



Steven L. Beshear
Governor

Terry Holliday, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

**EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CABINET
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Capital Plaza Tower • 500 Mero Street • Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
Phone: (502) 564-4770 • www.education.ky.gov

June 16, 2011

Dear Superintendent:

Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable death in Kentucky. Tobacco use is a danger to everyone, capable of killing and disabling both those who use the product and those who are exposed to others' use. It can be immediately life threatening for those who have asthma and other respiratory illnesses. As little as 30 minutes of exposure to secondhand smoke can affect the coronary arteries of healthy, young nonsmokers. It causes acute and chronic respiratory disease, ear and upper respiratory infections — all primary causes of school absences.

The 2009 Kentucky Youth Risk Behavior Survey reports that approximately 6 out of 10 high school students have tried smoking at least once. Approximately 10% of high school students reported smoking at least one or more cigarettes on school property in the last thirty days.

A 100% Tobacco-Free School (TFS) policy represents a firm commitment by school administration, teachers and parents to prohibit tobacco use by students, employees and visitors. Compliance with the TFS policy confirms this commitment and provides genuine opportunities for adults and peers to serve as role models for not using tobacco. A 2003 study found that students were more likely to smoke in locations where they saw other students and adults smoking. In addition, youth look to adults they respect, such as teachers and school staff, as role models.

A 100% TFS policy prohibits tobacco use by staff, students and visitors twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, inside Board-owned buildings or vehicles, on school owned property, and during school-sponsored student trips and activities. We encourage you to pass and implement this 100% TFS policy as a District Policy. It's the right thing to do for the health of your schools and communities.

For more information please visit <http://www.site.kytobaccofreeschools.com/Home.html> or contact: Jamie Sparks, jamie.sparks@education.ky.gov; Irene Centers, irene.centers@ky.gov or Victoria Greenwell, victoria.greenwell@ky.gov.

Thank you for providing and supporting the education and health of Kentucky's students.

Sincerely,

Terry Holliday, Ph.D., Commissioner
Kentucky Department of Education

William D. Hacker, MD, FAAP, CPE, Commissioner
Kentucky Department for Public Health

cc: Principals

