

Addressing vaping on school property

A toolkit for Alberta schools

July 2026



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For more information, please contact tobaccovapingenforcement@ahs.ca

Acknowledgements

This toolkit has been adapted with permission from British Columbia Interior Health’s Vaping Toolkit for Schools (July 2024).

Sacred tobacco acknowledgement

Traditional tobacco is a sacred plant and a gift given by the Creator to Indigenous people. It is important to honour the role tobacco plays in many Indigenous cultures.

In this resource, “tobacco” refers to commercial tobacco products, like cigarettes sold in stores. It does not include traditional tobacco used by First Nations and some Métis groups for ceremonial purposes and as a sacred medicine. Vaping products are not used for ceremonial purposes, nor are they considered sacred medicine.

Background

The purpose of this document is to provide school authorities in Alberta with information and resources to help address the use of vaping products on school property and meet the requirements set out by the Alberta [Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Act](#) (TSVRA) and Regulation.

Enforcement Program

The [Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Enforcement Program](#) was created in January 2022 to improve compliance with the Alberta TSVRA and its Regulation by:

- Inspecting tobacco and vaping product retailers to ensure compliance.
- Educating retailers to help them meet requirements.
- Working with other enforcement agencies to coordinate enforcement activities across the province.
- Responding to public complaints.

This toolkit was created by the Enforcement Program to support schools in becoming compliant with the Alberta TSVRA.

If a school authority or administration does not exercise its due diligence to prevent smoking and vaping on school property, then they may be held legally responsible for being non-compliant with the legislation. Penalties under the TSVRA can be up to \$10,000 for a first offence, and up to \$100,000 for a second offence. Penalties are only used as a last resort when a manager of a place where smoking and vaping is prohibited has not made any effort to prevent smoking and vaping on their property.

[Appendices 1 and 2](#) of this toolkit have checklists that include strategies to help encourage and maintain compliance at your school(s).

Note: Nothing in this toolkit should be interpreted as legal advice. In the event of a conflict between any information in this guide and the legislation, the provisions in the TSVRA and regulation apply.

For further information, contact the Tobacco, Smoking & Vaping Enforcement Program at tobaccovapingenforcement@ahs.ca.

Vaping

Vaping is a common term for using electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes). E-cigarette devices heat liquid containing nicotine, flavours, and other chemicals to create an aerosol (i.e., small particles of liquid or solids suspended in a gas). When someone vapes, they inhale the aerosol into their lungs and exhale it into the air. Vaping mimics the experience of smoking regular cigarettes. E-cigarettes go by different names, like e-cigs, vapes, vape pens, mods, or e-hookahs.

Vaping can be harmful to health. Youth and people who do not smoke should not vape. Youth are especially susceptible to its negative health effects including damage to the lungs. Nicotine in vape liquid can interfere with healthy teen brain development and can affect memory and concentration. It can also lead to physical dependence and/or addiction. Youth may become dependent on nicotine with lower levels of exposure than adults.

To reduce the harms associated with smoking, second-hand smoke, and to address the rise in youth vaping, the [Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Act](#) (TSVRA) came into effect on July 31, 2021.

Statistics

According to the 2021-2022 Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey, 39% of students who had used an e-cigarette indicated that they had never smoked a cigarette, not even a puff.¹

The 2022 Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey found that the main reason 15 to 19-year-olds vaped was to reduce stress (30.5%) compared to those aged 25 and older who reported vaping to reduce, quit or avoid returning to smoking (27.6%). Other reasons for youth-use included because they enjoyed it (22.9%) or were curious (27%).² The 2023 Canadian Substance Use Survey reported that 28% of youth and young adults aged 15-24 had used a vaping product in the past 30 days. 50% of youth reported using a vaping product in their lifetime.³

¹ [Summary of results for the Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey 2021 - Canada.ca](#)

² [Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey \(CTNS\): summary of results for 2022 - Canada.ca](#)

³ [Canadian Substance Use Survey \(CSUS\): summary of results for 2023 - Canada.ca](#)

School authority responsibility

Overview of the legislation

The [Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Act](#) (TSVRA) came into effect July 31, 2021, which amended [Section 3](#) to prohibit smoking and vaping on school property, including the building, grounds and parking areas used in relation to the school property.

Key responsibilities

1. Schools must maintain a smoke and vape-free environment on all school property.
2. No smoking / no vaping signs must be posted at each entrance to a school.

[Section 6](#) of the TSVRA requires that the manager of a place where smoking or vaping is prohibited not permit a person to smoke or vape in that place. A manager is defined as an employer or other person who, directly or indirectly, controls, directs or is responsible for a place or who controls the activities in the place. This means the school authority and administration are responsible for the school property and must not permit anyone to smoke or vape in the school building, on the grounds or in the parking areas.

[Section 7](#) of the TSVRA requires that the manager of a place where smoking or vaping is prohibited under the Act must ensure that signs indicating that smoking or vaping is prohibited are posted and continuously displayed in accordance with the regulations. This means the school authority must ensure that no smoking/no vaping signs are posted at building entrances, inside the school, on school grounds and in parking areas.

Signage requirements

The [Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Regulation](#) requires the prescribed ‘[No Smoking No Vaping](#)’ sign to be posted at each entrance to the school at a height of no lower than 1 metre and no higher than 2.4 metres and must be clearly visible to anyone entering the school.

The manager is required to post the ‘No Smoking No Vaping’ sign at each entrance to the school and inside the building in such numbers and locations so that the requirements are clear and everyone is aware of the regulations. It may be beneficial to post signs in areas that students tend to gather.

For more information, see [section 2\(1\)](#) of the Regulation.



Information and resources for schools

Addressing student use of vaping products requires a multi-pronged approach in alignment with the [Comprehensive School Health Framework](#) and evidence-based substance-related harms prevention. Learn more about what schools can do through the Public Health Agency of Canada’s [Blueprint for Action: Preventing substance-related harms among youth through a Comprehensive School Health approach](#).

Authority policies/administrative procedures

School authorities should have a policy or administrative procedure in place that communicates their position on smoking and vaping on school property. This guidance should be communicated to principals, staff members, parents/guardians and students at all schools.

See [Appendix 2](#) of this toolkit for a checklist to help create or update a smoke and vape-free policy for schools.

Information for superintendents and school administrators

Help protect youth from exposure to smoking and vaping by following these steps:

- Ensure prescribed [No Smoking, No Vaping signs](#) are posted at each entrance to the school at a height of no lower than 1 metre and no higher than 2.4 metres. Add signage in areas where students, staff or the public gather.
- Create, review or strengthen the school's [tobacco, smoke and vape-free policy](#).
- Educate and regularly remind students, parents/guardians and staff about the school's tobacco, smoke and vape free policy.
- Use [restorative practices](#) to support students who possess or use tobacco or vaping products on school property.
- Learn about traditional and ceremonial tobacco use through the [Keep Tobacco Sacred Collaborative](#).
- Help prevent problematic substance use by promoting mental health and social-emotional wellbeing with [effective programming for supporting positive youth development](#).
- Make information about supports for quitting smoking and vaping available to all students and staff. Additional resources are provided at the end of this toolkit.

Engage students:

- [Amplify the student voice](#) to create effective policies, programs and a positive environment.

Engage parents/guardians:

- Send reminders to parents/guardians about the [tobacco, smoke and vape-free policy](#).
- Share the [Consider the Consequences](#) campaign with parents/guardians and encourage them to share it with their children.

Engage staff:

- Provide staff with training and reminders about the [tobacco, smoke and vape-free policy](#).
- Help staff stay informed about vaping with this [tip sheet for teachers](#) and this [E-Cigarette and Vape Pen Module](#).

Information for teachers and school staff

Educate yourself:

- Review your school authority's policies, administrative procedures, and codes of conduct regarding smoke and vape-free regulations.
- Stay updated about [vaping](#) with this [tip sheet](#) and [E-cigarette and vape pen module](#).
- Improve [dialogue facilitation skills](#) to encourage reflection and support the development of decision-making skills through open classroom discussions.
- Learn about the traditional and ceremonial use of tobacco through the [Keep Tobacco Sacred Collaborative](#).
- Review the Primary Care Alberta [resources for teachers](#) page for more information and support.

Educate students:

- Ensure students are aware of the school's tobacco, smoke and vape free policy and administrative procedures by providing regular reminders.
- Implement [interactive classroom programs](#) or [self-led educational modules](#).
- Refer students to the [Behind the Haze](#) Alberta webpage to learn more about vaping.
- Share the [Consider the Consequences](#) campaign.
- Any time that you address tobacco in the classroom, school, or school authority, make it clear that using [traditional tobacco](#) is not the same as using commercial tobacco.

Appendix 1: School compliance checklist

Below is a checklist of strategies to help encourage and maintain compliance at your school(s). It's recommended to review the checklist on an annual basis.

School compliance checklist	✓
No Smoking No Vaping signage is posted at each school entrance.	
Additional signage is posted where students gather.	
Policies, administrative procedures, and codes of conduct are current.	
Staff training and information is provided.	
Student/classroom vaping information is provided.	
Parent/guardian information is provided.	
Quit support or information is available.	

Appendix 2: Policy review checklist

Below is a checklist of topics to include in your schools' vaping policy. It's recommended to review the checklist on an annual basis.

Policy review checklist	✓
The policy/administrative procedure meets the requirements of the TSVRA.	
No Smoking No Vaping signage is posted at each school entrance.	
No smoking or vaping at school events or field trips.	
Funding or gifts from tobacco or vape companies are not allowed.	
Traditional tobacco process is established.	
Restorative practices are implemented.	
Quit support or information is available.	
Vape disposal process* is established.	
*Vaping products are considered household hazardous waste and should be disposed of accordingly. Check your local municipal disposal sites for guidance.	

Appendix 3: Signage and print resources

Signage and print resources		
Name	Example	How to access
No Smoking No Vaping Required signage	 A white rectangular sign with the text "NO SMOKING NO VAPING" in bold black capital letters at the top. Below the text is a red circle with a diagonal slash over a black icon of a cigarette and a vape pen. At the bottom left is "alberta.ca" and at the bottom right is "Alberta" with a small logo.	Click here for the printable copy of this poster. See section 2(1) of the Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Regulation for specifications on posting.
Government of Canada Vaping nicotine can alter teen brain development	 A yellow poster with a black and white striped background. In the center is a white cloud of smoke coming from a green vape pen. At the top left is the Canadian flag and "Canada" and at the top right is "Canada". Below the smoke cloud is the text "VAPING NICOTINE CAN ALTER TEEN BRAIN DEVELOPMENT" in bold black capital letters, followed by "CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES" and "Canada.ca/vaping-info" at the bottom.	Click here for the printable copy of this poster. Cliquez ici pour télécharger l'affiche en français.

Click [here](#) for an in-depth list of available print and video resources from the Government of Canada in English and [here](#) for the resources available in French.

Additional resources

Youth quit support:

- [Quash](#)
- [Not An Experiment - Quitting](#)

Adult quit support:

- [AlbertaQuits](#)