

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) is committed to creating safe, orderly, clean and inviting schools for all students and staff. To this end, the board supports state laws that prohibit the sale or distribution of tobacco products to minors and that prohibit the use of tobacco products by minors. The board also supports state and federal laws that prohibit the use of tobacco products in school buildings, on school campuses, and in or on any other school property owned or operated by the school board. For the purposes of this policy, the term “tobacco product” means any product that contains tobacco and is intended for human consumption. The term “tobacco product” also includes alternative nicotine products (noncombustible products that contain nicotine, whether natural or synthetic, but do not contain tobacco and are intended for human consumption whether chewed, absorbed, dissolved, ingested, or by other means), consumable products (nicotine liquid solutions or other materials containing nicotine that is depleted as a vapor product is used), vapor products (noncombustible products that employ a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit regardless of shape or size and that can be used to heat consumable products) including electronic cigarettes, , electronic cigars, electronic cigarillos, and electronic pipes, and components of vapor products.

A. PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

In support of the board’s commitments and state and federal law, students are prohibited from using, possessing or displaying any tobacco product (1) in any school building, on any school campus, and in or on any other school property owned or operated by the school board, including school vehicles; (2) at any school-related activity, including athletic events; or (3) at any time when the student is subject to the supervision of school personnel, including during school trips.

Nothing in this policy prohibits the use, possession or display of tobacco products for an instructional or research activity conducted in a school building, provided that the activity is conducted or supervised by a faculty member and that the activity does not include smoking, chewing or otherwise ingesting tobacco.

B. CONSEQUENCES

The disciplinary consequences for violations of this policy shall be consistent with Section D of policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for violations of this policy.

In determining appropriate consequences for violations of this policy, school officials are encouraged to identify programs or opportunities that will provide students with a greater understanding of the health hazards of tobacco use, the hazards of secondhand smoke, and the impact of tobacco use on efforts to provide a safe, orderly, clean and inviting school environment.

C. SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

The administration shall consult with the county health department and other appropriate organizations to provide students with information and access to support systems and programs to encourage students to abstain from the use of tobacco products. The school system may, from time to time, provide free non-smoking programs and services to its students.

D. NOTICE

Students will be provided with notice of the information in this policy through the Code of Student Conduct, student handbooks, or other means identified by the principal. In addition, the principal shall post signs in a manner and at locations that adequately notify students, school personnel, and visitors about prohibitions against the use of tobacco products in all school facilities, on all school grounds, and at all school-sponsored events.

Legal References: Pro-Children Act of 1994, 20 U.S.C. 6081 *et seq.*; 21 U.S.C. 321 (rr); 21 C.F.R. 1100 *et seq.*; G.S. 14-313; 115C-47, -288, -307, -390.2, -407

Cross References: Student Behavior Policies (policy 4300), Smoking and Tobacco Products (policy 5026/7250)

Adopted: October 13, 2014

Revised: January 11, 2016; April 9, 2018 (Legal references only); February 10, 2025

Replaces: Policy 5.07.60, Tobacco Use