

STAFF ETHICS

4118.

An effective educational program requires the services of men and women of integrity, high ideals, and human understanding. To maintain and promote these essentials, the Board expects all employees of the Meriden Public Schools to maintain high standards of personal and professional behavior. Among those standards which the Board expects its staff members to maintain are the following:

- just and courteous relationship with pupils, parents, staff members and others;
- transaction of all official business with the properly designated authorities of the school system;
- establishment of friendly and intelligent cooperation between the community and the school system;
- representation of the school system on all occasions in such a manner that the contributions of the school system to the community are recognized;
- placement of the welfare of children as the first concern of the school system;
- restraint from using school contracts and privileges to promote partisan politics and sectarian religious views;
- directing any criticism of other staff members or of any department of the school system only toward the improvement of the school system (such constructive criticism is to be made first directly to the particular school administrator who has the responsibility for evaluating the situation and then to the Superintendent, if necessary);
- keeping confidential such information as they may secure in confidence unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law;
- the proper use and protection of all school properties, equipment and materials;
- conduct which will not result in discredit or a lack of confidence in themselves, their colleagues, or the school system.

Approved 4/28/1981

Reviewed and No Changes Required: November 17, 2015

Previous Policy Number: GA1

Smoking at Public Functions on School Premises

4118.231.

In accordance with Public Act 74-126, the Board endorses a policy of no smoking at public meetings in public buildings. Smoking will be prohibited in any room where a class is in progress.

4118.232.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a workplace that is free of the effects of alcohol and second-hand smoke, and free from drug abuse. By accomplishing this purpose, the Board of Education (the “Board”) also seeks to promote a safe, healthy working environment for all employees and to reduce absenteeism, tardiness, and other job performance problems that may be caused by alcohol and/or drug abuse. This policy is adopted in accordance with state law and the Drug Free Workplace Act.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Employees shall not be involved with the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of an illegal drug, a controlled substance, or alcohol, and shall not be under the influence of such substances while on school property or while conducting Board business on or off school property. Any employee who discovers illegal drugs, a controlled substance, or alcohol on school property shall notify the Superintendent or the Superintendent’s designee who shall investigate the matter.

An employee must report any conviction under a criminal drug statute for violations occurring on or off school property while on Board business to the Superintendent or his/her designee within five (5) days after the conviction. The Board will notify any agency awarding a grant to the Board of such conviction within ten (10) days thereafter.

Employees shall only use prescription drugs on school property, or during the conduct of Board business, that have been prescribed to them by a licensed medical practitioner, and such drugs shall be used only as prescribed. However, in accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 21a-408a through 408q, the Board specifically prohibits the palliative use of marijuana on school property, at a school-sponsored activity, or during the conduct of Board business, and specifically prohibits employees from being under the influence of intoxicating substances, including marijuana used for palliative purposes, during work hours.

The Board prohibits smoking, including smoking using an electronic nicotine delivery system (e.g., e-cigarettes), electronic cannabis delivery system, or vapor product, and the use of tobacco products in any area of a school building, on school property, including property owned, leased, contracted for, or utilized by the Board, or at any school-sponsored activity.

While Connecticut law allows for the legal use of marijuana under certain circumstances, because

marijuana use is still prohibited under federal law, the use of marijuana at work, or outside of work if it impairs an employee's ability to perform their job, constitutes a violation of this policy.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment.

DEFINITIONS

“Any area” means the interior of a school building and the outside area within twenty-five feet of any doorway, operable window or air intake vent of a school building.

“Cannabis” means marijuana, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 21a-240.

“Controlled substance” means a controlled substance in schedules I through V of section 202 of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 (21 U.S.C. 812), including marijuana.

“Electronic cannabis delivery system” means an electronic device that may be used to simulate smoking in the delivery of cannabis to a person inhaling the device and includes, but is not limited to, a vaporizer, electronic pipe, electronic hookah and any related device and any cartridge or other component of such device.

“Electronic nicotine delivery system” means an electronic device used in the delivery of nicotine to a person inhaling from the device, and includes, but is not limited to, an electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe or electronic hookah and any related device and any cartridge or other component of such device, including, but not limited to, electronic cigarette liquid or synthetic nicotine.

“School property” means any land and all temporary and permanent structures comprising the district's school and administrative office buildings and includes, but is not limited to, classrooms, hallways, storage facilities, theatres, gymnasiums, fields, and parking lots.

“School-sponsored activity” means any activity sponsored, recognized, or authorized by a board of education and includes activities conducted on or off school property.

“Smoke” or “smoking” means the burning of a lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe or any other similar device, whether containing, wholly or in part, tobacco, cannabis or hemp.

“Vapor product” means any product that employs a heating element, power source, electronic circuit or other electronic, chemical or mechanical means, regardless of shape or size, to produce a vapor that may or may not include nicotine or cannabis and is inhaled by the user of such

product.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

In appropriate circumstances, the Board shall provide an employee with an opportunity for rehabilitation in overcoming addiction to, dependence upon or other problem with alcohol or drugs.

Employees who feel they have developed an addiction to, dependence upon, or other problem with alcohol or drugs are encouraged to seek assistance. Certain benefits for alcoholism or drug addiction are provided under the Board's group medical insurance plan. An employee may be given an opportunity to participate in a rehabilitation program that requires absence from work for bona fide treatment. Such absence may be charged to the employee's accrued and unused sick leave, subject to the provisions of the employee's collective bargaining agreement and/or any applicable Board policies and regulations.

Any request for assistance with a drug or alcohol problem will be treated as confidential and only those persons "needing to know" will be made aware of such request.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-233a(h) (definition of school-sponsored activity)

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 19a-342

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 19a-342a

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 21a-408a through 408q (palliative use of marijuana)

June Special Session, Public Act No. 21-1

United States Code:

Pro-Children Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 7973, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, Public Law 114-95, § 4001

Drug Free Workplace Act, 41 U.S.C. § 8101 et seq.

ADOPTED: September 18, 1990

Amended: November 17, 2015

Amended: September 1, 2020

Amended: November 15, 2022

Prohibition on Recommendations for Psychotropic Drugs

4118.234.

In accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-212b, the Board of Education prohibits school personnel from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any child. Moreover, personnel may not require that a child obtain a prescription for a controlled substance (as defined in the Controlled Substances Act, 21 USC 801 et seq.) in order for the child to: 1) attend school; 2) receive an initial evaluation or reevaluation to determine a child's eligibility for special education; or 3) receive special education and related services. Notwithstanding the foregoing, school health or mental health personnel may recommend that a child be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner and school personnel may consult with such practitioner with the consent of the parents or guardian of such child, in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

1. Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

1. Psychotropic drugs means prescription medications for behavioral or social-emotional concerns, such as attentional deficits, impulsivity, anxiety, depression and thought disorders, and includes, but is not limited to, stimulant medication and antidepressants.
1. Recommend means to directly or indirectly suggest that a child should use psychotropic drugs.
2. School health or mental health personnel means:
 1. school nurses or nurse practitioners appointed pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-212;
 2. school medical advisors appointed pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-205;
 3. school psychologists;
 4. school social workers;
 5. school counselors;
 6. school administrators;
 7. other school personnel (such as a teacher designated as a child's Case Manager) who have been identified by a Planning and Placement Team, Section 504 team, Student Assistance Team or similar group of district professionals as the person responsible for communication with a parent or guardian about a child's need for medical evaluation;
 8. a school professional staff member designated by the Superintendent to communicate with a child's parent or guardian about a child's need for medical evaluation.

1. Procedures

1. A school health or mental health personnel, as defined above, may communicate with other school personnel about a child who may require a recommendation for a medical evaluation, provided that 1) there is a legitimate educational interest in sharing such information; and 2) such communication shall remain confidential, to the extent required by law.
1. A school health or mental health personnel, as defined above, may communicate a

recommendation to a parent or guardian that a child be evaluated by a medical practitioner provided that 1) based on such person's professional experience, objective factors indicate that a medical evaluation may be necessary to address concerns relating to the child's education and overall mental health; and 2) any communication includes the basis for the recommendation.

1. If a parent or guardian determines that it is necessary to share medical information, including results of any medical evaluation, with school personnel, he or she may do so at any time. School personnel who receive such information directly from a parent must maintain the confidentiality of such information, to the extent required by law.
1. Any school personnel with a legitimate educational interest in obtaining information from a child's medical practitioner outside the school who is not a school employee must obtain prior, written consent from the child's parent or guardian to communicate with such outside medical practitioners. Any school health or mental health personnel, as defined above, may request written consent from the parent or guardian. To be valid, the written consent must: 1) be signed by the child's parent or guardian; 2) be dated; 3) provide the child's name; 4) provide the name of the medical practitioner and relevant contact information, to the extent known; and 5) indicate the scope of the consent.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to prevent school personnel from consulting with a medical practitioner who has information concerning a child, as long as the school district has obtained consent from the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child, in accordance with the Section II.D., above. Nothing in this policy shall prevent a planning and placement team from recommending a medical evaluation as part of an initial evaluation or reevaluation, as needed to determine a child's (i) eligibility for special education and related services, or (ii) educational needs for an individualized education program.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-212b

Public Act 06-18, An Act Concerning Special Education

34 C.F.R. § 300.174 Prohibition on mandatory medication.

Approved 11/20/2007

Date Amended: November 17, 2015

Previous Policy Number: GA1.3