

Policy Tip Sheet – Student Enforcement

A policy that is not enforced is a useless policy. Students will be a crucial piece of ensuring compliance with any tobacco policy put in place. Below are suggestions for utilizing students in the process.

- If possible, have the first semester be a “transition time.” During this time, violators will receive reminders about the policy, but no fines or penalties. Start enforcement procedures during the second semester (using whatever penalties have been deemed appropriate by administration).
- Remain positive and do not escalate a confrontation. The overall message is “this benefits the health of everyone on campus.” Some smokers, inevitably, will argue that you’re taking away their “right to smoke.” The policy is not forcing them to quit smoking, just to restrict their smoking to off-campus locations.
 - If pressed for a reason, politely inform them that secondhand smoke kills 53,000 nonsmokers in the U.S. every year, and this policy ensures everyone’s ability to breathe clean air. Also mention that secondhand smoke exacerbates asthma and increases the possibility of a heart attack for those at risk.
- Hand out cards with the policy, as well as a list of cessation resources. Reinforce the quitting option verbally. e.g. “If you ever want to quit or explore options for quitting, please contact ‘x.’”
- If possible, you may want to train peer educators in motivational interviewing skills. This way, as they encounter people that are thinking about quitting, they can provide them with steps for making quit attempts.
- For those following the policy, hand out thank you cards with cessation information on the back. Again, verbally reinforce the quit options. You may want to include some small incentive on the cards (like a small candy). This rewards them for following the policy, but it is not a large incentive that rewards the smoking behavior.
- Conduct observations of campus to see where “problem areas” are. This will help you dispatch volunteers to key locations.
- Consistently provide reminders about the policy throughout the first semester, not only during the first few weeks. The goal is to build high compliance so that you only need to conduct enforcement procedures sparingly in future semesters.
- Make sure there are large, visible reminders about the policy. Advertise it in the student paper, online, and even through Twitter and Facebook. Post sandwich board signs in high-traffic areas. The first semester, in particular, should be less about enforcement and more about education and building compliance.
- Utilize students to spread the message. Students talk to other students, so make sure you provide them with accurate information about the policy.