



I Want My Child's School to be Drug Free. How Do I Make That Happen?

Most high school students and nearly half of middle school students see drug use, possession and dealing, or see students high on drugs or drunk, on their school grounds. Is your child witnessing these things at school? If you're not sure, ask your child.

If you believe that there are drugs on the grounds of your child's school, follow these steps.

Know The Facts

- 80 percent of high school students and 44 percent of middle school students see drug use, possession or dealing and/or students high or drunk on the grounds of their schools.
- Students who attend schools where drugs are used, kept or sold, or where students come to school high or drunk, are many times likelier to use illegal drugs including marijuana, to abuse prescription drugs, to drink alcohol or get drunk, and to smoke cigarettes.
- Student substance use and abuse increase problem behaviors and disciplinary problems in the classroom.
- Substance use interferes with attendance, academic performance, promotion, graduation and achievement on standardized tests including college entrance exams.
- Students who smoke, drink or use drugs are at greater risk for failure, absenteeism, truancy, dropping out of school and expulsion.
- Student substance use interferes with student academic performance by physically damaging areas of the brain involved in learning and memory.



- Students who smoke, drink or use drugs are at increased risk for a variety of mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety disorders, conduct disorders and eating disorders – all of which further interfere with a student's ability to concentrate on his or her studies and increase the likelihood of disruptive behavior.

Demand a Drug-Free Learning Environment For Your Child

- Parents have successfully pressed for better schools, higher academic standards and quality education. Some have lobbied hard to pass legislation allowing their children to go to charter schools or receive school vouchers to attend parochial schools. There is no reason why parents cannot demand safe and drug-free schools for their children.
- **You do not need to do this alone.** Share the information in *How to Raise a Drug-Free Kid: The Straight Dope for Parents* with other parents at your school's parent-teacher association meeting. Talk to the other parents and the teachers about raising the issue with the school leadership.
- If you believe that there are drugs on the grounds of your child's school, **talk to the school principal about it.** Understand the impact of substance abuse on academic achievement. Realize the dangers of sending your child to a drug-infected school environment.
- A school environment that helps reduce the risk of student substance use is one that encourages student attachment to school, provides clear and consistent expectations for student behavior, imparts sound societal values, offers more individual attention within smaller schools, helps coordinate support services for students and their families, and insists on parental involvement in students' education. Substance abuse prevention curriculum is an important but by no means sufficient element of this equation.
- A school environment that encourages students to set high, yet attainable, academic goals will encourage students to avoid substance use that would interfere with the attainment of those goals.
- A school that encourages students to become involved in extracurricular activities not only provides the opportunity for youth to broaden their interests and enrich their lives, but also helps reduce key risk factors for substance use – boredom, delinquency and low self-esteem.

