

TEACHING ABOUT DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO AND ABOUT FAMILY LIFE/SEX EDUCATION

In accordance with state and federal law, the school district shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based drug, tobacco and alcohol education and substance abuse prevention and family life/sex education programs in grades K-12.

The drug, tobacco and alcohol education and substance abuse prevention program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of drug, tobacco and alcohol use. It shall include special instruction as to the effects upon the human system; the emotional, psychological and social dangers of such use with emphasis on nonuse by school age children and the illegal aspects of such use. The program also shall include information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure to use illicit drugs or alcohol.

The objectives of this program, as stated below, are rooted in the School Committee's belief that prevention requires education, and that the most important aspect of the policies and guidelines of the school district should be the education of each individual on healthy decision-making and on the dangers of substance abuse, including the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Additionally, the objectives of this program are:

To create an awareness of the total drug problem-prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation, and law enforcement on the local, state, national and international levels.

To relate the use of drugs and alcohol to physical, mental, social and emotional practices.

To develop the student's ability to make intelligent choices based on facts and to develop the courage to stand by one's own convictions.

To understand the personal, social and economic problems causing the misuse of drugs and alcohol.

To develop an interest in preventing illegal use of drugs in the community.

To prevent, delay and/or reduce alcohol, tobacco and drug use among children and youth.

To increase students' understanding of the legal, social and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco and drug use.

To teach students self-management skills, social skills, negotiations skills and refusal skills that will help them to make healthy decisions and avoid alcohol, tobacco and drug use.

The curriculum, instructional materials and outcomes used in this program shall be consistent with the requirements set forth in state law and be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee. Further, in accordance with state law, any driver education course shall include a module on science related to addiction and addictive substances, including the impact of psychoactive substances on the brain and the effect of such substances on a person while operating a motor vehicle. Additionally, in accordance with state law, educational materials prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regarding the dangers of opiate use and misuse shall be distributed in written form to all students participating in extracurricular activity prior to the commencement of their athletic seasons.

Opportunities shall be provided to educate parents/guardians about recognizing the warning signs of substance abuse and providing available resources. Additionally, in appropriate cases when a student is under the influence of alcoholic beverages or drugs, while in school, the principal/head of upper school may send the student to the school nurse, notify the student's parents/guardians and refer the matter to appropriate medical and/or legal authorities, including when appropriate, referring the parents/guardians and student to programs and/or facilities that specialize in the treatment of persons with substance abuse problems. Students with drug, alcohol or other substance abuse problems and their parents/guardians are encouraged to seek the assistance of school personnel for planning, intervention and referral to appropriate city/health agencies for substance abuse treatment and support. All communications regarding such referrals are to be kept in strict confidence.

The Superintendent shall ensure that staff are provided with professional development regarding the school district's policies and procedures and protocols for prevention, intervention and follow-up in preventing and responding to substance use and abuse. Such professional development should include training on the early warning signs and behaviors that indicate a student may be experiencing substance abuse problems and the building-based referral systems and other protocols to follow. The Superintendent also will ensure that staff who are responsible for implementing substance abuse prevention curricula receive professional development on implementing evidence-based programs and effective strategies for preventing substance abuse.

Additionally, in accordance with the requirements of state law, the Cambridge Public Schools, through its School Health Services, which are provided by the Cambridge Public Health Department, will implement a voluntary and confidential verbal substance abuse screening process of students at grade levels to be designated by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Parents/guardians and students will be provided with advance notice of this screening in accordance with the requirements of state law and with an opportunity to opt-out of participation in this screening. The goal of the screening is to provide individualized prevention supports for students and, when necessary, as a result of the screening to provide referrals to parents/guardians and the student to appropriate city/health agencies for substance abuse treatment and support.

The Family Life/Sexuality Education Program shall address the following topics: anatomy and Physiology, Puberty and Adolescent Development, Identity, Pregnancy and Reproduction, Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV, Healthy Relationships and Personal Safety.

The Cambridge School Committee wishes to encourage the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Coordinators, Principals/Heads of Upper Schools, Assistant Principals, teachers and other staff of the Cambridge Public Schools to develop and initiate voluntary programs, academic courses of instruction, reading, lectures and discussions related to the following subject matters in accordance with state education standards:

1. Sexuality education for students of ages and grades included in public school classes, dealing with the physiology of human reproduction, contraception, family living and sexually transmitted disease treatment and prevention.
2. Education on the rights of individuals to include free and open discussion on the rights and responsibilities of both sexes, gender, and sexual identity, sexually transmitted disease (treatment, prevention and care), sexual orientation, birth control and abortion, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual assault prevention and healthy relationships.

3. Further, the Superintendent is directed to purchase materials, such as textbooks for programs of this nature where necessary, and that she/he develops the necessary curriculum, prepares for workshops for instructors, and establishes courses for students to be taken on an optional basis. The Superintendent, should she/he desire, may seek the help of available community and other local organizations to implement this policy.

The School Committee recognizes that the cooperation and guidance of parents/guardians and community of the school shall be a vital factor in designing the family life/sex education programs, and that at no time shall the discussion of abortion, contraception, family planning, or matters dealing with birth control and population planning be made other than optional.

This policy shall be posted on the school district's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents/guardians in accordance with state law. Additionally, the school district shall file a copy of this policy with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ("DESE") in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L.c. 71, §1
M.G.L.c. 71, §13D
M.G.L.c. 71, §96
M.G.L.c. 111, §222

Adopted: November 1, 2016