactured, distributed, marketed, or sold as an electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe, electronic hookah, vape pen or any other product name or descriptor. Theatrical props/simulated cigarettes are permitted under teacher/director supervision.

5. "Smoke or Smoking" means inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, or pipe, or any other lighted or heated tobacco or plant product intended for inhalation, including hookahs and marijuana, whether natural or synthetic, in any manner or in any form. "Smoking" also includes the use of an electronic smoking device which creates an aerosol or vapor, in any manner or in any form.
6. "Tobacco Product" means:
 - a) Any product containing, made, or derived from tobacco or nicotine that is intended for human consumption, whether smoked, heated, chewed, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled, snorted, sniffed, or ingested by any other means, including, but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco, snuff;
 - b) "tobacco product" includes any component, part, or accessory of a tobacco product.
7. "Tobacco use" means smoking, chewing, dipping, or any other use of tobacco products, including electronic smoking devices.

Signage

Signs will be posted in a manner and location that adequately notify students, staff and visitors about the tobacco-free school policy.

Enforcement for Students

Consequences for students engaging in prohibited behaviour will be provided in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct as prescribed by Medicine Hat Public School Division Administrative Procedure 612 P 001. Consequences shall include the seizure of banned substances and associated paraphernalia and potential suspension up to, and including, expulsion. Items will not be returned to students and will be disposed of as necessary.

Students who violate Medicine Hat Public School Division's banned substance policy will be referred to the guidance counselor, addictions worker, or Alberta Health Services for all offenses to access health information, counseling and referral. Parents/guardians will be notified of all violations and actions taken by the school.

Enforcement for Staff and Visitors

Consequences for employees who violate the banned substance policy will be in accordance with Medicine Hat Public School Division policy 540; Employee Alcohol and Drug Use and may include verbal warning, written reprimand, or termination.



Visitors using banned substances will be asked to refrain while on school property or leave the premises. Law enforcement officers may be contacted to escort the person off the premises should they fail to comply or if they are thought to be in possession of an illegal substance.

Opportunities for Cessation

The administration will consult with Alberta Health Services and other appropriate health organizations to provide students and employees with information regarding intervention identification, assessment and referral to support systems, programs and services. They will be encouraged to abstain from the use of banned substances.

Prevention Education

The administration will consult with Alberta Health Services and Division teachers to identify and provide addictions prevention and mental health promotion programming that follow the guidance from the most current research and pertinent legislation. Such programs should be developed with a preventative focus; intended not only to inform students about the hazards of substance use but also to build best practices in prevention that are based on accurate information, are comprehensive and of sufficient duration. Programs are to be delivered at a time when the content is relevant to students and anticipates important life transitions. They are to be focused on the strengths and skills of people and designed to teach and give opportunities for practicing life skills while promoting a culture of community that builds a welcoming, caring, safe and respectful school environment that fosters resiliency and builds awareness of supports and services.

Procedures for Implementation

The administration will develop a plan for communicating the policy that may include information in student and employee handbooks, announcements at school-sponsored or school-related events, and appropriate signage in buildings and around the school campus.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

[634 P 001: Banned Substances Use and or Possession](#)

[634 E 001: Prevention Strategies for Teachers](#)

[634 E 002: Identifying Students at Risk](#)

Approved: September 7, 2004

Revised: November 26, 2019

