



HAMPDEN CHARTER SCHOOL OF SCIENCE WEST

Hampden Charter School of Science
West
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HCSS-West Substance Use Prevention and Education Policy

Introduction Massachusetts is one of many states across the country facing a growing epidemic of opioid addiction. Schools play an important role in educating youth about the dangers of substance abuse and in preventing substance use among students. Hampden Charter School of Science West (HCSS) is taking action to address it, in accordance with Mass. General Laws (c. 71, s.96) and with recommendations and guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), through the use of multiple prevention and intervention strategies. This updated Policy will be the district's blueprint for enhancing the capacity to prevent and respond to issues of substance use within the context of other substance use initiatives. In accordance with the 2016 amendment to the statute, the WPS will file this and related policies with the DESE beginning October 28, 2016.

Goals: 1. Increase students' understanding of the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol and substance use to prevent use and abuse among students. 2. Provide parents and guardians with educational opportunities regarding the warning signs of substance use/abuse and referral resources. 3. Teach student's self-management, social, negotiation, and refusal skills that will empower them to make healthy decisions and avoid alcohol and substance use.

I. Leadership: An essential component of the HCSS-West mission is maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment. Within our Multi-Tiered System of Supports all students are supported to achieve academic success. We aim to provide all students with the individual academic and non-academic supports needed to succeed. This is accomplished by utilizing a team approach with strong collaboration among school administrators, educators, support staff, students, families, and local community stakeholders.

II. Professional Development: The HCSS-West administration will provide appropriate school staff with training to ensure that staff are aware of the district policies, procedures, and protocols for prevention, intervention, and follow-up in the prevention and response to substance use and abuse Training on the early warning signs and behaviors that indicate a student may be experiencing substance use problems, to include building-based support and referral systems, will be conducted yearly in every school within the district. Qualified staff will be identified and trained as appropriate to administer all protocols and procedures related to this Policy, including but not limited to the use of a verbal screening tool.



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III. Access to Resources and Services:

Administration, Guidance, and Nursing Department personnel work in close collaboration in identifying and referring students with substance use problems. All schools in the HCSS-West district have an identified team of social-emotional support staff available when students are in need of assessment, supportive counseling, and referral services both within and outside the school department. The team has an established agreement with selected community-based providers of mental health and/or substance use treatment facilities to support families in their efforts to gain access to needed services. School-based intake and re-entry procedures are in place to support students and families who may require referral to or from community-based services.

IV. Academic and Non-academic Strategies: The HCSS-West district utilizes the evidence-based Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Framework for delivering developmentally appropriate and culturally competent health education to all students. Within this curriculum, students are provided with education to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to be competent in making health-enhancing decisions regarding the use of medications and avoidance of substances, and in communicating about substance use/abuse prevention for healthier homes, schools, and communities. Through collaboration among the Athletic and Nursing Departments, beginning the spring of 2019, all HCSS-West coaches will be educated annually on opiate use and misuse among athletes. All student athletes and families are provided with written educational material prior to the start of every new athletic season. Beginning school year 2018-2019 school nurses will utilize a verbal screening tool to assess 7th and 9th grade students for substance use problems. If a student is identified to be at-risk for substance abuse, a school adjustment counselor or guidance counselor will provide supportive counseling and referral as needed.

V. Policies and Protocols: HCSS-West has a policy on the Possession of or Use of Drugs or Alcohol included with its Code of Conduct Policy, in compliance with MGL c. 94C. This policy is intended to inform all students and their families that no drugs or alcohol are permitted on school property at any time and no student is allowed on the premises under the influence of any controlled substance or alcohol both while on school property or during school-sponsored activities. Any student charged with a violation may be expelled or have a long-term suspension imposed. This policy is implemented subject to the due process provision of the HCSS-West Discipline Code applicable to regular and special education student. HCSS-West is currently in the process of developing Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT). All HCSS-West policies and protocols are provided to all students and families.

VI. Collaboration with Families: HCSS-West believes that families are essential partners in our efforts to prevent substance use. Family and Community Engagement are a core component of the district's Standards and Indicators which provide the structure to successfully implement



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our policies. HCSS-West team members perform home visits annually to students and their families and maintain constant communication through the year via emails, phone calls, and in-school parent/guardian meeting. HCSS-West is able to provide our students and families with written and electronic forms of education materials as well as offer information for outside support agencies and healthcare providers.