

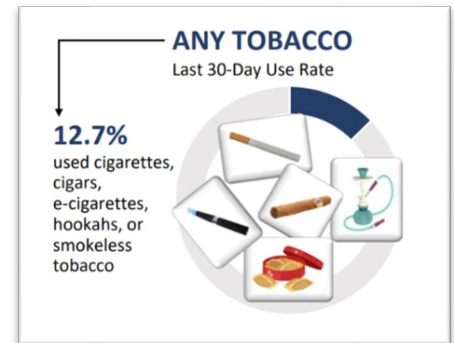
Connecticut Department of Public Health

Tobacco Control Program | August 2024

R E S O U R C E S F O R S C H O O L S

Overview

Commercial tobacco product use is established primarily in adolescence. Nearly all adults who smoke cigarettes started before they were 18.¹ In Connecticut, about 1 in 8 high school students currently use some form of tobacco, including cigarettes, cigars, e-cigarettes, hookahs, or smokeless tobacco.² School environments can encourage tobacco- and nicotine-free beliefs and behaviors, and support students in quitting through policy, education, and intervention.



Policy

The Connecticut Clean Indoor Air Act restricts smoking and the use of electronic nicotine and cannabis delivery systems in schools and school grounds.^{3,4} Some districts have updated their policy to provide greater protections. District policies that restrict everyone's use of all commercial tobacco products protect all school property and school-sponsored events, offer alternative or restorative practices instead of punitive ones, and provide comprehensive prevention and cessation education. These policies can also help prevent tobacco use and support students who are addicted to nicotine.⁵

Prevention Education

Tobacco prevention education programs should be evidence-based or evidence-informed and not sponsored by the tobacco industry. Programs should also be implemented as designed and address all aspects of tobacco use, long and short-term health effects, social acceptability and influences, negative social consequences, peer norms and peer pressure, resistance and refusal skills, and media literacy.⁵ Prevention education should occur throughout a young person's educational experience.⁵ Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 10-19 require teaching about nicotine or tobacco in all grades in Connecticut public schools.⁶

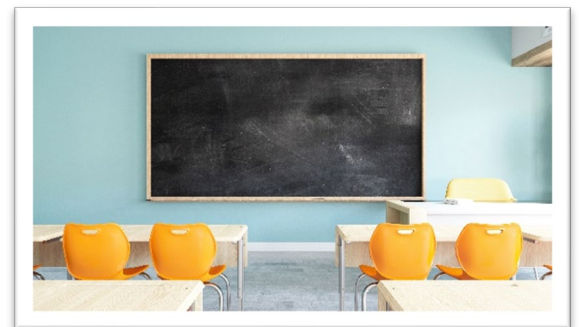


Table 1. Evidence-Based or Evidence-Informed Prevention Education Programs

Program Name	Developed By	For Grades	Cost
ASPIRE	The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center	6 th – 12 th	Free
CATCH My Breath	CATCH Global Foundation	5 th – 12 th	Free
Tobacco Prevention Toolkit	Stanford Medicine Reach Lab	K – 12 th	Free
Vaping: Know the Truth	Truth Initiative	8 th – 12 th	Free

Cessation Education and Intervention

Providing young people with resources to quit tobacco is critical. According to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, counseling and education are the most effective approaches in helping youth quit tobacco.⁷ Schools can implement evidence-based school-administered cessation programs or provide information to students and staff about available resources in their community. Schools should also consider alternatives to suspension and expulsion for tobacco or nicotine violations. The Public Health Law Center provides four reasons to consider alternative measures:⁸

1. The tobacco industry targets youth, especially most recently with flavored e-cigarettes.
2. Nicotine exposure affects brain development, making nicotine addiction difficult to break.
3. Research shows penalties like expulsion or out-of-school suspension can contribute to negative educational and life outcomes.
4. Tobacco use disparities and implicit biases may result in unequal treatment of students.

Table 2. Evidence-Based or Evidence-Informed Cessation Interventions, Programs, and Services

Program Name	Developed By	Cost	Type
Healthy Futures	Stanford Medicine Reach Lab	Free	Alternative to Suspension
INDEPTH	American Lung Association	Free	Alternative to Suspension
My Life, My Quit	National Jewish Health	Free	Cessation Service
N-O-T On Tobacco	American Lung Association	\$400	Cessation Program
Smokefree TXT for Teens	National Cancer Institute	Free	Cessation Service
This Is Quitting	Truth Initiative	Free	Cessation Service

****A Note About Vape Detectors****

With e-cigarette use prevalent among high school students in Connecticut (11.5% or 16,600 high school students currently use electronic vapor products)², some administrators are considering vape detectors installation (most commonly in restrooms) to deter use in schools. While this may provide a temporary solution, there is no research or evidence to indicate detectors prevent use or support quitting. Installation is expensive, requires maintenance, can contribute to punitive discipline rather than alternatives to suspension, and lead to product use in other areas on school property.⁹ Alternatives to vape detectors include the following:

- Updated tobacco-free school policy
- Prevention education (Table 1)
- Intervention (Table 2 or [brief intervention](#))
- Referral to resources (Table 2)
- Parent or community engagement

For More Information, Contact:

Connecticut Department of Public Health | Tobacco Control Program

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Last updated: August 9, 2024



Additional Resources

1. [Empower Vape-Free Youth Campaign | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#): Resources for middle and high school educators to speak with students about the risks of e-cigarettes and nicotine.
2. [Safe Disposal for Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems \(ENDS\) | Connecticut DPH's Tobacco Control Program](#): Learn about how ENDS are a hazardous waste and how confiscated products can be disposed of properly.
3. [The ABC's of Comprehensive K-12 School Commercial Tobacco Policies | Public Health Law Center](#): Resources for states, school districts, and schools to create or strengthen commercial tobacco policy.
4. [Tobacco Education Resource Center | U.S. Food & Drug Administration](#): Free resources for teachers, students, and parents to learn more about the dangers of vaping nicotine.
5. [Tobacco-Free and Vaping-Free Schools and Communities | Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#): No-cost access to resources that include a model policy, assessment, and policy builder.
6. [Vape-Free Schools Initiative | American Lung Association](#): Resources to help schools navigate the youth vaping epidemic with tools to protect and support schools and students.
7. [VapeFreeCT | Connecticut DPH's Tobacco Control Program](#): Support for young people, parents, and healthcare providers on quitting vaping, tobacco, and nicotine.

References

¹Youth and Tobacco Use. Office on Smoking and Health. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Last reviewed November 2, 2023.

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/index.htm.

²2023 Connecticut Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

³Connecticut General Statutes. [Sec. 19a -342](#): Smoking Prohibited. Exceptions. Signs required. Penalties.

⁴Connecticut General Statutes. [Sec. 19a-342a](#): Use of electronic nicotine or cannabis delivery system or vapor product prohibited. Exceptions. Signage required. Penalties.

⁵How Schools Can Help Students Stay Tobacco-Free. Campaign For Tobacco-Free Kids. January 9, 2024.

<https://assets.tobaccofreekids.org/factsheets/0153.pdf>.

⁶Connecticut General Statutes. [Sec. 10-19](#): Teaching about alcohol, nicotine or tobacco, drugs and acquired immune deficiency syndrome . Training for personnel.

⁷National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Office on Smoking and Health. PHS Guideline Recommendations: How to help adolescents quit smoking. 2008.

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/cessation/pdfs/phs_adolescents_508.pdf

⁸Student Commercial Tobacco Use in Schools: Alternative Measures. Public Health Law Center. November 2019.

<https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/Student-Commercial-Tobacco-Use-in-Schools-Alternative-Measures-2019.pdf>.

⁹Guidance on Vape Detectors in K-12 Schools. California Youth Advocacy Network. 2023