



**POLICY:**

REGULATION: ADB Clean Air Learning Environment

**EXHIBIT:**

Manitoba Health provides a number of statistics regarding smoking and the serious effects it has on our health.

- Smoking is the single most serious public-health problem in Canada, killing more Canadians than car accidents, murders, suicides and alcohol combined.
- This year, tobacco will kill about 1,400 Manitobans.
- Approximately 184,000 Manitobans are smokers.
- One billion cigarettes were sold in Manitoba in 2011.
- The smoking rate for Manitobans aged 15 to 19 is 15 per cent. (Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey, 2010)

Evidence shows that nonsmoking learning environments are most effective when combined with other types of prevention, rules and stop-smoking initiatives. All these initiatives need to be used consistently and sustainably across the whole community. To help create a nonsmoking learning environment the approach has to be more than clear the air in one place and push the problem over to another; a larger strategy needs to be in place.

In Seine River School Division we use an integrated approach. This provides the greatest chance of impacting student choices and behaviours. It links people, policy and programs. It makes sure that a message of health is delivered in different ways, from different angles and from different people.

Healthy Schools Manitoba is a well-established health promotion program that invites students to learn and use decision-making skills around their own health and well-being. Linking SRSD policy and regulations, such as the school grounds smoking ban, to the Healthy Schools initiative gives consistent messages. It also helps reinforce broader lessons about positive health choices among students.

APPROVED: June 24, 2014

REVISED: January 2014

SOURCE: Manitoba Healthy Schools (Manitoba Education); Manitoba Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs; Addictions Foundation of Manitoba; Manitoba Education

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**OTHER REFERENCE:** Visions Journal, 2009, 5 (2), pp. 22-24

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### **Eight steps toward a smoke-free school learning environment**

Developing and carrying out a comprehensive nonsmoking strategy takes time, effort and a long-term commitment. Below are eight recommended steps for creating a smoke-free school. These steps help make the process easier, because they are manageable and based on common sense.

#### **1. School based students and staff committee**

School leaders, staff and students can form a committee to create a program or strategy to address the health risks to students who smoke. The first six months after start-up are the most crucial to the strategy's long-term success. However, the committee will likely need to continue its leadership role well after the strategy takes effect to ensure the effort is ongoing.

#### **2. Create capacity: encourage support and involvement of relevant school and community members**

Enlisting full support of stakeholders (i.e., those who care about the issue) is best done by including them in both the development and execution of the strategy. The steering committee should actively reach out to relevant stakeholders, both in the school and the community.

At the school level, stakeholders may include:

- administrators
- teachers
- other school staff (counsellors, nurses, clerical support, janitors, bus drivers, etc.)
- students (including those who smoke)
- parents

At the community level, key stakeholders may include:

- tobacco reduction coordinators (within each health authority)
- municipal bodies
- local police services
- neighbourhood associations
- local businesses
- youth services organizations

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### **3. Gather information in order to design a tailored strategy**

Each school is unique. Therefore, it is important to collect information on the local situation so that the tobacco-free strategy can be tailored to local needs and circumstances.

Some of the key pieces of information to collect are:

- the percentage of students and staff who smoke
- community perceptions and concerns regarding a tobacco-free school (pro and con)
- anticipated concerns or problems in enforcing a smoking ban; for example, students gathering in locations near the school to smoke during school hours
- examples of educational and promotional activities already in place that could support the implementation of a tobacco-free school strategy
- a list of successes and problems of previous tobacco-reduction activities, both locally and further afield (if available)

### **4. Develop the strategy**

Successful tobacco control strategies for schools involve a well-thought out mix of programs. This provides students, staff, parents and other stakeholders with the information, skills and supports needed to address tobacco use. All relevant groups should be involved in coming up with specific interventions and procedures. The local situation, as identified in step 3 above, will determine the best overall strategy. The steering committee should provide leadership and support for the development process.

### **5. Develop clear and consistent messages**

Once the tobacco control strategy has been developed, staff, students and parents must be made aware of its basic elements (rules and expectations). This can be done through school newsletters, posters, signs and other tools that clearly communicate these rules and expectations. Ideally, both general and stakeholder-specific information will be used in messaging campaigns (see table for examples).

### **6. Ensure measured, consistent and fair enforcement**

Smoke-free school policies work best when the rules are well understood, consistently applied and the consequences of breaking them are seen by students as fair and reasonable. Consistent enforcement of the rules shows that school officials are serious about compliance and fair in their response to violations.

When designing consequences for breaking the rules, a school should:

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- use a positive approach (i.e., recognize successes and encourage connectedness and social and emotional development)
- focus on the purpose of the rule (i.e., to promote healthy choices and reduce tobacco use)
- change the consequences based on how many times the person has broken the rules (i.e., progressive consequences) and whether the person is a student, staff member or visitor

Heavy-handed consequences, such as suspension, should be used in special cases and only as a last resort.

### **7. Provide support for students and staff who want to quit smoking**

Schools are encouraged to take advantage of existing cessation support resources in the community.

- Seine River School Division staff have the opportunity to receive training to offer NOT (Not On Tobacco) which is offered by The Lung Association in Health. For more information see the Lung Association website.
- Back Off Tobacco (Tobacco Education for Manitoba Students) offers packaged lessons for teachers to use from Kindergarten to Grade 12.  
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/MobilePages/bot/index.html>
- Schools can access information and resources from Health Canada such as On The Road to Quitting-Guide to becoming a non-smoker.

### **8. Prepare for and respond to students who leave school grounds to smoke**

One of the most difficult issues with having a tobacco-free school grounds policy is students leaving school property to smoke during the school day. This can create problems with student safety and public disorder in areas close to the school.

Since every environment is different, schools need to:

- talk through the issue with students, staff and people in the areas surrounding school property
- talk about potential safety and public order problems before they happen
- be creative and flexible when dealing with students choosing to leave school grounds to smoke (e.g., bring students together with neighbours or local business owners to discuss the situation and possible solutions that serve everyone)

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### **Scent Free Environment**

Seine River School Division is dedicated to providing a healthy, comfortable and productive learning environment for all persons learning and working in our schools and buildings. We can only achieve this goal through ongoing efforts to protect sensitive individuals and to help staff and students adjust to restrictions on scented products. Persons in our buildings are expected to respect the common learning and working environments and to eliminate wearing scents.

Scent free areas:

- Fire or emergency escape routes
- Common areas, including elevators, hallways, stairwells, lobbies, waiting rooms, copier rooms, gymnasiums/auditoriums, reception areas, staff rooms, and rest rooms
- Classrooms and conference rooms

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