
WALDEN SCHOOL BOARD POLICY
SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Prepared for 1st reading: 9/28/98 Original Policy Warned: 10/16/98 Adopted: 10/26/98

Copies to: ___ Principal: ___ School Library: ___ Board Members: ___ CCSU: ___ Town Clerk: ___ Town Library: ___

The board assumes its responsibility to assure an atmosphere conducive to learning and the development of individual responsibility, while protecting the individual rights of all students.

It is believed that the ingestion of drugs, tobacco, or alcohol interferes with a student's ability to perform physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially, and is damaging to that person's health and well-being, and therefore is an infringement upon the rights of others to learn in a substance free environment. Therefore, the possession of and/or the ingestion of such substances or presence of devices of any kind associated with drug, tobacco, or alcohol usage is deemed contrary to school district philosophy, and is hereby prohibited from the school premises at all times.

The Walden School District, herein referred to as the School District, believes that chemical abuse and dependency are treatable health problems and that they are primarily the responsibility of the home and community. The school shares in this responsibility and sees its role in the areas of prevention (education), intervention (identification and referral) and support for these students attempting to change patterns that interfere with overall school performance. To effect these commitments, the school administration shall give proper attention to planning and conducting learning activities at all grade levels for all students that emphasize an understanding of drugs and alcohol and their effect on people. The School District will follow a course of action consistent with the laws of the State of Vermont in addressing persons suspected of actual violations of such laws on school premises or at school sponsored functions.

School personnel, support services from within and without the district and, most importantly, the family will work in a coordinated manner to establish prevention and treatment opportunities relative to substance abuse problems.

All plans and procedures will comply with Title 16, VSA, Section 1162 and appropriate due process will be made available in the Office of the Superintendent for public inspection.

ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES**I. COOPERATIVE AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

The following programs shall be established for the purpose of promoting sustained interaction between the school district, home, and appropriate community resources for prevention, intervention and/or treatment of alcohol and drug abuse in compliance with existing laws and regulations of the State and to provide timely and comprehensive drug education for all school personnel, students, and parents. Specifically:

- A. **Cooperative Programs:** School district personnel will provide students with educational and counseling services and work in cooperation with appropriate community agencies. School administrators will maintain a liaison with the Vermont State Police Department to ensure that current law enforcement requirements are followed and for the purpose of obtaining assistance in determining appropriate and effective courses of action to be taken when alcohol or drug incidences occur within the school environment.
- B. **Educational Programs:** These include three types of educational programs.
 - 1. **School Personnel:** Establish and maintain an on-going in service substances abuse education program for all school personnel.
 - 2. **Students:** Establish and maintain a realistic and appropriate substance abuse education program for students grades K through 12 in compliance with guidelines established by the State of Vermont.
 - 3. **Parents:** Parental educational programs shall be implemented in response to specific requests from parents submitted in writing to the principal or his/her designee or other appropriate school personnel.

II. VIOLATION, REPORTING, AND NOTIFICATION

A. Definition of Violation of Policy: A violation of this Policy is defined as any drug, alcohol, or tobacco related incident which occurs on school premises, on school buses, or at school sponsored functions, whether held on school premises or not. This includes, but is not limited to, the sale, the purchase, use, and possession of a substance; being under the influence of a substance; dealing in alcohol or other drugs; and the possession of devices specifically or reasonably associated with alcohol, tobacco, or drug use. The refusal of a student to “cooperate fully” with a search or with any socially rehabilitative program imposed, will constitute a violation of this policy. Any other specific substances abuse related action(s) that, in the best judgment of school personnel who are familiar with the student=s normal behavior, impairs the normal functioning of a student, will also constitute a violation of this policy. Organizations or individuals who have rented or secured school system permission to use school facilities for non-school sponsored activities shall be bound by this same policy. Appropriate use of prescription and non-prescription medications is not a violation

B. Procedures for Reporting Substance Abuse. All school district personnel are expected to discuss immediately, with the student involved, any suspected or actual policy violations. Such a discussion, if conducted in a manner consistent with Appendix B hereof, shall be deemed to be in conformance with the requirements of this section. In addition, the incident shall be reported to the Building Principal or his/ her designee.

Chaperones shall report a suspected or actual substance abuse violation to the Building Principal or his/her designee. If the Building Principal or his/her designee is not immediately available, then notification of the alleged incident shall be made directly to other appropriate school personnel. It will then be the responsibility of that individual to inform the Building Principal or his/her designee of the alleged incident as soon as possible thereafter.

All verbal reports shall be followed by a written report of the incident to the Building Principal (before the close of the school day, or as soon as reasonably possible). The Building Principal or his /her designee will investigate appropriate action. See Appendix A.

C. Notification and Emergency Response

1. In all reported instances of actual Policy violation the parents or legal guardian will be notified as soon after the incident as possible and will be asked to transport the student home. Under no circumstances will the student be sent home without an escort, or be allowed to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In the event that an appropriate escort cannot be found to transport the student, the Building Principal may call the Vermont State Police or other appropriate law enforcement agency to transport that student home.
2. If in the opinion of the Building Principal, his/her designee or any other responsible staff member, an emergency situation exists; an area rescue squad and/or the Vermont State Police Department will be called upon for their services. Any expenses incurred by this action will be borne by the parents or legal guardian of the student. The School Nurse and Guidance Counselor will serve in a support capacity in such instances. The parent or legal guardian will be notified prior to such action when possible and in all other instances as soon as possible thereafter.
3. Police Notification: The Building Principal or his /her designee, at his or her discretion, may notify the Vermont State Police Department in any instance of suspected or actual alcohol or drug use, possession, or distribution.

D. Searches: When the administration has sufficient information as a result of observation or referral to suspect that a probable violation of the Substance Abuse Policy has occurred, the student(s) will be expected to cooperate fully. This may include emptying pockets, pocketbooks, and/ or backpacks. In such situations, the administration also reserves the right to inspect students= lockers and cars parked on school premises. The Building Principal reserves the right to contact the Vermont State Police Department in the event the student fails to cooperate.

III. CONSEQUENCES OF A VIOLATION OF THE POLICY

The consequences for the student (s) for a violation of the Policy of the District shall be twofold, DISCIPLINARY and SOCIALLY REHABILITATIVE.

A plan that addresses a discipline and rehabilitative response shall be developed by the Building Principal, his/ her designee, and the Support and Referral Team in conference with other appropriate school personal.

Parents, legal guardians, and the student will be notified of the time and place for a conference to develop a discipline and rehabilitation plan for the student.

Any disciplinary response shall be imposed in accordance with the School District=s Policy on due process. Any disciplinary response shall be limited to the following:

A. Disciplinary Action

1. Alcohol and Drugs.

FIRST VIOLATION: The first violation of the Policy shall involve suspension from school for no longer than ten school days and required participation in a socially rehabilitative program conducted under Section B hereof, together with any additional suspension resulting from failure to comply with any socially rehabilitative program imposed.

SECOND VIOLATION: A second violation of the Policy within a given school year shall result in an automatic ten (10) day suspension and required participation in a socially rehabilitative program conducted under Section B hereof , together with any additional suspension resulting from failure to comply with any socially rehabilitative program imposed.

THIRD VIOLATION: In the event that a third violation of the policy occurs within a given school year, a recommendation will be made to the Superintendent for expulsion.

2. Supplying and Selling. Notwithstanding any of the foregoing, students found to be supplying or selling drugs and/or alcohol will be recommended to the Superintendent for immediate expulsion.

3. Tobacco Violations. Notwithstanding any of the foregoing, students found to be in obvious possession of or using any tobacco products on school premises or at school sponsored functions will be in violation of this Policy and subject to the following disciplinary responses:

FIRST VIOLATION: Confiscation of the product and an in-house suspension not to exceed five (5) days.

SECOND VIOLATION: A second violation of the Policy within a given school year shall result in confiscation of the product and no less than five (5) days and a maximum of ten (10) days suspension and required participation in a socially rehabilitative program conducted under Section B hereof, together with any additional suspension resulting from failure to comply with any socially rehabilitative program imposed.

THIRD VIOLATION: In the event that a third violation of the Policy occurs within a given school year, a recommendation for expulsion will be made to the Superintendent.

B. Socially Rehabilitative Action for Policy Violations

The socially rehabilitative action shall involve a minimum of four sessions with a counselor in either individual or group sessions. The counseling sessions may be provided by a community agency or by private provider with the approval of the school Support and Referral Team. Written certification a of a plan for these counseling sessions must be presented to the school before the student may re-enter school following suspension. This requirement may be modified at the discretion of the Support and Referral Team.

Following the four sessions, an evaluation shall be made to determine if further assessment or counseling is warranted.

SUSTAINED TREATMENT: In some instances a student may be required to seek sustained professional guidance and treatment as a condition of continued enrollment in school. Refusal to accept such professional service may result in suspension until a conference is held and the parent(s) or legal guardian and the Building Principal, in consultation with the Support and Referral Team and the student=s guidance counselor, develop a satisfactory course of further action. In all cases parental or legal guardian permission and consent of the student to receive sustained treatment shall be obtained when an outside professional or agency is to be involved in the delivery of sustained services.

REMOVAL FROM SCHOOL: Students whose problems, as determined by school personnel, constitute a clear and present danger to their own welfare and/or others may be removed from school via the District=s due process procedure. School personnel may continue to cooperate in a manner deemed to be in the best interest of the student.

IV. SOCIALLY REHABILITATIVE ACTION FOR STUDENTS IN DISTRESS - NON-VIOLATION

In some instances, school personnel may observe over a period of time changes in the academic, social, or personal behavior of the student that might be related to alcohol or drug abuse even though the student has not committed any known violation against the District Policy. Specific observable indicators of such possible alcohol and drug abuse include but are not limited to the following:

- < drop in class performance
- < frequent tardiness or absences
- < inappropriate behavior in or out of class
- < change in family or peer relations
- < bravado, relating to alcohol and drug use
(for example, Monday morning bragging)

THESE BEHAVIORS ARE NOT VIOLATIONS BUT RATHER EARLY INDICATORS OF A POSSIBLE PROBLEM. School personnel are encouraged to observe student behavior which may signal a need for assessment by the Support and Referral Team. Staff members are **NOT ASKED TO LABEL OR DIAGNOSE STUDENT BEHAVIOR** but rather to become aware and sensitive to problematic student behavior related to possible substance abuse, and to address such behavior with the student, asking for behavioral change. Appendix B presents some statements teachers might employ to explore **POTENTIAL** abuse with a student. Appendix C is a problem behavior checklist that presents many known behavior indicators of such potential abuse which may assist school personnel in making a referral to the Support and Referral Team. When the problematic behavior continues after a staff member=s attempt to intervene through personal confrontation, the need for a referral is indicated (Use Appendix C).

Referral records for each student will be kept with the student=s Health Record in the Nurse=s Office and will be disposed of in accordance with School District=s Records Policy.

V. SECONDARY SCHOOL REFERRALS

At the high school level these referrals will be made to a core referral group, the Support and Referral Team, made up of administrator(s), a counselor, school nurse, and teacher(s). this group will meet on a regular basis to discuss students whose behavior concerns teachers, other staff members, parents, and/or other students. **THESE BEHAVIOR CONCERNS NEED NOT BE DRUG-RELATED TO WARRANT A REFERRAL.** The usual procedure of this group will be to evaluate student behavior and make recommendations aimed at assisting the student to resolve problems and to improve behavior. Parents or guardians will be notified of their son=s or daughter=s behavior and asked to assist in the problem resolution unless such notification is deemed not in the student=s best interest by the appropriate school personnel.

VI. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REFERRALS

Referrals at the elementary level may be made to the Principal and/or the School Nurse.

VII. SELF-REFERRAL OF POTENTIAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE

When a student recognizes that he/she has a problem with chemical use and chooses to do something about this problem, the School District will cooperate as fully as possible with this student. A student who is self-referred to a guidance counselor or other staff member will receive assistance with this problem.

The school will create a climate and provide resources through which a student may seek and receive education, referral and/or counseling related to the problem. This will be provided without reprisal provided that the following conditions are met:

1. There is no immediate or apparent threat of harm to self or others.
2. The student is self-referred, not "caught" in violation of school policy.
3. A commitment is made to abstain from further chemical use and to cooperate with a counseling plan.

VIII. PRESCRIPTION AND NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Prescription and non-prescription drug use on school premises will conform to the guidelines of the school District=s medication policy and/or procedure.

Legal Reference(s):

16 V.S.A. §909
16 V.S.A. §1165
18 V.S.A. §4226
Vt. State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices §4200
Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 (P.L. 101-226)

Cross Reference:

Student Conduct and Discipline (F1)
Search and Seizure (F4)
Interrogations or Searches of Students by Law Enforcement
Officers or Other Non-School Personnel (F5)

APPENDIX A

ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE POLICY VIOLATION

Referring Staff Member(s): _____

Student=s(s=) Name(s): _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Description of incident:

Signature of Referring Person: _____

ADMINISTRATIVE FOLLOW-UP:

Feedback to referring staff member: _____ Date: _____

Feedback to Support and Referral Team: _____ Date: _____

Feedback due within five (5) school days of the referral date. Signed: _____
Principal

COUNSELOR=S REPORT/SUPPORT AND REFERRAL TEAM REPORT:

1) All sessions were completed: _____ NO _____ YES Date Completed: _____

2) If no, what were the consequences?

3) Were follow-up recommendations made?

Comments:

Counselor=s Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B

Helpful tips for school personnel:

You are not being asked to label or diagnose. You ARE being asked not to look the other way when you see a school rule violation. Your observations may signal a need for assessment. When you observe behavior that concerns you, confront the student privately about this behavior using the following guidelines:

1. Express concern for him/her and consequences of the behavior.
2. Identify specific, observable behaviors.
3. Ask for a behavior change.
4. Document your observation.

If the disturbing behavior continues:

1. Record your further observations.
2. Confront the student and inform him/her of your intention to make a referral.
3. Make the referral using Appendix C of the policy.

SAMPLE FORMAT FOR CONFRONTING

STEP I: AI=m concerning about you because I=ve noticed (specific behaviors). I care about you and I need to know that your behavior will change. The changes I=m looking for are (specific behaviors).@

If change occurs, provide some positive feedback and STOP right there.
If the problem behavior continues, go on to Step II.

STEP II: AI=m really concerned because I see you are continuing to (specific behavior). I think that it is important enough that I plan to talk to your counselor (Building Principal or his designee). I=m going to continue to observe your behavior and keep a record of it because I think you=re hurting yourself.@

Make a referral using Appendix C.

APPENDIX C

FOCUS REFERRAL FORM

Student: _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____ Person making the referral: _____

Please check the appropriate responses

A. GRADES

- _____ Lower grades/lower achievement
- _____ Academic failure
- _____ Always behind in class
- _____ Lack of motivation - apathy

B. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- _____ Absenteeism
- _____ Tardy
- _____ On absence list, but in school
- _____ Suspension
- _____ Frequent schedule changes
- _____ Frequent nurse or counselor visits

C. EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- _____ Loss of eligibility
- _____ Increasing non-involvement
- _____ Dropped out

D. PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- _____ Staggering or stumbling
- _____ Smelling of alcohol or pot
- _____ Vomiting
- _____ Glassy, bloodshot eyes
- _____ Coordination
- _____ Slurred speech
- _____ Bad hygiene
- _____ Frequent need to leave room
- _____ Sleeping in class
- _____ Physical complaints
- _____ Physical injuries
- _____ Physical appearance

E. BEHAVIOR-CRIMINAL LEGAL

- _____ Selling drugs, exchanges of money
- _____ Possession of drugs/paraphernalia
- _____ Involvement in thefts and assaults
- _____ Vandalism
- _____ Carrying weapons
- _____ Smoking

BEHAVIOR - DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

- _____ Defiance of rules-constant discipline
- _____ Irresponsibility, blaming, denying
- _____ Fighting
- _____ Cheating
- _____ Throwing objects
- _____ Defiant littering
- _____ Sudden outbursts-verbal abuse
- _____ Elaborate excuses
- _____ Obscene language, gesture
- _____ Lying
- _____ Dramatic attention getting
- _____ Crying
- _____ Constantly in wrong area
- _____ Extreme negativism
- _____ Hyperactivity, nervousness

BEHAVIOR - ATYPICAL BEHAVIOR

- _____ Sitting in parking lot
- _____ Talks freely about drug use
- _____ Avoidance of contact with others
(Student won't go to office)
- _____ Erratic behavior change
as viewed on day to day basis
- _____ Change of friends - usually negative
- _____ Sudden popularity
- _____ Constant adult contact