SUSQUEHANNA COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
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November 10, 2026

Dear Susquehanna Community Parents/Guardians:

The safety, health, and well-being of our students remain our highest priorities. We are reaching out to make you aware of the growing concerns surrounding THC-containing products and the potential dangers they pose to children and adolescents. THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) is the psychoactive chemical found in marijuana that causes a mind-altering effect. Today, THC is available in many forms, including vape cartridges, disposable vape pens, edibles (gummies, chocolates, and candies), oils, concentrates, and other products. Some of these items are packaged to look like ordinary candy, snacks, or popular consumer products, making them particularly appealing to young people and difficult for adults to recognize.

Why Are THC Products Dangerous for Young People?
The adolescent brain is still developing, and exposure to THC can interfere with important areas of brain development, including memory, attention, learning, decision-making, and emotional regulation. THC use among adolescents has also been associated with increased risks of anxiety, depression, impaired judgment, dependence, and mental health concerns. High-potency THC products can increase these risks.

What Should Parents and Guardians Look for at Home?
We encourage families to be aware of possible signs of THC use, including:

- Unusual sweet or fruity odors, particularly in bedrooms or vehicles.
- Small vape pens, cartridges, chargers, or unfamiliar electronic devices.
- Gummies, chocolates, candies, or baked goods in unusual packaging.
- Small containers, oils, or products labeled THC, Delta-8, Delta-9, or cannabis.
- Red or bloodshot eyes, unusual sleepiness, increased appetite, or changes in coordination.
- Changes in behavior, mood, motivation, school performance, or social activities.
- Unexplained spending, secrecy, or unfamiliar items among personal belongings.

These signs do not necessarily mean a young person is using THC, but they may be reasons to start a conversation.

How Can Families Help?
We encourage parents/guardians to have open, honest, and age-appropriate conversations with their children about the risks of THC products. Monitor unfamiliar products brought into the home, secure medications and potentially harmful substances, and keep communication open without judgment. If you discover a suspected THC product, keep it away from children and pets and avoid handling unknown substances unnecessarily. Seek guidance from a healthcare professional if you have concerns about possible exposure or use. SCSD will continue working to educate students about the dangers of substance use and provide support to those who may need assistance. We ask that you partner with us by remaining informed, observant, and engaged in your child's health and well-being.

If you have concerns or questions, please contact your child's school counselor, Principal Soden or Principal Emmons, our school nurse. Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to keeping our students safe, healthy, and focused on their future.

Sincerely,
Superintendent Mr. Rushefski

Phone: 570.853.4921 Fax: 570.853.3768 www.scschools.org

THC is CHANGING

What is THC?

1. A look at Cannabis: Hemp vs. Marijuana.

Cannabis is a plant that comes in many shapes and sizes:

- Hemp has less of the chemical (THC) that makes someone feel "high." Hemp plants can be made into many different things like clothes, and the hemp seeds are sometimes used for food and oil
- Marijuana flowers are often known for having more of this chemical (THC). It is consumed as medicine and for fun because of how it makes you feel.

2. What is THC?

THC is the part of the cannabis plant that makes the user feel "high."

- **Delta 9** is a type of THC found in marijuana that has strong effects and causes the "high" that many people connect to marijuana.
- **Novel (New and Emerging) THCs:** Types of THC made from hemp plants. Manufacturers take the non-active cannabinoids (chemicals) from hemp, such as CBD, and change them to novel THCs, such as Delta 8 THC, Delta 10 THC, and others. Some THC products changed from hemp-based CBD are human-made and not found naturally. These THCs come in many different strengths and can cause the "high" people are familiar with. It's important to note these products are not currently regulated through the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) so we can never be sure of what is truly in these products.

3. Common names for THC

- Pot, weed, grass, dope, herb, joint, Mary Jane, buds, blunt, ganga, trees, hash, doobie, chronic, dab

4. How is THC consumed?

- Smoked through joints, blunts, bongs, or vape pens.
- Mixed into food, often desserts, like brownies or cookies, sometimes even made into drinks. Food and drink mixes are also called edibles and are much more dangerous. The time it takes for the THC substance to "kick in" may vary due to unknown factors. These THC products can come in many different strengths, and are not currently regulated through the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), so may have other dangerous chemicals in them. This increases the risk of a dangerous situation or even an overdose.

5. Testing Positive

- Remember: Any product that has THC in it may cause a positive drug test, even Delta products.
- A positive drug test for a teen could result in suspension from clubs, sports and/or school.
- The best way to avoid suspension due to drug use is to be THC free.

6. What are the effects and signs of THC?

Short-term effects:

- Judgment and attention changes
- Headaches
- Dry mouth
- Dry eyes
- Dizziness
- Sleepiness
- Faster heart rate
- Feeling hungry
- Seeing things
- Feeling like you're going to throw up
- Throwing up
- Not feeling like yourself

Long-term effects:

- Higher risk of stroke and heart disease
- Damaged lungs
- Mental illness
- If a teen uses THC it could change the way their brain works

Effects on driving:

- Slower movements
- Changes to vision
- Driving while high is both dangerous and against the law

Possible signs of use:

- Red eyes
- Feeling hungry
- Feeling like you don't want to do anything
- Weight gain
- Feeling nervous
- Poor coordination
- Troubles remembering
- Not feeling like yourself

7. What should I do in an emergency?

It could mean someone has had too much THC if they have:

- Extreme anxiety or panic attacks
- Seeing things
- Lack of coordination
- Shaking
- If they are unresponsive

If you think someone has used too much THC and needs emergency medical help, call **911**. If you or someone you know is having a non-emergency crisis, visit www.findhelp.org to find local resources.

8. How do I talk to kids and teens about THC use?

- Talk to kids multiple times as they grow up
- Be clear with your expectations
- Be supportive
- Don't be forceful when you talk about THC
- Keep it casual

9. How do I learn more?

- Call a substance use prevention coalition near you to get local resources through the Alliance for Wisconsin Youth.
- For more general information, try the national institute on drug abuse (NIDA) or Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (CDC)
- For more information you can go to **northwoodscoalition.org**

Marshfield Clinic Health System

NORTHWOODS COALITION

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Information for Parents Regarding Marijuana







The Bucks County Youth Marijuana Use Prevention Task Force is a collaborative effort with a number of Bucks County coalitions focused on preventing / reducing adolescent access and use of marijuana .

Being a parent is rewarding & difficult!

Staying up to date on what our youth have access to can help us keep them engaged in a healthy lifestyle. Today's access and purity of marijuana are very different from when we were growing up.

Clear & concise parental expectations can reduce the likelihood that a teen tries marijuana!

Share with your teen, your expectations regarding avoiding marijuana & substance use! Research shows that teens are less likely to use substances if their parents have established a pattern of setting clear expectations of no substance use.

[Guo, Hawkins, Hill, and Abbott (2001)]

Talk and they will listen!

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reported that, teens who consistently learn about the risks of drugs from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use drugs than those who don't. Telling them to "just say no" isn't enough! Give them realistic and factual information.

SCAN HERE

Teen Guide ← → **Parent Guide**

Answers To Common Questions From Teens

Question: Your generation smoked marijuana and you turned out ok, why can't I?

Answer: Not everyone from my generation turned out "ok". Unfortunately, people from previous generations didn't know as much about the impact of marijuana on the developing brain as we do now, so problems were not identified until much later in life. Today's marijuana is much stronger, and your brain is still undergoing important development well into your 20's. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reported that using marijuana before the age of 21 can change the structures of the brain that are responsible for decision-making, emotions, memory, learning, pleasure and can lead to worse educational outcomes. Compared with teens who don't use, students who use marijuana are more likely not to finish high school or get a college degree.

Question: Isn't marijuana natural?

Answer: Most drugs come from plants; marijuana is no exception. Being "natural" does not mean it is safe. According to the DEA, today's smokeable marijuana is up to 10X more potent than previous generations' and marijuana vape products are up to 30 times more potent. Today's super-potent marijuana can cause a loss of consciousness (greening out) and even psychosis (National Institute of Drug Abuse).

Question: It seems like everyone else is doing it, why shouldnt I?

Answer: Not everyone is doing it! According to the 2023 Pennsylvania Youth Survey, only 7% of 10th-grade students used marijuana in the last 30 days. More youth are choosing not to use marijuana! We now know that as individuals continue to mature between 13 and 21 years, the likelihood of lifetime substance abuse and dependence drops 4–5% for each year that initiation of substance use is delayed, in short, it is recommended that individuals wait until they are 21 to use legal substances. (Jordan and Andersen 2017)

Question: Is marijuana safer than alcohol?

Answer: Both alcohol and marijuana are harmful, neither is safe. According to the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, many teenagers believe that marijuana is safer than alcohol or other drugs. When talking about marijuana with your child, it is helpful to know the myths and the facts. For example, teenagers may say, "it is harmless because it is natural," "it is not addictive," or "it does not affect my thinking or my grades." However, research shows that marijuana can cause serious problems with learning, attention, feelings, and health.

Question: Is Marijuana legal?

Answer: Marijuana is illegal in Pennsylvania. You can be arrested for buying, selling, possessing, smoking, growing and driving under the influence of marijuana in Pennsylvania. Only medical marijuana patients who have a medical marijuana card have access to legal marijuana.

Question: Is Marijuana addictive?

Answer: According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, 1 in 6 young people under the age age 18 who use marijuana regularly will become addicted.

Find more detail to all theses questions and more by scanning the parent guide QR code provided above!

FUNDING FOR THESE EFFORTS IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE BUCKS COUNTY DRUG & ALCOHOL COMMISSION, INC.

Bucks County Youth Marijuana Use Prevention Task Force

If your adolescent is struggling with substance use, you can find more information and resources by scanning the QR code to the right. You can also call 215-444-2700 (Bucks County Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc.) to talk to someone directly.



For more information, please contact:

Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program Specialist Trehab
36 Public Avenue
PO Box 366
Montrose, PA 18801

570-278-5237 or 1-800-982-4045 ext 5237

Departments

Community Services
D&A Prevention
Housing
Marcellus Response
D&A Treatment
Transportation
Weatherization

Drug & Alcohol Prevention

Trehab's Prevention Department conducts educational programs in schools, and throughout the community, to build protective factors and reduce risk factors for alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) abuse.

TOO GOOD FOR DRUGS (TGFD) is an evidence-based prevention program for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. It is designed to reduce the intention to use alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs in youth. TGFD also impacts students through a family component used in each grade level.

*Please note: This model program, to be implemented with fidelity, requires 10 sessions in each classroom. Trehab staff will adapt materials and curriculum for the number of sessions requested, if less than 10.

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING (LST) is an evidence-based substance abuse prevention program for upper elementary and middle-school students. LST develops personal skills and interpersonal skills to promote individual competence; it aims to decrease young people's vulnerability to substance use through social influences from peers and the media.

*Please note: This model program, to be implemented with fidelity, requires 8 sessions in each classroom at the elementary level and 15 (first year), 10 (second year) and 5 (third year) at the middle/high school level. Trehab staff will adapt materials and curriculum for the number of sessions requested, if less than these numbers.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SAP)

S.A.P. CORE TEAM CONSULTATION/LIAISION – A Prevention/Treatment staff member will serve as a drug and alcohol services liaison on each district's Student Assistance Program Core Team(s). Staff will be present at meetings at least twice each month.

INITIAL SCREENINGS – Prevention/Treatment staff will conduct drug and alcohol initial screenings for students referred by SAP Core Teams who may need drug and alcohol supportive services. The Core Team, prior to the screening, must provide a parent consent form to staff completing the screening. Screenings are conducted at the school (or at the Trehab offices). Following this screening process, a recommendation is made—usually one of the following three options: 1) further evaluation by a D&A treatment professional, 2) participation in a school-based/agency based educational support group, or 3) no further D&A services are needed at this time. With student consent, a written letter documenting the recommendation will be sent to the Core Team.

FORMAL INTERVENTIONS – Trehab staff will participate in formal interventions with students and their parents as requested by SAP Core Teams. Appropriate planning and preparation for the formal intervention should include all agency and school staff who are expected to participate in the intervention.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT GROUPS – Trehab staff specifically trained in educational support groups co-facilitate with trained school personnel and cover various topics for life and social skill development. Support groups include but are not limited to: Drug and Alcohol, Self-Esteem, Hygiene/health, PREP (see above), Teen Issues, Bullying, Anger Management/Healthy Communication, Stress Management, Codependency/COA. The aim is to provide students the basic knowledge needed for making healthy choices as well as an opportunity to share concerns and ask questions in a safe, non-threatening environment. **Please note that these groups provide support and education only; they are not for counseling or therapy.** The prevention/treatment staff will provide written outlines and lesson plans, and process group with a co-facilitator. Groups **must** be co-facilitated by appropriately trained school personnel.

- Students in grades 4 – 12
- Maximum of 8 students per group
- Approximately 8 -12 sessions, depending on topic(s)

OUTREACH SERVICES – TREATMENT:

Trehab counseling staff will provide on-site drug and alcohol counseling to students who have gone through the S.A.P. referral process and evaluated as requiring addiction treatment. Staff will also provide on-site treatment to students who have been discharged from inpatient drug and alcohol facilities and require aftercare support.

SPECIAL EVENTS/ASSEMBLIES – customized presentations for small to large groups are always available upon request (please schedule as far in advance as possible to allow for staff schedules). Teacher in-services, student assemblies and community agency educational trainings/workshops are just a few things we offer! Drug and Alcohol Department Treatment and Prevention staff facilitate. Fees are determined on an individual basis/sliding scale, based on ability to pay. As a community action agency our goal is to educate as many individuals as possible, ages 0-100, about Drug and Alcohol issues and health.

LENDING LIBRARY – Trehab Prevention has an extensive library of printed and video resources available to the community at no cost.