

SCHOOL SUBSTANCE USE POLICY



*A Comprehensive Guide for School
Substance Use Policy Development*



Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction.....	2
School Substance Use Policy Checklist.....	3
1. Philosophy Statement/Definitions.....	5
2. Community Involvement.....	5
3. Communication.....	6
4. Prevention/Education.....	8
5. Prohibitions.....	9
6. Enforcement.....	10
7. Expectations and Accountability.....	11
8. Intervention and Treatment.....	14
9. Review/Revision.....	15
Appendix A: Resources.....	20
Appendix B: Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Substance Use.....	22
Appendix C: School Substance Use Policy Action Plan.....	23
Appendix D: Policy Example.....	25
Appendix E: Violation Response Plan Example.....	31

Introduction

According to the 2019 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) students who report feeling like their school cares about kids and encourages them are less likely to use alcohol, cannabis, and prescription drugs.

Effective substance use policies are an essential part of creating a healthy, safe school environment for students, staff, and communities. It is recommended that schools review and revise their policies at least once every two years. The information in this guide is based on current research and best practice strategies for preventing and addressing substance use among young people. It is a tool to assist schools in partnering with students, staff, families, and community members in developing a substance use policy that meets local needs.

This guide is for policies related to alcohol, cannabis, and other substance use. For recommendations regarding school tobacco-free policies, please refer to *Tobacco-Free School TOOLKIT*, on the MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence website (see Appendix A) or visit <https://breatheasymaine.org/policy-implementation/education> for more information.

This guide was revised by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention in collaboration with the Maine Department of Education, and other state and local partners.

School Substance Use Policy Checklist

The checklist below identifies elements of a comprehensive substance use policy that are considered evidence-based or best practice. This tool will help school staff determine if there are aspects of their school's substance use policy that may be missing or need to be modified. Consider each component when reviewing your current school substance use policy and how effective the policy is at addressing the elements listed below.

KEY COMPONENTS	
1. PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT/DEFINITIONS	
Our school administrative unit/district has a substance use policy that:	
• States a philosophy about substance use and misuse	
• States a rationale and the goals it aims to accomplish	
• Defines the population to which it applies	
• Has clearly written text that is easily understood by diverse audiences	
• Has clearly defined terms	
2. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	
The policy was developed with the support and involvement of the following stakeholders:	
• School administrators	
• School board and/or school policy committee	
• Teachers and staff	
• Students	
• Parents, guardians, and families	
• Community members	
• Law enforcement	
• Prevention, intervention, and treatment professionals	
3. COMMUNICATION	
There are the following provisions for communication of the policy:	
• A clear strategy for dissemination of the policy	
• A process to address community questions and concerns while promoting the purpose and value of the policy	
4. PREVENTION/EDUCATION	
There are the following prevention components in the policy:	
• Health Education curriculum includes evidence-based substance use prevention curriculum programs	
• A plan to create, promote and maintain a healthy, positive school climate that includes:	
○ Mission and vision statements for the school administrative unit/district that address health, safety, and a positive school climate	
○ Acceptable behaviors for students and adults that are clearly stated	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A process for students and adults that routinely evaluates health, safety, and school climate 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education for staff on impairment detection, overdose prevention and response, and understanding basic substance use trends 	
5. PROHIBITIONS	
The policy prohibits substances and behaviors according to standards that are agreed upon by the community, and are:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with state and local laws 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective of community values 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on practices that are evidence-based and effective 	
6. ENFORCEMENT	
There are the following consistent enforcement strategies in the policy:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear system for monitoring, identifying, and reporting violations 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and support for those expected to enforce the policy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisions for due process 	
7. EXPECTATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY	
Consequences are clearly stated and are reflective of community values and are:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive of alcohol and other substance use by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students ▪ Staff and other adults 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on evidence-based and best practices 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective of community values and are supported by the community 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-appropriate 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate to the situation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly aligned to violations 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive of clearly defined criteria that can increase or reduce the consequences 	
8. INTERVENTION AND TREATMENT	
There are provisions for interventions in the policy, including:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and screening for substance use treatment needs 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A system to connect students with necessary services and programs (either in school or by referral), which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student support teams such as Student Assistance Teams ▪ Preventative interventions for youth who are not in need of treatment ▪ Counseling for youth who need treatment 	
The policy has referral and treatment protocols, including:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance use screenings and assessments provided by trained staff 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment services either in school or by referral 	
9. REVIEW/REVISION	
There are procedures to periodically review and revise the policy, including a:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetable for periodic review and revision 	

• Procedure to convene a policy committee	
• Process to evaluate, review, and revise the policy	

1. Philosophy Statement/Definitions

KEY PRINCIPLE: *Our school is committed to the safety and well-being of our students, staff, and families.*

A strong philosophy statement demonstrates your school's commitment to promote a healthy and safe environment for your students, staff, and community members. It establishes a “big-picture” approach that defines the policy as a positive, preventive action rather than just a disciplinary tool. It also defines and distinguishes all terms used in the policy, including prohibited substances and activities.

A comprehensive school substance use policy should include:

- ☐ A clear purpose statement about the need to prevent and address substance use and misuse as part of creating a healthy, safe, and positive school climate that includes why the policy is being developed.
- ☐ Goals the policy aims to accomplish.
- ☐ The population(s) to which it applies.
 - The policy addresses students, staff, and visitors.
- ☐ Clearly written text that will be easily understood by diverse audiences.
- ☐ Clearly defined and distinguished terms.
- ☐ A plan that includes restorative practices.

2. Community Involvement

KEY PRINCIPLE: *The policy should reflect the input and involvement of diverse stakeholders.*

School substance use policies are most effective when they reflect the values and commitments of all members of the school community. To create this “grass-roots” support, the process of policy development should include a wide representation of interested parties, including students, families, staff, and community members. School policies will have the most impact if they are aligned with community efforts to prevent or

address youth and adult substance use. Community prevention or treatment professionals are valuable resources for advice and expertise.

In creating or revising school policy, broad community participation on a Substance Use Policy Committee is encouraged. School District Policy Committees are typically standing sub-committees of the School Board that meet regularly during the school year. These committees work to ensure that the school's policies are consistent and current with all state and federal laws. They also may propose new or amended policies that will be considered by the entire school board. Ensure that Policy Committee meetings are accessible to all members of the school community by scheduling them at times and locations that are convenient to all members, including those who work outside of the school.

Where possible, a Substance Use Policy Committee should include:

- ☐ Students— recruit students that represent various identities, cultures, interests, peer groups, etc.
- ☐ Parents/guardians and family members—include parents/guardians who are already engaged with the school such as members of a PTO or booster group, but also reach out to families who may have experience with substance use and recovery.
 - Ensure that the policy is culturally responsive and co-constructed with community members
- ☐ School administrators, school board members and staff - including teachers, school counselors, social workers, nurses, coaches/athletic directors, and/or co-curricular advisors.
- ☐ Law enforcement—including local police department or sheriff's office, school resource officers (SROs), juvenile community corrections officers (JCCOs).
- ☐ Substance use prevention and treatment specialists.

3. Communication

KEY PRINCIPLE: *All members of the school community should be informed about the school substance use policy and understand what the policy means for them.*

Community knowledge and understanding are critical aspects of creating a successful and effective school substance use policy. Research shows that a clear understanding of the consequences of drug and alcohol use discourages young people from engaging in those

behaviors. The Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) consistently indicates that high school students who believe they would be caught by the police or their parents/guardians are less likely to use substances than their peers. As part of the process, create a clear, written plan that informs all community members of the new or revised policy and explains the reasoning behind it. In promoting the new or revised school policy, explain why it is a positive change for the school and community.

Recommendations for communicating about the policy:

- ☐ Provide opportunities for all community members to learn about the policy by distributing it widely:
 - Display the policy on school and town bulletin boards and websites, and include in local newsletters.
 - Partner with local media to promote the new or revised school policy.
- ☐ Include a copy of the policy in your faculty and student handbook, include it as a part of new employee orientation, and in co-curricular policy handbooks. Engage directly with members of the school community:
 - Review the policy with all staff at the beginning of each school year, and with all students during orientation.
 - Ensure that all parents/guardians receive the policy annually and require that parents/guardians and students sign an agreement stating they have reviewed it.
 - Convene a community forum, or designate time during a town meeting to present the policy to the public.
- ☐ Ensure that co-curricular policies – specific policies that apply to athletics, clubs, or school events – clearly identify and address consequences of substance use:
 - Disseminate the policy to coaches and advisors before the season begins and ensure that they address the policy with the participating students and parents/guardians, verbally, as well as in written form.
 - If participants and parents/guardians are signing a document endorsing their understanding of specific club or team policies, make sure that expectations and consequences are clearly stated and in alignment with the school substance use policy.
 - Provide all participants and parents/guardians with a written or digital copy of both the specific team/club policy and the school substance use policy.
 - Announce the policy at school functions, such as athletic events, orientations, concerts and plays as a reminder to attendees.

4. Prevention/Education

KEY PRINCIPLE: *The primary goal of a substance use policy is to prevent substance use and keep young people healthy and successful.*

Research shows, that individuals who begin using substances as teenagers, are more likely to struggle with substance use dependence as adults. Efforts to prevent alcohol and other substance use among young people are at the core of a school substance use policy. A policy that is well-communicated and enforced consistently and fairly, is the key to creating a healthy, safe, and positive school climate. Students who feel safe at school are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs.

Using an evidence-based curriculum is an important element of a school's substance use prevention efforts. There are many successful prevention programs that have been studied and evaluated for use with students in a classroom setting. For a full list of evidence-based prevention programs that have been reviewed and approved by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), please visit:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/ebp-resource-center>. Substance use and misuse curriculum programs should be part of the school district's health education curriculum and aligned to the Maine Learning Results. For information visit the Maine DOE Health Education website: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/content/healthphysed/standards>.

Steps you can take to create a school climate that supports students in staying drug and alcohol free:

- ☐ Take advantage of opportunities to reinforce that your school is drug and alcohol free. Create a brief, clear statement that is included in printed materials like event programs or newsletters, websites, and shared through social media. Consider making it a routine announcement at events hosted by the school community such as athletic events.
- ☐ Ask staff to be role-models for your school's values about substance use. Suggest that they try to be conscious of the language they use or the stories they tell in front of students so as not to unintentionally send the wrong message.
- ☐ Be consistent in how the substance use policy is enforced, instilling confidence that all students will be treated fairly.
- ☐ Train staff on how to respond to students who are struggling with substance use or who may come from families where substance use is a concern. Make sure that all students know where they can go to get help for themselves or their friends.

- ☐ Reward and recognize positive behaviors and actions.

5. Prohibitions

KEY PRINCIPLE: *The school policy prohibits substances and behaviors according to standards that are agreed upon by the community stakeholders.*

This section of the policy explains the “who, what, where, when, and how” of prohibited substances and actions. It is essential to be clear and specific in outlining prohibited substances, behaviors, and conduct. Vague or ambiguous policies are difficult to enforce. It is recommended that local law enforcement engage in the policy work to ensure that definitions in the policy are consistent with the definitions used in laws and statutes.

For maximum effectiveness, ensure that the school policy states:

- ☐ To whom the policy applies:
 - Create a clear policy to be followed by students, staff, and visitors.
- ☐ Where the policy applies:
 - School buildings, grounds, including vehicles parked on school property.
 - School-sponsored off-campus events, including athletic events and field trips.
 - If included in the policy, clearly define prohibitions for non-school events.
- ☐ Which substances are prohibited, and what determines use and/or possession (such as the presence of a substance in a backpack, locker, or car on school property).
- ☐ What are expectations for behavior:
 - Clothing or accessories advertising and/or promoting alcohol or other substances will be prohibited.
 - Alcohol and/or drugs are not allowed on school grounds.
- ☐ How the policy is consistent with state and local laws.
- ☐ The distinction between prescribed medications and misused medications.

Special considerations for co-curricular policies:

- ☐ Duration – will it apply year-round, only during the athletic season, or only during the school year?
- ☐ Where does the policy apply?
 - School-sponsored off-campus events, including athletic events and field trips.

- Non- school sponsored off-campus parties.

6. Enforcement

KEY PRINCIPLE: *The school substance use policy is enforced fairly and consistently for all students.*

This section of the policy describes the ways in which the policy will be enforced. School policies regarding substance use need to be consistently enforced to be effective. Evidence suggests that when it comes to deterrence, youth certainty of being caught is far more important than the nature of the punishment itself. The Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) data consistently confirms that when youth believe they are going to get caught, they are less likely to drink alcohol or use other drugs.

In your policy, include a clearly written procedure describing the steps to be taken when violations of the policy occur.

Steps you can take to ensure that enforcement is fair and consistent:

- ☐ Educate all students about the policy and the reasoning behind it *before* violations occur. Emphasize that the purpose of the policy is not to “punish,” but to keep all students safe and to support those in need of help.
- ☐ Make it clear that the policy should not deter students from seeking help or support around substance use. Clearly identify staff members (such as school counselors or social workers) who can provide students with treatment or referrals.
- ☐ Ensure that students, coaches, and co-curricular leaders carefully review the policy and consequences before the start of each season.
- ☐ Educate coaches and co-curricular leaders regarding the importance of consistent enforcement for all students who violate policies.
- ☐ Provide parents/guardians with information about the policy and consequences for violations. Encourage them to discuss the policy with their child.
- ☐ Encourage staff to act as role-models by enforcing rules fairly and supporting responsible behavior.
- ☐ Communicate with local law enforcement agencies proactively so that there is a common understanding of when and how law enforcement should be involved in responding to school substance use violations.
- ☐ Make it safe for students to report policy violations by other students without fear of repercussions.

- ❑ Consider providing lessened consequences for self-reported violations so that students are more likely to step forward and receive the help they need.

Ensuring Due Process:

A clear description of your school's procedure to ensure due process, including an appeal process, should be included in your policy.

Your substance use policy should clearly state that a violation of the policy may be a violation of the law. Include a specific protocol to follow if a violation occurs. Each school district's protocol may differ, but it is important to ensure that yours is a result of a community decision. All who are enforcing the policy should be aware of this protocol.

Your school district's appeal process should be clearly outlined. Students and parents/guardians need the right to appeal the school administration's decision to the School Board, while protecting the student's privacy.

7. Expectations and Accountability

KEY PRINCIPLE: *Students are held accountable to school expectations in a manner that is inclusive, collaborative, and that provides opportunities for learning and repair. Expectations, consequences, and processes for accountability are clearly stated in the school policy and are reflective of community values.*

This section of your school policy should state which disciplinary processes will be utilized for which violations, consistent with local, state, and federal laws. Clear expectations and consistent processes of accountability are critical, and reduce the likelihood of future risky or harmful behavior related to substance use.

Accountability processes should be based on evidence-informed strategies to reduce student's harmful behavior. Thus, zero-tolerance policies should be avoided as they are not protective and often result in suspensions, in school suspensions, and expulsions. Lost classroom time, lost school time and isolation are risk factors for substance use and other risky behavior. Restorative practices, on the other hand, provide methods of accountability that reduce lost school and classroom time, and improve relationships and a sense of belonging in the community- all protective factors that reduce the likelihood of substance use/misuse.

The school policy should describe the extent of school authority in the discipline and the specific steps that will be taken depending on the level of offense. Implementation of these

policies and practices should be consistent. Training and guidance should be offered to all staff responsible for its implementation.

It is critical to involve a diverse group of community members when writing your policy, and to educate community members on Restorative Practices as a means of holding students accountable without inadvertently increasing their risk through suspensions and expulsions.

Restorative Practices are a three-tiered approach to building community, building conflict resilience, and shifting discipline policies to a more collaborative and inclusive approach that emphasizes prevention of future harm and reparation of the harm caused by the behavior, instead of emphasizing standardized rules and consequences.

Alternatives to Suspension

School connectedness is a powerful protective factor for preventing youth substance use. Suspending or expelling students who violate the substance use policy can have negative effects on their academic and emotional success. The Federal Department of Education recommends that schools remove students from the classroom only as a last resort, and that efforts are made to engage with students and their families to return them to a positive learning environment as quickly as possible. Implementing Restorative Practices as community-building strategies and alternatives to suspension is recommended.

Whenever possible, schools are encouraged to consider alternatives to suspension in determining how to hold students accountable under the school substance use policy. These alternative consequences demonstrate that the harm caused by violations of school expectations is taken seriously, but they keep the student connected to school supports and resources.

There are several evidence-based or evidence-informed diversion programs in Maine that are available to schools. Examples are:

Student Intervention and Reintegration Program (SIRP), which provides students who violate the substance use policy with information and skills to make low-risk choices about alcohol and drugs. FMI, or to make a referral: <http://sirpmaine.com/>.

Restorative Justice Diversion, which provides a collaborative dialogue-based opportunity to develop a plan to increase the student's individualized strengths and assets, while repairing the harm caused by their behavior. To get connected to a Restorative Justice program near you, contact www.rjmaine.org or email submit@rjmaine.org

Maine Youth Court, which provides support and accountability for young people who have violated the law or a school rule through a restorative, peer-led approach. Trained youth volunteers act as advocates and facilitators using a restorative framework to create a collective agreement. www.maineyouthcourt.org

The policy should specifically address actions taken for the following violations:

- ☐ Suspected of using alcohol or other drugs at school, or at school-sponsored events.
- ☐ Found in possession of alcohol or other drugs at school, or at school-sponsored events.
- ☐ Found using alcohol or other drugs at school, or at school-sponsored events.
- ☐ Selling or distributing alcohol or other drugs at school, or at school-sponsored events.

Appropriate accountability processes should be:

- ☐ Inclusive
- ☐ Collaborative
- ☐ Reflective of community values
- ☐ Based on evidence-based or best practice
- ☐ Consistent, non-discriminatory, and reasonable
- ☐ Reviewed, known, and understood by all stakeholders
- ☐ Appropriate to:
 - Level of offense
 - For example, supplying alcohol or other drugs should be given a greater consequence than possession or use of alcohol or other drugs
 - Age and/or development of the student who violated the policy
 - Circumstances of the incident and/or substance used
 - For example, first-time offenses versus repeated offenses will carry different consequences
 - The school's available resources
- ☐ Enforceable
- ☐ Predictable
- ☐ Not unreasonably severe or punitive
- ☐ Able to separate the student from the behavior, i.e. does not result in "labeling" the student as a troublemaker, which can result in feeling stigmatized
- ☐ Preventative to future similar behaviors

- ☐ Utilizing Restorative Practices Making use of available community diversion programs when needed

Suggestions for applying consequences:

- ☐ Involve parents/ guardians and the student, as well as other impacted parties when selecting a plan of repair and prevention. Restorative Practice Approaches can provide a forum for creating these collaborative plans.
- ☐ Use loss of privileges that do not restrict educational opportunities.
- ☐ Offer alternative consequences (such as diversion programs).
- ☐ Ask the student to write a personal reflection, including how substance use might interfere with their goals.
- ☐ Use out-of-school suspension and expulsion only when deemed absolutely necessary for safety reasons.
- ☐ Utilize re-entry processes if students have experienced suspension or expulsion.
- ☐ Offer peer support to help students reintegrate into the classroom setting.
- ☐ Provide referrals for evaluation, counseling, and/or treatment (See Section 8, Treatment).

Special considerations for co-curricular activities:

In athletic or co-curricular settings, consider using loss of privileges that do not result in complete expulsion from the group or team. For example, allow the student to continue to practice, but not play a specified number of games.

8. Intervention and Treatment

KEY PRINCIPLE: *The school community is committed to helping students who are struggling with substance use get the help they need.*

Research indicates that many individuals who misuse substances begin developing these unhealthy patterns of behavior as adolescents. Intervening with students who are using substances provides an opportunity for education, treatment, and support. Policies should include language that encourages student supports, intervention and/or treatment. This may include encouraging the use of diversion programs; identifying local community referrals and youth treatment programs; and providing staff training and education. The policy may also identify those within the school or community who are responsible for

assessing and developing intervention plans with students who are at-risk of substance use.

For information on local intervention and treatment programs in your area, search the following resources:

- **2-1-1 Maine:** A free, confidential statewide program that provides information about local health and human services to people of all ages. Dial 211 (or 1-877-463-6207) or visit <https://211maine.org/>
- **ACCESS Maine:** an online resource guide with information to connect people living in Maine to public programs, services, and other resources that are available to provide the support they need to be safe, happy, healthy, and successful. Visit <https://www.accessmaine.org/>
- **OPTIONS:** The Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety (OPTIONS) initiative is a coordinated effort of the Maine Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) and other state agencies to improve the health of Mainers using substances through harm reduction strategies, helping them on the road to recovery, and dramatically reducing the number of fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses. Visit <https://knowyouroptions.me/resources/> to search for local resources.

9. Review/Revision

KEY PRINCIPLE: *There are provisions for periodically reviewing and revising the policy.*

This section of the policy describes your school's procedures to periodically review and revise the substance use policy. The school district's policy committee should be convened at least every two years to review the implementation and effectiveness of the policy. A regularly scheduled review process keeps the content current and reinforces its importance.

Evaluation should always be part of policy review. Consider what data you will need to collect regarding the effectiveness of the policy, to assist with shaping your revisions.

To effectively evaluate, review and revise the policy:

- ☐ Include key stakeholders in the process
- ☐ Outline a realistic timetable
- ☐ Describe the procedure to be followed by the policy committee
- ☐ Evaluate how the policy is working or isn't working

- ☐ Ask students, parents/guardians, administrators, staff, community partners, and law enforcement for feedback regarding the policy, its enforcement, and its impact
- ☐ Review data regarding substance use rates as measured by student survey data (for Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) data, go to <https://maine.gov/miyhs/>)
- ☐ Develop a process for gathering additional information as needed
- ☐ Examine new research, strategies, and resources since the policy was last reviewed
- ☐ Review the policy with help from legal advisors

Special considerations for areas of review:

Medical Use of Cannabis

The Maine CDC recommends seeking legal counsel and obtaining more information from the Office of Cannabis Policy when developing policy regarding the use of medical cannabis on school grounds

According to the Maine Revised Statute 2423-A; F1 ([MRS 2423-A; F-1](#)) a patient may obtain or receive cannabis for their own use without designating a caregiver or a dispensary, unless that patient has not reached the age of 18 or if that patient is enrolled in a preschool, primary, or secondary school. In that case, a caregiver must be designated, and the caregiver can possess and administer harvested cannabis for the patient's use.

In [MRS 2426 1-A](#), the law allows exceptions for schools to these limitations. A designated caregiver or parent, legal guardian, or person having legal custody of the qualifying patient may possess and administer harvested cannabis in a school bus and on the grounds of the preschool, primary or secondary school in which the patient is enrolled if:

- A. A medical provider has provided the qualifying patient with a current written certification of the medical use of cannabis
- B. Possession of the harvested cannabis is for the purpose of administering cannabis to the qualifying patient.
- C. The parent, legal guardian or person having legal custody of the qualifying patient enrolled in the preschool, primary or secondary school has notified the school that a caregiver has been designated on behalf of the qualifying patient to possess and administer harvested cannabis to the qualifying patient.

Harvested cannabis possessed or administered in accordance with this subsection may not be in a form that permits the qualifying patient to engage in smoking. Smoking does not include the use of a nebulizer.

According to the Maine Department of Education’s “Rule for Medication Administration in Maine Schools” ([Chapter 40, Section 4F](#)) reasonable accommodations must be made for students who hold written certification for the medical use of non-smokable cannabis under Title 22, section 2423-B. [20-A MRSA §6306]. For the purposes of this rule cannabidiol (CBD) oil is a cannabis product and subject to the same limitations. Medical cannabis may only be possessed and administered under the following conditions:

- i. The student requires a dose during the school day.
- ii. It is possessed by the parent/guardian or caregiver only.
- iii. Only the parent/guardian or caregiver may administer medical cannabis – it cannot be done by, or delegated to, a school employee or any other person than the primary caregiver.

Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems

Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), also known as electronic cigarettes, vaporizers, vape products, among others, are considered tobacco products under state law. Although possession and/or use of these products likely fall under a tobacco school policy, it is important to note that many of these devices are especially popular with young people and may be used or modified for the use/co-use of other substances, including cannabis.

Naloxone and Overdose Prevention

Following the enactment of Executive Order No. 2 “*An Order to Implement Immediate Responses to Maine’s Opioid Epidemic*” on February 6, 2019, Maine’s Director of Opioid Response strongly encouraged all middle and high schools in Maine to make naloxone readily available to anyone who may be experiencing an opioid overdose. On June 8, 2021, LD 772 [An Act to Permit Naloxone Possession, Prescription, Administration and Distribution in Public and Private Schools](#) was signed into [law](#). This law provides for the administration of naloxone hydrochloride in a noninjectable form to students, school staff and school visitors through collaborative practice agreements between physicians licensed in Maine or school health advisors and public and private school nurse.

Maine Department of Education’s “[Rule for Medication Administration in Maine Schools](#)” (Chapter 40, Section 6) clarifies this rule with the following: **Without a Collaborative Practice Agreement in place**, naloxone shall only be administered by a licensed

healthcare personnel within a school whose scope of practice includes recognizing signs of overdose and administration of medication. [20-A MRSA §6307(5)]

With a Collaborative Practice Agreement, any trained school personnel may carry and administer naloxone on school grounds to any person experiencing a suspected opioid overdose if the school nurse is not present. [20-A MRSA §6307(3)]

For more resources, including a sample naloxone policy, visit [Maine DOE's Emergency Procedures](#) page.

*Thank you for caring about the youth of
Maine and taking the time and effort to
create a healthy, safe school environment for
students, staff, and community members.*

APPENDICES

Appendix A:	Resources
Appendix B:	Risk and Protective Factors
Appendix C:	School Substance Use Policy Action Plan
Appendix D:	Policy Example
Appendix E:	Violation Response Plan Example

Appendix A: Resources

Some websites, books, programs, and organizations you may find useful include:

GENERAL:

- ❑ Maine CDC Tobacco and Substance Use Prevention and Control Program (TSUPC): <https://preventionforme.org/>
- ❑ Maine's Office of Behavioral Health (OBH): <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/obh/support-services/substance-use-disorder-services>
- ❑ AdCare Educational Institute of Maine: <http://adcareme.org/>
- ❑ U.S. Department of Education School Climate & Discipline Resources: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html>
- ❑ Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP): <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>
- ❑ National Association for Children of Addiction, *CHILDREN IMPACTED BY ADDICTION: A Toolkit for Educators*: <https://www.addictionpolicy.org/post/addiction-policy-forum-releases-children-impacted-by-addiction-a-toolkit-for-educators>

PREVENTION:

- ❑ Maine CDC Substance Use Prevention: <https://preventionforme.org/>
- ❑ Maine DOE's Social Emotional Learning Program: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/sel/sel4me>
- ❑ Maine CDC Prevention Store: <https://www.maine preventionstore.com>
- ❑ MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence, *Tobacco-Free School TOOLKIT*: <https://breatheeasymaine.org/policy-implementation/education>
- ❑ Maine DOE Bullying Prevention: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/safeschools/bullying>
- ❑ Maine's Good to Know Cannabis Prevention: <https://goodtoknowmaine.com/>
- ❑ Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center: <https://www.samhsa.gov/ebp-resource-center>

- ❑ SAMHSA Publications Ordering (free prevention and treatment resources from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration):
<https://store.samhsa.gov/>

INTERVENTION/ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION:

- ❑ Student Intervention and Reintegration Program: <http://sirp.adcareme.org/>
- ❑ PRIME for Life -Universal: [AdCare Maine](#)

TREATMENT:

- ❑ 2-1-1 Maine: A comprehensive state-wide directory of over 8,000 health and human services available in Maine. <https://211maine.org/> The toll free 2-1-1 hotline connects callers to trained call specialists who can help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

RECOVERY:

- ❑ OPTIONS listing of support resources in Maine:
<https://knowyouroptions.me/resources/>
- ❑ Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services: <http://thealliancemaine.org>

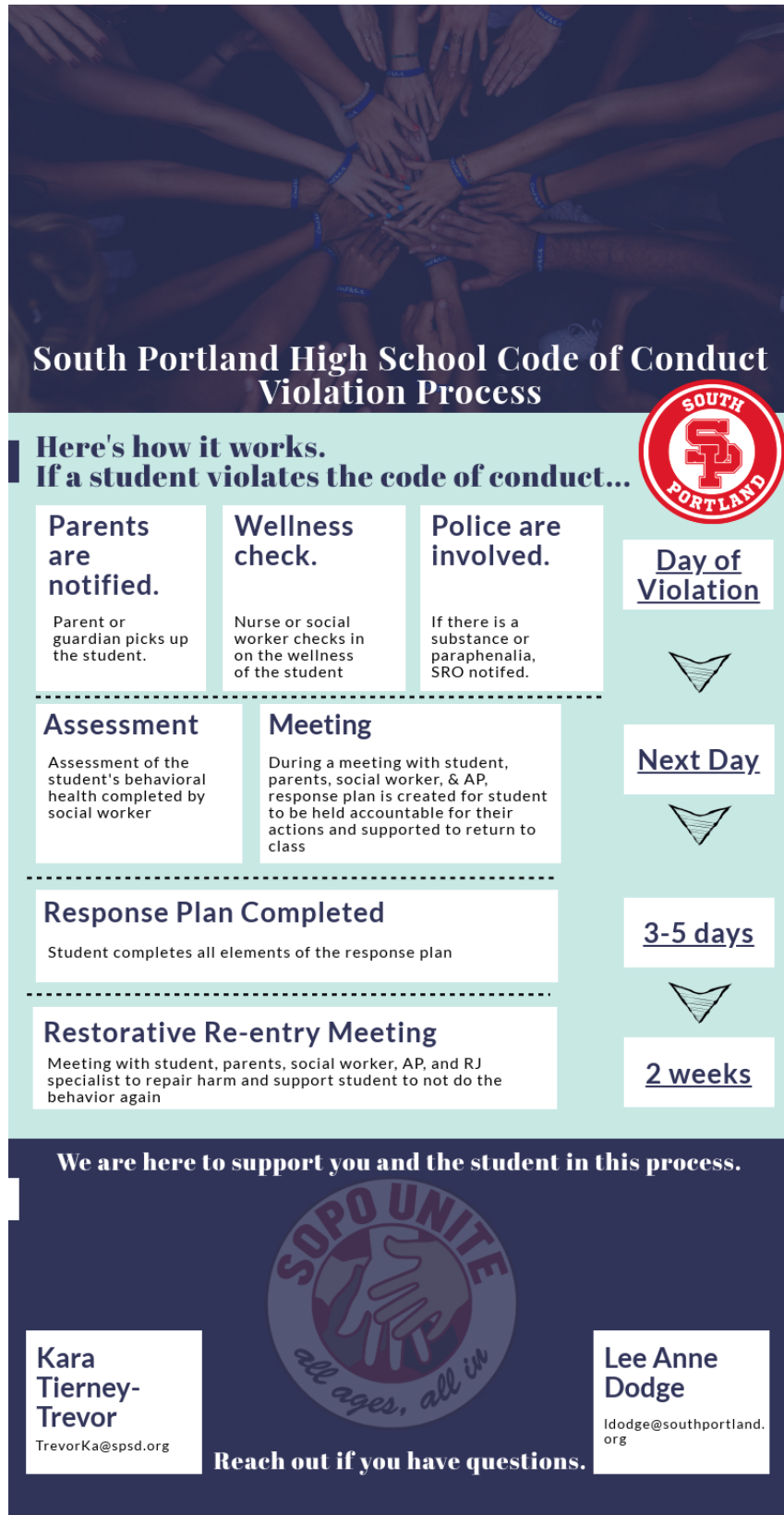
Appendix B: Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Substance Use

	Risk Factor	Protective Factor
Age of onset (when someone begins using alcohol or drugs)	The earlier the age at which someone starts using alcohol or other drugs, the greater the risk that they may develop problems with substance use disorder later in life.	Delaying alcohol use until the legal drinking age reduces the risk of developing alcohol-related problems as an adult.
Poor school achievement and low school connectedness	Students who have low commitment to school, poor achievement, or significant academic disruption are more likely to become involved with alcohol or drug use.	Students who are connected to school and perceive their school environment as supportive are less likely to use substances.
Youth perception that their parents/guardians approve/disapprove of their alcohol or drug use	Young people who believe their parent(s)/guardians approve of or are indifferent to their substance use are at greater risk for using drugs or alcohol.	Youth who perceive that their parent(s)/guardians strongly disapprove of alcohol or drug use are less likely to use substances.
Peers engaging in problem behavior	Youth who report that many of their peers use alcohol or drugs are more likely to report using substances themselves.	Young people who have strong social relationships with peers who do not use substances are less likely to use drugs or alcohol.
Early and persistent problem behaviors, risk-taking, and high sensation-seeking	Young people who display aggressive or anti-social behavior as children are more likely to misuse drugs and alcohol throughout adolescence and adulthood.	Positive social skills and relationships reduce the risk that a young person will engage in problem drug and alcohol behaviors.
Parental monitoring (or perception of monitoring)	Young people whose parent(s)/guardians don't monitor their activities and behaviors are more likely to use substances.	Parent(s)/guardians who pay close attention their teen's activities decrease the likelihood that their child will use alcohol or drugs.
Parent or older sibling drug or alcohol use	A family history of substance use or misuse is a significant risk factor for adolescents' use of alcohol or drugs.	Youth who do not have a family history of substance use have a lower risk of drug and alcohol use.
Low perception of harm	Youth who perceive little or no risk of harm from alcohol or drug use are more likely to engage in those behaviors.	Youth who perceive drug and alcohol use as very risk or causing significant harm are less likely to use substances.
Strong parental relationships and family cohesion	Youth who do not have supportive family relationships are at higher risk for substance use disorder.	Adolescents who have close relationships with their parent(s)/guardians are less likely to use substances.
Youth access and availability	Youth who have easy access to alcohol or drugs (from friends, family, or parties) are more likely to have increased use of substances.	Youth who do not have regular access to alcohol or drugs are less likely to engage in substance use behavior.

Appendix C: School Substance Use Policy Action Plan

Directions: This template can serve as an action plan to provide a road map for creating/evaluating/reviewing/revising your policy.

Action Steps <i>What Will Be Done?</i>	Responsibilities <i>Who Will Do It?</i>	Timeline <i>By When?</i> <i>(Day/Month)</i>	Resources <i>A. Resources Available</i> <i>B. Resources Needed (financial, human, political & other)</i>	Potential Barriers <i>A. What individuals or organizations might resist?</i> <i>B. How?</i>	Evidence Of Success <i>A. How will you know that you are making progress?</i> <i>B. What are your benchmarks?</i>
Step 1:			A. B.	A. B.	
Step 2:			A. B.	A. B.	
Step 3:			A. B.	A. B.	
Step 4:			A. B.	A. B.	
Step 5:			A. B.	A. B.	



SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

The South Portland Board of Education regards substance use in the schools or at school activities as a serious threat to student success in schools, and to preserving a safe and orderly school environment. The Board recognizes that substance use disorders are preceded by early use and misuse of substances and that adverse childhood experiences and behavioral health disorders put a young person at greater risk for substance use. Therefore, the Board believes coordinated prevention efforts should be implemented and system wide procedures established to deal with substance use in the South Portland Schools and students found using and in possession will be assessed by a behavioral health professional and evidenced-based intervention strategies will be recommended depending on the needs of the student. The goals of this policy are to create a safe, substance free environment conducive to learning, and to aid students in abstaining from the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. The policy provides for intervention when use is detected, provides support as appropriate and seeks to determine the best way for students to repair the harm they may have caused by their use.

The South Portland Board of Education regards the dispensing, distributing, or selling of substances by students in the schools or at school activities to be a substantial threat to student success in schools, and to preserve a safe and orderly school environment. While the Board recognizes students who dispense, distribute, or sell substances in school may also have a substance use problem or other behavioral health disorders that may require ongoing support, the Board regards dispensing, distributing, or selling substances to be a criminal act requiring student removal to preserve a safe school environment for all students. Students who are removed from school will also be given the opportunity for an assessment of their behavioral health needs, supports as appropriate and ways for students to repair the harm they may have caused by their actions.

Prevention: In order to create a safe and supportive environment, the district will provide prevention across grade levels with age appropriate messaging and materials as well as work with local prevention providers to increase the school community's ability to prevent and reduce youth substance use.

Intervention: The School District is committed to finding the best response for the needs of the individual student found in possession or under the influence of a substance during or at school sponsored events. The School District provides assessment and restorative opportunities, assistance through school social workers and guidance counselors as well as access to community behavioral health professionals to intervene and counsel students involved in substance use. The goals of the interventions are to help students take accountability for their actions, build their skills and abilities to abide by the expectations set out in the School District Substance Use Policy and address any other behavioral health problems the student may be facing. Confidentiality of student information concerning issues with Prohibited Substances will be maintained in accordance with state and federal laws.

Prohibited Activities and Substances: Possession and Use: No student shall possess, use, or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, tobacco products of any kind, including e-cigarettes or vape devices, or any scheduled drugs or controlled substances defined in federal and state laws and regulations, or any substance that is represented to be a controlled substance. Nor shall a student purposefully use a prescribed or over-the-counter medication in a manner other than specified by the medication directions and for/by the intended person.

Dispense, distribute, or sell: No student shall dispense, distribute, or sell any alcoholic beverage, tobacco products of any kind, including e-cigarette or vape devices, or any scheduled drugs or controlled substances defined in federal and state laws and regulations, or any substance that is represented to be a controlled substance. Nor shall a student purposefully dispense, distribute, or sell a prescribed or over-the-counter medication in a manner other than specified by the medication directions and for/by the intended person.

Look-alikes: Any student attempting to possess, or use “look-alike” substances, counterfeit or imitation substances, will be held to the provisions of the Substance Use Policy as if they were actual substances. Any student participating in purchasing or accepting “look-alike” substances, or attempting to dispense, distribute, or sell “look-alike” substances, counterfeit or imitation substances, will be held to the provisions of the Substance Use Policy as if they were actual drugs.

Over-the-counter: Any student who has not given his/her prescription or over-the-counter medication to the school nurse or main office upon arriving to school may face disciplinary consequences as outlined in this policy.

Where policy applies: The South Portland substance use policy applies to any student who is on school property, who is in attendance at school or at any school-sponsored activity, or whose conduct at any time or place directly interferes with the operations, discipline or general welfare of the school.

Oversight of the policy: The Superintendent shall be responsible for the development of appropriate curricula, prevention strategies, rules and procedures to implement this policy. The policy and appropriate information shall be distributed to students and parents through means selected by the administration.

Policy Violations: Any violation of the policy will set off the administrative procedures outline in JICH R1 or R2, which can include a restorative conference, behavioral health assessment, in-school suspension or suspension from school at the appropriate discretion of the administration and the Board of Education. A student may also be referred to law enforcement for investigation.

Voluntary Referrals:

*Students concerned about their own use or that of another student may seek the assistance of a school administrator, school social worker or guidance counselor. Voluntary referral will not lead to the administrative procedures if the student does not have a known policy violation.

*Any staff member who has a concern or is approached by a student about issues related to student substance use shall refer students and notify a school social worker or guidance counselor.

*Parents/guardians who have a concern about a student's substance use may notify a school administrator, school social worker or guidance counselor. Parent/guardian referrals will not lead to the administrative procedures if the students does not have a known policy violation.

Legal Reference: 21 USC § 812 (Controlled Substances Act); 21 CFR Part 1300.11-15; Pub. L.No. 101-226 (Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989); 17-A M.R.S.A. § 1101; 41 USC § 290dd-2; 42 CFR § 2.1 et seq.; 20-A M.R.S.A. § 1001(9); 4008.

Cross Reference: JLC – Administering Medication to Students

JICH-R – Substance Use Policy Administrative Procedures

Adopted: August 10, 1987

Revised: June 14, 1993

Revised: April 10, 1995

Revised: August 11, 1997

Revised: May 10, 1999

Revised: July 8, 2002

Revised: March 2003

Revised: April 14, 2003

Revised: May 11, 2009

Revised: May 8, 2018

Revised: June 6, 2022

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Administrative Procedures for Student Substance Use:

If a student is found in violation of the school substance use policy and is found in possession of, using, or under the influence, the following steps will be taken by school administrators:

1. Police involvement: All Substances and paraphernalia will be confiscated and turned over to the police.
2. School Nurse: The student will participate in a wellness check.
3. Parents/guardians: They will be notified and asked to come in right away and the student will leave school with the parent/guardian, unless the South Portland Police Department requires a different procedure.
4. Restorative Classroom: The student will return to school the next day and will spend that day (and up to two additional days) in the in-school restorative practice coordinator's classroom, until steps 5 and 6 are complete.
5. Assessment: An appointment for an assessment will be made with the school social worker or licensed alcohol and drug counselor. The assessment will be offered to the student privately.
6. Response Meeting: The student, administrator, social worker and advisor (optional: teacher or a peer) and parent/guardian meet within 2-3 days of the incident to discuss what happened and create a response plan for the student to complete in order to reenter the regular school day.

Response Plan: The response plan for a student caught using or possessing substances will be based on the meeting, the assessment, best practice interventions for youth substance use, and available resources to address the needs of the student. The group will attempt to reach consensus on the response plan, but in the event consensus is not possible or the parents/guardians and/or student refuse to complete the assessment, the administrator will make the final decision based on the following factors:

- Substance use treatment history
- History of other discipline problems
- Student attitude and responsibility for actions

Administrators may choose from the following list of options to be included in the student's response plan and the plan may be progressive in severity depending on the number of offenses the students has incurred:

*Meetings with the school social worker or licensed alcohol and drug counselor and the South Portland Police Department's behavioral health liaison.

*1 or 2 days of "supported" in-school suspension. "Supported" in-school suspension not to exceed 3 days for first offense. Can be full day in-school suspension but may also include check-ins with administrators during lunch, before or after school to help maintain connection with the student. Supported in-school suspension includes academic help and the restorative practice process.

*Substance use prevention education.

*SIRP: Student Intervention and Reintegration Program:

<https://adcareme.org/student-intervention-reintegration-program-sirp-providing-skills-and-empowering-youth-to-make-informed-decisions/>

*Community Service.

7. Restorative reentry meeting: After the student has completed the response plan, the student will participate in a reentry meeting, ideally with a parent/guardian that may involve a restorative process facilitated by the in school restorative practice coordinator. The goals of the meeting are to offer the student an opportunity to repair any harm they may have caused by their actions, to reconnect the student to the school community and to create a plan for the student's future academic success and ability to follow school expectations regarding substance use.

If an in-school suspension isn't an option, doing an out-of-school suspension of up to 3 days for first offense, 5 days for second offense, can be lessened based on the assessment, group meeting, and other related criteria.

Second Offense: If the student has a second offense, the following response will occur:

SIRP: the student will complete the 12 hour Student Intervention and Reintegration Program:

<https://adcareme.org/student-intervention-reintegration-program-sirp-providing-skills-and-empowering-youth-to-make-informed-decisions/>

Community Service: the student will complete 10 hours of community service.

Meeting: the student, parents/guardian will be required to participate in a meeting with school social worker, in school restorative practice coordinator, and administration.

Third Offense: If the student has a third offense, the following response will occur:

Community Service: The student will complete 10 hours of community service.

Meetings: The student will meet with the South Portland Police Department's behavioral health liaison, which may include more than one meeting. The student, parents/guardian will also be required to participate in a meeting with school social worker, in school restorative practice coordinator, and administration.

*If a student and/or parent/guardian refuses to participate in the process, the student and his/her parent/guardian will be required to meet with the principal/superintendent and may have an out of school suspension.

Administrative Procedures for Student Dispensing, Distributing, or Selling Substances: If a student is found in violation of the dispensing, distributing, or selling substances policy the following steps will be taken by school administrators:

1. Police Involvement: The South Portland Police Department will be notified immediately, and all substances and paraphernalia will be confiscated and turned over to the police
2. School Nurse: The student will participate in a wellness check
3. Parents/guardians: They will be notified and the student will leave school with the parent/guardian, unless the South Portland Police Department requires a different procedure.
4. Response Meeting: the student, administrator, social worker and advisor (optional teacher or peer) and parent/guardian meet with within 2-3 days of the incident to discuss what happened and create a response plan for the student to complete in order to reenter the regular school day.

Response Plan: A student caught dispensing, distributing, or selling will include an immediate suspension of 10 days pending expulsion proceedings by the Superintendent. Additional options for the response plan:

*Assessment: The student will be encouraged to have an assessment with the school social worker or licensed alcohol and drug counselor. The assessment will be offered to the student privately.

*Ongoing counseling: Meetings with the school social worker or licensed alcohol and drug use counselor.

*Community service.

5. Restorative Conference: After the student has completed the response plan, the student will participate in a reentry meeting, ideally with a parent/guardian that may involve a restorative process facilitated by the in school restorative practice coordinator. The goals of the meeting are to offer the student an opportunity to repair any harm they may have caused by their actions, to reconnect the student to the school community and to create a plan for the student's future academic success and ability to follow school expectations regarding substance use and the dispensing, distribution, or selling of substances.

Appendix E: Violation Response Plan Example

SPHS Substance Use Policy Violation Response Plan

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date of
Violation: _____

The purpose of the school substance use policy is to create a safe, substance free learning environment for all students and to help students abstain from using alcohol, nicotine and other drugs. By violating the policy, you have put yourself and other students at risk. The process outlined in the school policy for violations gives you the opportunity to reflect upon your actions, consider what caused you to make the decision you made, repair any harm those actions may have caused and while also providing you with additional help and support you may need to not use substances at school or school sponsored events in the future. This response plan will guide you through the process.

Primary point of contact at SPHS is: _____

Email or phone number?

If you or your parents/guardians have any questions throughout the process, please connect with your primary point on contact.

Step #1 Assessment:

You will complete a behavioral health assessment with _____ (school or Day One social worker).

Assessment Date: _____ Time: _____

Social worker signature _____

Step #2 Response Plan Meeting:

School Administration and social worker will meet with you and your parents/guardians to determine what the appropriate response to the substance use violation should be based on the assessment of your behavioral health needs, your history of discipline problems, your attitude and responsibility for your actions, and your academic needs.

Response Plan Meeting Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Step #3 Response Plan:

You must complete the response plan by this date: _____

Your response plan includes:

- Meetings with the social worker How many meetings? _____ Name of social worker: _____
 Date of meeting #1 _____ Social worker signature _____
 Date of meeting #2 _____ Social worker signature _____
 Date of meeting #3 _____ Social worker signature _____
 Date of meeting #4 _____ Social worker signature _____
 Date of meeting #5 _____ Social worker signature _____
 Date of meeting #6 _____ Social worker signature _____

- SIRP (Student Intervention and Reintegration Program)
 Date of SIRP: _____ Location: _____
 SIRP contact information: _____

- Nicotine Intervention
 Date of intervention: _____ Location: _____ Signature of Staff: _____

- Supported In-School Suspension (ISS)
 Number of Days: _____ Please see ISS Schedule for details
 Supported ISS will include:
 - Restorative Reflection
 (dates & times of reflection to be written into ISS schedule)
 - Community Service:
 Service work: _____ Contact: _____
 (dates & times of service to be written into ISS schedule)
 - Academic Support
 Contact: _____
 (dates & times of academic support to be written into ISS schedule)

Step #4: Restorative Reentry Meeting

Once you have completed the response plan, you, your parents/guardians, social worker, school staff, and an advisor or teacher.

Restorative Reentry Meeting Date: _____ Location: _____

Facilitated by: _____

Maine School Substance Use Policy Guide

By signing, you are agreeing to complete the response plan outlined above. If you do not complete all of the items listed above, you may be asked to complete your suspension out of school and the superintendent will be notified.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian (if available)

Date

School Administrator

Date

In School Suspension Schedule:

Day # ___ Date: _____

Block	Where you should be	What you should be doing	Signature of staff
Before school			
Block 1			
Block 2			
Block 3			
Lunch			
Block 4			
After school			

Additional instructions:

Duplicate schedules as needed.

Special thanks to Independent Health Consultant, Liz Blackwell-Moore, to LeeAnne Dodge of the Drug Free Community Coalition of South Portland (SoPo Unite-All Ages, All In) and to the South Portland High School for sharing their alternative to suspension process.

SPHS Substance Use Policy Violation: *Parent/Guardian Information*

The purpose of the school substance use policy is to create a safe, substance free learning environment for all students and to help students abstain from using alcohol, nicotine and other drugs. By violating the policy, students put themselves and other students at risk. The process outlined in the school policy for violations gives students the opportunity to reflect upon their actions, consider what caused them to make the decision they made, repair any harm those actions may have caused while also providing them with the additional help and support they may need to not use substances at school or school sponsored events in the future. The response plan will include:

Step #1 Police Involvement & Wellness Check

When students are caught with a violating substance and/or paraphernalia, the School Resource Officer (SRO) is called upon to confiscate the items and summons students if applicable. The nurse is also asked to complete a “Wellness Check” on students to ensure there is no need for more medical treatment.

Step #2 Assessment:

Students are given a private behavioral health assessment by the school social worker or Day One social worker.

Step #3 Response Plan Meeting:

School Administration and the social worker meet with the parent/guardian and the student to determine what the appropriate response to the substance use violation should be based on the assessment of behavioral health needs, history of discipline problems, attitude and responsibility for their actions, and academic needs.

Step #4 Completing the Response Plan:

Students are given a specific time period (around 3-5 days) to complete the response plan. Actions the students might have to take in order to complete the response plan include:

- ☐ Meetings with the social worker
- ☐ Completion of a SIRP course (Student Intervention and Reintegration Program)
SIRP is a 12 hour education program for youth experimenting with alcohol or drugs. The program empower youth to make healthy decisions and reduce risk.
- ☐ Nicotine Intervention
This is a one hour intervention that the student completes with a social worker or other trained staff member to educate the student on nicotine and empower them to make healthy decisions and reduce risk.
- ☐ Supported In-School Suspension (ISS)
- ☐ Restorative Reflection
- ☐ Community Service
- ☐ Academic Support

Step #5: A Restorative Reentry Meeting

Once the student has completed the response plan, the student, parents/guardians, social worker, school staff, and an advisor or teacher are invited to attend a restorative reentry meeting. With parent/guardian permission, SPHS may invite the Restorative Justice Institute of Maine to facilitate the reentry meeting.

**Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Tobacco and Substance Use Prevention and Control Program**
286 Water Street, 11 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333-0011
(207) 287-4627
TTY: Use Maine Relay: 711
E-mail: tsup.dhhs@maine.gov
Web: <https://www.preventionforme.org>

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