

COMPREHENSIVE POLICY ON DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND OTHER POTENTIALLY
HARMFUL SUBSTANCES

NOTE: The terms “drugs, alcohol and other potentially harmful substances” shall be construed throughout this policy to refer to the use of all substances including, but not limited to: alcohol, tobacco, vaping products (synthetics), inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, LSD, PCP, amphetamines, heroin, steroids, look-alikes, unprescribed drugs, unauthorized over-the-counter drugs and any of those substances commonly referred to as “designer drugs.”

This policy describes the philosophy of the Sharon Springs Central School District and the program elements this District will use:

- (a) To promote healthy life styles for its students and staff;
- (b) To inhibit the use of drugs, alcohol, and other potentially harmful substances.

The Board of Education of Sharon Springs Central School District is committed to the education of our students, staff and citizens concerning the use of drugs, alcohol, and other substances. The Board is committed to the prevention of substance abuse of all types. The Board is committed to the collaboration with law enforcement agencies as a means of dealing with illegal usage, and to the collaboration with appropriate counseling or treatment agencies as a means of dealing with abuse. The Board urges responsible, moderate use (if any) in situations, where the use of an unhealthy substance is legal.

No person may use, possess, sell or distribute alcohol or other substances, nor may use or possess drug paraphernalia on school grounds or at school—sponsored events, except drugs as prescribed by a physician.

Realizing that tobacco and tobacco synthetics (ie. vaping products) are addictive substances, its use on school property is strictly prohibited.

Additionally, any person flagrantly and obviously under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be prohibited from entering the school grounds or school – sponsored events.

PHILOSOPHY

The District will use the following principles as guides for the development of its substance use/abuse prevention efforts and for any disciplinary measures related to alcohol and other substances:

- Alcohol, tobacco and other substance abuse is preventable and treatable.
- Alcohol and substance abuse could inhibit the District from carrying out its central mission of education.
- The use of alcohol, tobacco, vaping products and drugs are viewed differently by individuals, the laws, health officials and by society. Therefore, in an effort to maintain the individual freedoms granted in an every changing democratic society, the Board recognizes the right of all persons to the responsible use of legal substances.
- The Board of Education, the administration, the teachers and the staff should be aware of the fact that their behavior is frequently observed and often taken as a model by students. Behavior by these individuals should not in any way weaken or jeopardize the purposes of this policy.
- Any policy on substance abuse will not be highly effective for young people if it is primarily restrictive and prescriptive. Alternative activities, attitudes and lifestyles should be an integral part of this policy.
- While the District can and must assume a leadership role alcohol, tobacco, vaping and other substance use/abuse prevention, this goal will be accomplished only through coordinated, collaborative efforts with parents, students, staff and the community as a whole.

PREVENTION CURRICULUM

The intent of primary prevention programming is to prevent or delay the onset of alcohol, tobacco and other substance use by students. The components of this programming shall include:

1. A sequential K – 12 prevention curriculum that provides:
 - a. Accurate and age appropriated information about drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping and other substances, including the physical, psychological and social consequences of their use/abuse.
 - b. Information about the relationship of alcohol and other substances use/abuse to other health—compromising issues such as AIDS, teenage pregnancy, eating disorders, child abuse, suicide and dropping out of school.
 - c. Help for students to develop appropriate life skills to resist the use of alcohol and other substances and to promote healthy life styles.
 - d. Help for students to identify personal risk factors for alcohol and other substance use/abuse and the steps needed for risk reduction.
 - e. Help for students to develop a positive self-concept.
 - f. Help for students to identify when they are under stress and how to manage and reduce stress through non - chemical means.
 - g. Help with basic communication skills, decision making, problem solving and assertiveness training.
 - h. Students with help in refusal skills.
 - i. Students with consumer education.

2. Training school staff, parents, and guardians to use the information and skills necessary to reinforce the components of this policy in the home, school and community.
3. Community education about the issues of alcohol, tobacco, vaping and other substance use/abuse as a basis for providing a consistent message to District youth.
4. Positive alternatives to alcohol and other substance use/abuse, such as peer leadership programs, service projects and recreational and extracurricular activities. Such activities will be planned collaboratively by students, school staff, parents, community members and agencies.

INTERVENTION AND AFTERCARE

The intent of intervention programming is to eliminate any existing use/abuse of alcohol and other substances, and to identify and provide supportive services to kindergarten through 12th grade students at high risk for such use/abuse. The components of such Programming shall include:

1. Providing alcohol and other substance use/abuse assessment and counseling services for students.
2. Developing a referral process between Sharon Springs Central School and community providers.
3. Identifying and referring students to appropriate agencies when their use/abuse of alcohol and/or other substances requires counseling/treatment.
4. Providing services to students in or returning from treatment to assure that the school environment supports the process of recovery initiated in the treatment Program.

5. Providing individual, group and family counseling targeted at students at high risk for alcohol and/or other substance use/abuse.
6. Educating parents on when and how to access the District's intervention services.
7. Confidentiality for students, families and referral persons.

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

Students

Students found to be using, possessing, selling or distributing alcohol and/or other substances or possessing drug paraphernalia will be disciplined in accordance with the District's Policy concerning Drug Usage which is set forth in the District's Policy Manual and Student Handbook. A violation of the District's Policy concerning drugs, alcohol, and other potentially harmful substances may result in disciplinary sanctions which may lead up to and include long term suspension from school. Additionally, all students who are found in violation of the policy will be required to participate in the Intervention Program as set forth in this policy statement.

If a handicapped student is found to be in violation of this Policy, the incident will be referred to the Committee on Special Education for an immediate evaluation of the handicapped student's conduct in the light of his/her handicapping condition. The recommendation of the Committee on Special Education will be forwarded to the Superintendent (or his/her designee) for consideration when determining the appropriate disciplinary sanctions for the handicapped student pursuant to the District's Policy.

Employees

District employees found to be in violation of this Policy will be disciplined in accordance with an applicable employment agreement, including any collective bargaining agreement, as well as the New York State Education Law. A violation of this Policy may result in disciplinary sanctions up to and including termination of employment.

Law Enforcement Age

This school district will establish a collaborative working relationship with the local law enforcement officials. All individuals (students as well as employees) who are found to be in violation of this policy by unlawfully using, possessing, selling or distributing alcohol and/or illicit substances, will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The Board recognizes that if the administrative, instructional and non-instructional staff are to be responsible for the understanding, implementing and modeling of this policy, they must be trained about the components for an effective alcohol and other substance prevention program. Staff training will be an on-going process including the following:

1. For the Staff:

- (a) An understanding of why individuals use and abuse drugs, alcohol and other potentially harmful substances.
- (b) Their role in implementing this policy, including how to identify students who exhibit high risk behaviors or who are using/abusing alcohol and other substances, and how to refer these students to the appropriate services established by this policy.
- (c) Awareness of personal risk factors for drugs, alcohol and other potentially harmful substance use/abuse so that they may identify personal use/abuse problems and seek assistance; and

- (d) Awareness of the special needs of students returning from treatment.
2. Additionally for teachers:
- (a) The knowledge and skills necessary to implement the District's K-12 alcohol and other substance prevention curriculum as implemented in the health and safety curriculum.
3. For intervention staff:
- (a) appropriate staff training for those identified to carry out the intervention function to assure that their skills in assessment, counseling (individual, group or family) and referral, answer the needs of high-risk, using, and abusing youth and school employees.
4. For prevention staff:
- (a) appropriate staff training to assure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to support the application of prevention concepts through programming targeted at school, home, and community.

The premises of a comprehensive policy concerning drugs, alcohol and other potentially harmful substances is that such substance abuse concerns everyone, and that a united community stand against it is a crucial step in preventing it. Getting District staff members to support alcohol and other substance abuse prevention is an initial step in this larger, community wide process.

All staff instructional, non-instructional, administrative and the Board of Education must be trained in the elements of a comprehensive prevention program. Some thought and skill will be necessary in presenting this material so that the staff will feel invested in establishing a healthy school environment. All staff and school board members should be impressed with the importance of examining their own behaviors and personal health risk factors.

The teachers who will actually be delivering these prevention elements in their classrooms will require a higher level of expertise in alcohol and other substance use/abuse. They will need a higher level of expertise relative to treatments and to the special needs of students returning to school after treatment. Furthermore, the District must support the staff responsible for its intervention program by providing them with the resources to maintain and improve their education and skills.