

## Drug and Alcohol Use by Students

The Eagle County School District is committed to assisting administrators, teachers, parents, and students in their efforts to help students make appropriate decisions regarding drugs and alcohol. The District recognizes that the use and/or abuse of drugs/alcohol may lead to chemical dependency.

### **BELIEF STATEMENTS:**

We believe that...

- ... *The school and community are dealing with a health issue as it regards its young people. There are legal, educational, social, and moral consequences, but these are secondary complications.*
- ... *The District should offer a K-12 articulated health and general education program that includes a scope and sequence of educational activities which includes activities designed to help students become good decision makers.*
- ... *improper use of drugs and alcohol is not only a school problem, but is symptomatic of other larger problems.*
- ... *there should be a coordinated effort to solve the drug/alcohol problem, and that effort should involve the community, churches, families and schools.*
- ... *because our young people are going through critical stages of their emotional and physical growth, they are very vulnerable to the negative side effects of drugs and alcohol. Developmental stages that are missed due to drug and/or alcohol use are not easily reconstructed.*
- ... *drug and alcohol related problems are treatable/manageable.*
- ... *there is no single answer or solution to the drug and alcohol problem, but rather we should use a variety of approaches and techniques.*
- ... *the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse is more effective than intervention and treatment.*
- ... *the use of drugs and/or alcohol will never be accepted in school or at school-related events.*
- ... *students are influenced greatly by their peers, and this influence can be either positive or negative.*
- ... *adults act as influential role models to students.*
- ... *school should be concerned with the drug and alcohol education of parents.*
- ... *the school climate and the home climate affect the probability that students will or will not misuse drugs and/or alcohol.*
- ... *teaching students to be responsible decision makers is the key to helping them avoid drug and/or alcohol abuse.*
- ... *chemical dependency should be viewed as an illness.*
- ... *drug/alcohol resistance is enhanced when there is an open communication of feelings and thoughts between a student and the significant people in his/her life.*
- ... *utilization and abuse of drugs and alcohol by students on school premises or at school events interferes with the administration of an environment conducive to education.*

**EDUCATION/PREVENTION:**

The District recognizes the importance of early intervention. Therefore, efforts will be made to contact students manifesting signs of use or abuse.

The cause of involvement with alcohol and/or drugs is not adequately understood by either adolescents or adults. There is evidence of a cultural, genetic, and psychological vulnerability, but that is as much as is understood at this time. Adolescents appear to create a substantial vulnerability to becoming harmfully involved once there is regular use of chemicals. Efforts should be directed at decreasing acceptance of use.

Education and the encouragement of student participation in activities that promote health continue to be the primary tools of prevention. Young people themselves, and their parents, bear the primary responsibility toward developing an attitude opposed to the use of chemicals during their developing years. It is toward these two groups that the major educational efforts are directed.

The District staff and the drug/alcohol program should be available to all students, as students who do not use drugs/alcohol may need assistance in supporting/continuing their decision not to use drugs/alcohol.

Organizations outside of the School District should be encouraged to provide as many healthy student activities as possible. These activities are especially helpful if they are partly planned by students, if they provide something for students to do on weekends, and if they are done with enough variety to continue to attract a wide range of the student population.

**REGULATIONS:**

1. The District shall develop, implement, and maintain an articulated health curriculum that includes activities necessary for a comprehensive drug/alcohol education program.
2. Emphasis of the educational program will be placed on the development of the basic skills necessary to help students become good decision makers. To accomplish this, students must learn how to deal with their feelings, how to establish and maintain positive relationships, and how to make decisions based upon a clear value system.
3. Each school will develop a library of materials that has the potential of helping parents and teachers become knowledgeable about drug and alcohol education and issues. The school staff should encourage the use of these materials in the regular/educational program by assigning themes, etc., on the topic and by counseling parents to take advantage of the library.
4. Members of each school staff will be encouraged to become resources to students to students and/or parents in the area of drug/alcohol education.

5. The District and each school will develop and maintain an up-to-date list of community resources that can be used for the prevention of drug/alcohol abuse or when intervention is necessary.
6. The School District will cooperate with outside agencies in their attempt to promote positive alternative activities to those activities that are commonly associated with drug/alcohol abuse for the students of the Eagle County School District.

**INTERVENTION:**

The Eagle County School District expressly prohibits the utilization and/or possession of drugs and/or alcohol, it may become necessary for school officials to make appropriate intervention.

It should be the goal of the staff to identify student drug and alcohol-related problems at the earliest possible time so that a proactive problem-solving approach can be taken. All decisions should focus on what is best for the long-term development of the student, on adherence to Colorado law, and on the need of the School District to maintain an orderly program for all students.

Confidentiality and the need for parental support and assistance may, at times, seem to be paradoxical, but both are necessary in a successful intervention program. Creative and individualized approaches to problem-solving will frequently be required.

Any intervention regulations must allow the school principal the discretionary authority to make decisions that are necessary to manage a safe, healthy, and productive school environment. The District staff should be knowledgeable about related laws and due process rights so that interventions are legal, moral, and provide the opportunity for student success.

Suspension from school of the student for drug or alcohol-related rule infractions should be considered only after other alternatives have been explored or considered. Providing options to student offenders is encouraged. The School District is in an excellent position to provide counseling, but is not equipped or staffed to provide treatment.

**REGULATIONS:**

1. It is very important that young people be confronted as soon as possible if there is suspected use of drugs and/or alcohol. This initial contact need not be one in which the student is accused of a law or policy infraction, but may take the form of the school official showing a sincere concern for the well being of the student. The teacher or other staff member making the intervention with the suspect drug/alcohol abuser should do what (s)he can to see that the student makes contact with the school counselor.
2. When an offense on the part of a student warrants suspension, in-school suspension and

counseling are preferable to out-of-school suspension and should be considered in most cases.

3. The three most common offenses on the part of a student are intoxication with drugs or alcohol, possession of drugs or alcohol on school property, or dealing (*selling*) drugs or alcohol to others on school property. The following guidelines are established to assist the principal (*or his/her designee*) in dealing with these offenses. The principal is always allowed the latitude of his/her judgment in disposing of these cases, and extenuating circumstances such as the number of offenses may be considered.

- a. **Intoxication:** If, in the opinion of school officials, there is cause to believe that a student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol at school during school hours or at a school-sponsored event, the student shall be confronted by a school official, removed from the setting, and told that the parents/guardians will be informed. A school official will attempt to contact the parents/guardians who will be asked to take the student home. The parents/guardians may be advised that it would be helpful if the student was to receive a complete physical examination to determine if a problem exists and if so, the extent of the problem.

Both the student and the parents/guardians will be informed that the administration of a medical examination by a doctor or mechanical analysis of the student's breath is a possibility in situations where the safety of the students is in questions. Options available to the principal include out-of-school suspension, in-school suspension, and/or counseling. The principal, at his/her discretion, may contact law enforcement officials.

- b. **Possession:** If a student is found to be in possession of drugs or alcohol on school property or at a school-sponsored event, the parents/guardians should be notified as soon as possible and efforts made to schedule a parent-school conference. Law enforcement officials may be notified of the offense as soon as possible, and potential evidence turned over to them. The school principal has the discretion to react to this offense in what (s)he deems to be an appropriate manner, including out-of-school suspension, in-school suspension, and/or counseling.
  - c. **Dealing:** In all cases where a student is found to be selling drugs or alcohol to others, law enforcement officials will be notified. Parents/guardians of the student will be notified as soon as possible, and the student will be suspended from school pursuant to the provisions of Colorado law and Board policy, which may lead to expulsion of the student from school.
4. Possession or use of drugs or intoxicants on an activity trip may result in the student being removed from the group and placed in the hands of the nearest law enforcement agency, at which time it will become the responsibility of the parent or guardian to

- arrange for transportation to return the student home. The supervisor of the trip shall have the discretion to bring the student back to the parent or to take the student to a law enforcement agency.
5. When parents/guardians are contacted and informed that their child is using alcohol or illegal drugs or is suspected of using alcohol or illegal drugs, the school official making that contact should also inform the parents/guardians of appropriate and inappropriate approaches for the parents/guardians to confront and solve the problem at the family level. This counseling is intended to make sure that any problems that may already exist between the child and the parents/guardians are not increased.
  6. School officials will attempt to establish and maintain a positive relationship with local law enforcement officials. When school district officials interact with law enforcement agencies involving the suspected offense of a student, the well being of the student should be considered as a high priority.
  7. In some situations, the use of contracts between the student, the school, and the parents/guardians may be used very successfully. A contract may be drawn which will stipulate the conditions under which the student may attend school. This contract, which will be written and signed by the principal, the student, and the parent(s) and/or guardian(s), may include requirements for in-school suspension, standards for behavior in school, suggestions for out-of-school family counseling, etc.
  8. In cases where reasonable cause exists to suspect that a violation has occurred, school officials may conduct searches of a school locker, a student's person, or a vehicle in the following manner:
    - a. School locker searches may be initiated by a principal (*or his/her designee*). Discretion should be used so as to not call undue attention to the student; searches should be done in as unobtrusive manner as possible and should be conducted in the presence of the student whenever possible.
    - b. Searches of the student's vehicle, pockets, backpacks, and/or carryalls may be conducted in the following manner: If reasonable cause exists, the student will be asked to allow the school authorities to search his/her person, bag, or vehicle parked on school property. If the student refuses to consent to a search of his/her person, bag, or vehicle, the school official should not conduct a forced search, but shall consider asking law enforcement officials for assistance. Strip searches are expressly forbidden.
  9. If in the opinion of school officials, there is cause to believe that a student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the school officials may ask the student to leave any school-sponsored event even though the student may not be under the influence but is behaving in an inappropriate manner.

