DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE – UPDATE ON PROCEDURES

EDUCATION OF STUDENTS IN THE PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUG DEPENDENCY

While substance abuse prevention should be a part of a comprehensive health education program, certain curricula should be used to complement and supplement health education curriculum materials, K-12. Substance abuse prevention may also be integrated into reading/language arts, social studies and science classes. The Health Standards contain substantial objectives related to substance abuse prevention. Skill building, as well as knowledge and health advocacy is important.

The Great Body Shop elementary comprehensive health education curriculum has an emphasis on substance abuse prevention. Middle school resources include: The new Teenage Health Teaching Module, “Choosing Not to Use” In high school, the recommended curriculum is Teenage Health Teaching Modules.

EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION

Even though a student may not possess or abuse substances at school, he or she may still have serious problems involving alcohol or drugs which demand the attention and assistance of school personnel. Teachers, counselors and administrators are professional people already trained in working with youth; they are also familiar with legal, sociological, psychological and medical effects of substance abuse or addiction. It is the goal of this school system, through in-service programs and workshops, to continually raise staff awareness, understanding and effectiveness regarding substance abuse.

School staff should be alert to those symptoms in students which may indicate problems with substance abuse so that they may initiate assistance to students in need of early intervention.

These symptoms may include one or more of the following: abrupt change in mood or attitude; sudden decline in attendance or performance in school; sudden resistance to discipline; impaired relationships with family or friends; drowsiness or inattention to discussion or surroundings; weight loss; inattention to dress; unusual flare-ups of temper; stealing; heightened secrecy about actions or possessions; and association with new friends, especially with individuals known to be substance abusers.

COUNSELING/REFERRAL

When it becomes evident that a student is either abusing alcohol or other drugs, or there are strong indications that such is the case, the administrative head of the school should discuss the situation with the student, parents or guardians of the student, and explore the possibility of directing them to a counseling or referral site capable of responding to the student's needs. The school's student support coordinator, guidance counselor and nurse should be consulted when dealing with such cases.

Students may be referred to the Student Support Team (S.S.T.) by teachers or by any other school staff member. Students may self-refer because of a problem with substance abuse. The team should be prepared to assist the student by providing him/her with a source of early intervention in the form of individual or group counseling by a provider agency which serves the school or is available in the community.
RE-ENTRY

Follow-up is a crucial phase of a student's recovery after return from treatment for substance abuse. An after-care program should be devised by school staff in collaboration with the facility which has provided treatment services. The plan should include a review of the student's school program with parents, guidance counselor and case manager, placements in an appropriate class schedule and follow-up meetings.

REPORTING OF INCIDENTS RELATED TO DRUG/ALCOHOL ABUSE

1. All School Department personnel are under obligation to report to the Principal, Headmaster, or other designated administrator any and all incidents or suspected incidents involving the use, possession, or distribution of any drug, alcoholic beverage or weapons by any student, while he/she is under the authority of the Boston School Department.

2. All School Department personnel are to understand that in the event they are subpoenaed to testify in a court of law or other proceeding, they are obligated to reveal any information pertaining to drug, alcohol and weapons incidents, even if such information was given to them in confidence.

3. All School personnel are to understand that they are prohibited from "making deals" with students whereby they agree not to notify law enforcement agencies of known or suspected illegal activities involving drug, alcohol or weapon incidents.

4. Each and every incident or suspected incident is to be reported immediately to the appropriate Principal, Headmaster or designated administrator, in accordance with School Department policy and procedure.

5. Students are considered to be under the authority of the Boston School Department when they are on School Department property, on School Department busses, at or near school bus stops, while on their way to or from school, or participating in school sponsored activities conducted off school grounds.

6. Any student who is suspected of, or who has admitted to being under the influence of drugs or alcohol must be immediately escorted to the office of the Principal, Headmaster, or designated administrator.

7. Students involved in incidents described in items 1, 5, and 6 shall be considered in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 94C (Controlled Substances Act), Chapter 138 (Alcoholic Liquors), Chapter 119 (Protection and Care of Children and Proceedings against Them) and Chapter 169-10 (Dangerous Weapons, Unlawfully Carrying).

8. To be under the influence of drugs or alcohol is a violation of School Department rules. Students deemed to be in violation of school rules after an investigation by the Principal, Headmaster or designated administrator will be appropriately disciplined, but law enforcement and EMS assistance may be requested in cases where it is apparent that the student is engaging in disorderly or dangerous behavior.

9. Students found to be in possession of drugs, alcohol or weapons or to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol is to be considered in violation of Massachusetts General Law. In such cases the Principal, Headmaster or designated administrator is obligated to summon the Boston Police Department which will assume responsibility for criminal prosecution in the event that such prosecution is warranted.
10. In all such cases where students are found or suspected to be involved in any incident involving substance abuse a School Police Officer will take custody of any and all evidence including drugs and alcohol.

11. The Department of Safety Services will coordinate record-keeping functions.

**DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES RELATING TO DRUG/ALCOHOL ABUSE**

1. Sections 7.4.1 of the Code of Discipline requires that sale, distribution or possession with intent to sell or distribute of any prescribed or non-prescribed controlled substances in school, on school grounds, or while under school jurisdiction will result in expulsion.

2. Section 7.4.2 of the Code of Discipline allows for suspension, long term suspension, alternative program placement, or expulsion if a student is found in possession of any non-prescribed controlled substance, narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind.

3. Headmasters and Principals are to make sure the behavior regulations described above have been publicized among the student bodies of their schools and parents or guardians dealing with the subject.

For more information about this circular, contact:

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Dr. Tommy Chang, Superintendent