



E-cigarette & Vaping Toolkit for Schools

Addressing student use of e-cigarettes & vapes



Will County

Health Department &
Community Health Center

TOBACCO CONTROL &
PREVENTION PROGRAM

Will County E-Cigarette and Vaping Toolkit for Schools Addressing Student Use of E-Cigarettes and Vapes

In Will County, 22% of 12th grade students reported using any tobacco or vaping products in the past year and 13% have reported using e-cigarettes in the past 30 days (2022, Illinois Youth Survey [IYS]). In 2022, 8% of 8th grade students also reported using any tobacco or vaping products in the past year (2022, IYS). As these numbers fluctuate, our youth need to be aware of all the known dangers related to these products. Nicotine is hooking kids fast and keeping them chained to the addiction.

Even products that claim to not contain nicotine, [have been found to contain large amounts](#).

This toolkit has been created to provide guidance to Will County school staff, including administrators and educators, who are working to address the use of e-cigarettes and other vaping devices in their schools. The resources in this toolkit were compiled with schools in mind, but some of these resources can certainly be helpful for parents and caregivers as well.

This toolkit also offers suggestions and resources to assist with the development of a comprehensive tobacco school code policy that includes e-cigarettes. This toolkit is intended to provide guidance for school policy makers who wish to protect the health and safety of our youth through the implementation of a comprehensive tobacco school code policy that includes e-cigarettes.

At the state level, additional action against e-cigarettes has been taken. An amendment to the Smoke Free Illinois Act was signed into law on July 28th, 2023, and will be effective January 1st of 2024. This amendment to the original act, bans e-cigarettes use in all public places where tobacco smoking is prohibited.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. [E-cigarettes & other vaping products](#)
 - a. What are electronic cigarettes and the dangers
 - b. It's time to start the conversation
- II. [Curriculum for Schools](#)
 - a. Catch My Breath
 - b. Stanford Toolkit
- III. [What more can you do?](#)
 - a. Policy change
 - b. National model school policy for tobacco and e-cigarettes
 - c. Implementation of new policy
 - d. Enforcement of policy- education not suspension
- IV. [Will County Health Department](#)
 - a. Technical assistance
 - b. Request materials (Factsheets, presentations, signage)
 - c. Health Department vaping webpages

All legal questions or advice should be reviewed and answered by your attorney. This information is not legal advice and should not be treated as such. The Will County Health Department Tobacco Control & Prevention program is not responsible for providing any legal advice or documents.

I. E-CIGARETTES & OTHER VAPING PRODUCTS

a. What are Electronic Cigarettes and the Dangers

Electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigs, vapes, or mods, are battery-powered devices that heat a liquid, referred to as e-liquid or e-juice, and turns it into an *aerosol* (not a harmless water vapor) that users inhale into their lungs. This aerosol contains flavorings, volatile organic compounds (VOC), other harmful chemicals, and almost always contains nicotine. These devices can resemble traditional tobacco cigarettes, cigars, or pipes, or even everyday items like pens, USB flash drives, even smart watches and draw-strings on a hoodie!



As stated, the aerosol produced by the e-cigarette, or vaping device, almost always contains nicotine, and we know nicotine is harmful to the developing adolescent brain. One JUUL pod (JUUL is a very popular vaping device that looks like a USB flash drive) contains as much nicotine as a traditional pack of cigarettes! Other chemicals, or ingredients used in e-juice, that may be harmless on their own, become dangerous when heated and inhaled into the lungs.

This became even more evident in 2019, when e-cigarettes were connected to an outbreak of a severe lung injury. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 2,800 known cases of this [severe lung illness](#) and over 60 deaths occurred. There were over 200 cases in Illinois, including five deaths, and there were over a dozen known cases in Will County. Using e-cigarettes also puts youth at greater risk for serious respiratory illnesses. While children and adolescents are at less risk of severe illness from COVID-19, the [Journal of Adolescent Health](#) found that there is increased risk of COVID-19 diagnosis and complications for adolescents who ever used e-cigarettes. Youth are also more likely to share e-cigarettes, increasing the risk of respiratory disease transmission as well.

Even though Illinois has a [Tobacco 21 law](#) that makes it illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to purchase any tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, kids are still finding ways to vape. And companies are always trying to come up with new, creative ways to keep kids vaping, so the devices are constantly evolving.

More information on vaping and e-cigarettes:

- E-cigarettes and Vapes- Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)
<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/tobacco/e-cigarettes-and-vapes>
- 6 Important Facts About JUUL- Truth Initiative
<https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/6-important-facts-about-juul>
- Risks of E-cigarettes for Kids, Teens, & Young Adults- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html

- Know the Risks- Surgeon General
<https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/>
- What You Need to Know About E-Cigarettes- American Lung Association
<https://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/smoking-facts/e-cigarettes-and-lung-health.html>
- Bigger, stronger, and cheaper: Disposable e-cigarettes have more nicotine and are more accessible than ever
<https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/bigger-stronger-and-cheaper-disposable-e-cigarettes>

b. It's Time to Start the Conversation

So, what does this mean for educators and parents? It means we need to be doing our homework to keep up with the trends, and know what dangers are associated with vaping. One way might be to visit vaping webpages to see what they are selling and how they market to youth.

It also means that it is even more important than ever to be talking to our students and children about these dangers. It is never too early, or too late, to start the conversation.

Tips for talking to youth about e-cigarettes:

- Vaping Resources for Parents- Partnership for Drug-free Kids
<https://drugfree.org/newsroom/news-item/partnership-for-drug-free-kids-launches-vaping-resource-for-parents/>
- Talk with Your Teen About E-cigarettes: A Tip Sheet for Parents- Surgeon General
https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/SGR_ECig_ParentTipsheet_508.pdf
- How to Identify Vaping Products- Flavors Hook Kids
<https://www.flavorhookkids.org/#product-cards>

II. CURRICULUMS FOR TEACHING ABOUT E-CIGARETTES IN SCHOOLS

Teachers, and school administrators, have the tough task of not only trying to communicate to their students the dangers of vaping, but also keeping these devices out of their schools. There are free curricula available to help schools to combat this issue.

a. Catch My Breath E-Cigarette & JUUL Prevention Program

This is a FREE, best-practices youth E-cigarette and JUUL prevention program developed by The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health. The program provides up-to-date information for teachers, parents, and health professionals to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions about the use of E-cigarettes, including JUUL devices. CATCH My Breath utilizes a peer-led teaching approach and meets National and State Health Education Standards.

This curriculum provides educators all the tools needed for program implementation. There are PowerPoints and educational handouts for each of the lesson plans. There are four 30-minute modules in the curriculum and is available for grades 5-12. Training is free for teachers and is virtual. Visit the links below for more information about this FREE curriculum.

Links to Free Curriculum and Training:

- E-Cigarette & JUUL Prevention Program- CATCH My Breath

<https://www.catch.org/bundles/23725#training>

- CATCH My Breath Information page
<https://catch.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/CATCH-My-Breath-One-Pager.pdf>

b. Stanford University's Tobacco Prevention Toolkit

Modules for Tobacco and Nicotine Education is theory-based, and evidence-informed resources created by educators, parents, and researchers aimed at preventing middle and high school students' use of tobacco and nicotine. This resource provides free tobacco/nicotine prevention materials to educators directly working with youth. This website includes free trainings and materials. Sample curricula, training modules on all types of tobacco, alternative to suspension curricula, and subject relevant materials for other classes, not just health class. Click below for the toolkit.

Link to Free Curriculum and Training:

- Tobacco Prevention Toolkit- Stanford Medicine
<https://med.stanford.edu/tobaccopreventiontoolkit.html>

III. WHAT MORE CAN YOU DO? POLICY CHANGE.

Schools, and school districts, need to set clear and comprehensive policies relating to tobacco use and tobacco products, in schools and on school properties. All schools within Will County have policies that address tobacco use, but some do not include e-cigarettes in their policies. Many schools in Will County focus on enforcement of their policies through suspensions and detentions, and do not educate and promote the cessation of tobacco use. This section addresses the importance of changing existing school tobacco policies to include e-cigarettes and focus on educating students on prevention and cessation.

a. Updating an Existing Policy

All Will County schools have an existing tobacco policy, but some of these were developed before e-cigarettes became popular with adolescents and need to be updated. Schools and districts can strengthen their existing policies by modifying them to be more like the model policy provided, with e-cigarettes included, and enforcement through education instead of suspension.

Inclusion of E-Cigarettes

Electronic cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among youth. According to the 2022 Illinois Youth Survey, 13% of 12th grade students in Will County had used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days. Schools can combat e-cigarette use among youth by updating their tobacco policies to include e-cigarettes.

Enforcement Through Education Not Suspension

Research suggests that school policies prohibiting the use of tobacco products, when consistently enforced, are an essential part of lowering the rate of tobacco use among adolescents. However, it is important that these policies are balanced with educational programming so that the students can understand the life-long consequences of using these addictive products and promote cessation from these products. Existing policies in Will County schools/districts regarding tobacco use focus on punishment through in-school and out-of-school suspensions and detentions. While students who

violate the rules of the school/district should be subject to discipline, the method currently employed by Will County schools does not effectively teach the students why using e-cigarettes and vaping products is wrong. The Will County Health Department Tobacco Control & Prevention Program staff recommend that instead of focusing on suspensions and detentions as a method of punishing e-cigarette use, schools should have student's complete educational programs on why e-cigarette use is dangerous.

Link to helpful resources:

- What should educators do if they catch students vaping at school? (Truth Initiative)
https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/what-should-educators-do-if-they-catch-students-vaping?utm_source=Truth+Initiative+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=e76b1a0876-Newsletter+2023+08+31&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-e76b1a0876-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D

b. Enforcement of Policy – Education Not Suspension

The existing school e-cigarette policies focus on punishing the student through detentions and suspensions. While students who break the rules should be held accountable, the goal is to promote the cessation of these products. This method of discipline is not effective in promoting cessation from tobacco products. These products contain nicotine, an addictive substance, and it is important that educating these students on the dangers of the use of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, and what future consequences these kids could face with continued use. To promote the cessation of using tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, in school policy, the Will County Health Department's Tobacco Control & Prevention program recommends that the schools have the students who violate their school's tobacco policy participate an education opportunity, like the American Lung Association free tobacco education program, Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health (INDEPTH), or Not on Tobacco (NOT).

INDEPTH is taught by any trained adult in four 50-minute sessions educating students about nicotine addiction and guide them through the process of identifying their reasons for using tobacco products. 60% of students who completed the program indicated that they were willing to quit using tobacco products.

Not On Tobacco (N-O-T) is a smoking/vaping cessation program for teens. NOT is taught by a certified adult in ten, 50-minute sessions. These sessions promote tobacco product cessation through developing stress management skills, coping skills, and promoting healthy behaviors. It utilizes different interactive learning strategies based on the Social Cognitive Theory of behavior change.

My Life My Quit is a free and confidential vaping/smoking cessation program for teens. Participants can chat or receive coaching via text, calls, or online that can help them reach their quitting goals. Educational materials are also available.

Link to programs and resources:

- American Lung Association

<https://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/helping-teens-quit/indepth.html>

- N-O-T: Not On Tobacco – Proven Teen Smoking and Vaping Cessation Program for youth ages 14-19 from American Lung Association
<https://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/helping-teens-quit/not-on-tobacco.html>
- My Life My Quit
<https://itql.mylifemyquit.org/index>

c. National Model School Policy for Tobacco and E-Cigarettes

The Public Health Law Center developed a comprehensive model policy for schools in Minnesota that thoroughly addresses tobacco and e-cigarette use within schools. The information within the policy is customizable and can fit Will County schools. The model policy has several sections including:

- i. **Findings:** This section includes data on the deaths related to tobacco product use, tobacco use financial burden on the health care system, use rates among youth, and acknowledgment that e-cigarettes and vaping products are causing a rise in tobacco use among youth. Including a *findings* section in the school policy, provides a foundation and justification for development of a strong tobacco-free policy for schools.

Sample Findings Statement:

In 2022, 17% of Will County 12th grade students had used tobacco products in the past 30 days and 13% had used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days.

Exposure to nicotine from all tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, can cause harm and lead to addiction in the adolescent brain.

Links that could help develop the findings section include:

- E-cigarettes and Vapes- IDPH
<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/tobacco/e-cigarettes-and-vapes>
- Vital Signs- CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/youth-tobacco-use/>
- Will County Report- Illinois Youth Survey (IYS)
https://iys.cprd.illinois.edu/UserFiles/Servers/Server_178052/File/2022/Cnty22_Will.pdf

- ii. **Purpose:** This section provides a goal that the school, or district, enacting this policy wishes to achieve. Including a *purpose* section explains why the policy is being created, what the policy goals are, and why following this policy is important.

Sample Purpose Statement:

(*District/School*) recognizes that the use of commercial tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems, is a health, safety, and environmental hazard for students, staff, visitors, and school facilities and school property. Therefore the (*district/school*) adopts the following tobacco-free policy.

- iii. **Definitions:** This section provides sample definitions of phrases that would be found within the policy. Includes definitions for types of tobacco and vaping products, school property, staff and students, and other definitions. Including a *definitions* section is important because it provides consistency in the language of the policy. It can also help reduce ambiguity and confusion.

Sample Definition for Tobacco Products:

“Tobacco Products” means any product containing, made, or derived from tobacco that contains nicotine and is intended for human consumption, whether chewed, smoked, inhaled,

absorbed, dissolved, snorted, sniffed, or ingested. Including, but not limited to cigarettes, electronic cigarettes or vaping products, cigars, cigarillos, chewing tobacco, and other kinds and forms of tobacco.

- iv. **General Statement of Policy:** This section provides a statement of what the school or districts policy is, what to include, and why. This section is where your school or district’s policy is clearly stated.

Sample General Statement of Policy:

(District/School name) students, staff, and visitors are prohibited from possessing, using, consuming, displaying, promoting, or selling any tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, any time on school property or at any off-campus, school-sponsored event.

- v. **Exceptions:** This section includes examples of exceptions to the rule. These could be either educational or equity reasons. Including an exceptions section in the school or district policy is important to respect the spiritual and philosophical beliefs of others.

Sample Exceptions Statement:

It shall not be a violation of (District/School) policy to possess or use tobacco products as part of an educational experience related to indigenous practices as approved by administrators.

- vi. **Opportunities for Cessation Programs:** This section establishes the importance of including cessation programs to be made available to students and staff. Including evidence-based cessation programs is an important method of strengthening a school tobacco policy, as it encourages abstaining from the use of tobacco and e-cigarette products.

Sample Opportunities for Cessation Programs:

Administrators shall identify and offer evidence-based programs and services for students and staff that use tobacco products to support them in complying with this policy.

- vii. **Enforcement:** This section discusses methods of punishment for those who violate the terms stated in the policy statement. It includes number of violations and what is to be completed after each violation, with an increase in severity of the consequences after each violation. All include education on tobacco and e-cigarette products as a part of the punishment. Including education on tobacco and e-cigarette products as part of the punishment is important to promote cessation from using these products and spreading awareness to the danger of their use. The enforcement section also includes the consequences staff and visitors face if they violate these policies.

Sample Enforcement Statement:

First violation by student shall result in the confiscation of tobacco products and require student participation in the tobacco education program INDEPTH.

- viii. **Dissemination of Policy:** Dissemination of policy details who is responsible for distributing information related to the policy, how it will be shared and when it is to be shared. This is important to achieve the goals and objectives that this policy is addressing.

Sample Dissemination of Policy Statement:

The school/district shall notify students and parents/guardians of this policy, including any updates to this policy, through student handbooks and orientations.

- ix. **Program Evaluation:** This section discusses the importance of including an evaluation plan for the policy. Evaluating the policy provides an opportunity to examine and update the policy as needed.

Sample Program Evaluation Statement:

This tobacco-free policy shall be assessed by the school/district at regular intervals, to determine whether policies, policy enforcement, communication, education, staff training and cessation programs are effective. Policies and programs shall be updated or revised accordingly.

- x. **Effective Date:** The last section of the model policy includes when the policy is to become officially implemented.

Sample Effective Date:

This policy shall take effect on September 7, 2023

Link to the full sample policy:

- Public Health Law Center
<https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/MDH-Minnesota-K-12-Q-A-WEB-2.pdf>

IV. WILL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- a. Will County Health Department’s Tobacco Control & Prevention program (TC&P) offers services to decrease tobacco use rates, keep youth tobacco-free and nicotine-free, and eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke in Will County. TC&P is available to help schools with technical assistance, such as developing a stronger school code policy that includes e-cigarettes and providing schools with updated educational information and tools to help keep their students tobacco-free.
- b. CATCH My Breath trained Will County TC&P program staff are available to assist with the implementation of this curriculum in several different classroom settings: health, physical education, science, etc.
- c. You can also request materials for your school such as **free tobacco-free campus signs**, or **e-cigarettes decals** to add to your existing signs. A **customizable PowerPoint presentation** has been developed for teachers and/or educators to educate their students about e-cigarettes and vaping. We have also developed **mirror clings** to display in school bathrooms, where in-school vaping is known to take place, with educational graphics about the dangers of youth vaping. Please also feel free to download and print any of the **factsheets** we have created. TC&P staff have also created several social media posts related to the harms of vaping. Please contact us if you would like to display on your own school’s social media outlets.
- d. The TC&P staff developed e-cigarette and vaping webpages so you can keep up-to-date on the information available and help you find additional resources for schools, students, and parents.

Links to Will County Health Department Resources:

- To request materials, for technical assistance, or for more information
<https://willcountyhealth.org/tobacco-control-and-prevention/>
- Vaping and E-cigarette information- Will County Health Department
<https://willcountyhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/E-Cigarette-and-Vaping-Information-main-page-update-9.11.19.pdf>
- Just Harmless Water Vapor? Think Again. Vaping Factsheet- Will County Health Department
<https://willcountyhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Just-Harmless-Water-Vapor-Think-again.-Sept.-2023.pdf>
- Customizable E-cigarette PowerPoint presentation for schools
<https://willcountyhealth.org/tobacco-control-and-prevention/>

- Catch My Breath Implementation Assistance

<https://willcountyhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/CATCH-promotion-IYS.2022-Sept.-2023.pdf>

In closing-

FOUR IMPORTANT THINGS SCHOOLS CAN DO TO IMPACT E-CIGARETTE USE:

1. Parent, student, and staff education of the risks of tobacco and e-cigarette usage
2. Implement vape prevention education curriculum in health class
3. Adoption of a strong tobacco use policy that includes electronic cigarettes/vapes
4. Education of staff, students, and parents of the new or existing policy (student handbook, campus signage, enforcement of policy, etc.)

Thank you for taking the steps towards protecting, and educating, today's youth about the dangers of e-cigarettes and vaping. We hope you found this toolkit educational and informative. If there is something you did not find here and are looking for, please feel free to contact our office Monday through Friday 8:30am-4:30pm at 1-815-727-5909.

*In health,
Will County Health Department
Tobacco Control & Prevention Program*



Will County

Health Department &
Community Health Center

TOBACCO CONTROL &
PREVENTION PROGRAM

WILLCOUNTYHEALTH.ORG/TOBACCO-CONTROL-AND-PREVENTION/