

Students

Inhalant Abuse

In addition to the prohibitions pertaining to alcohol drugs and tobacco contained in Board Policy 5131.6 “Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco, no student shall inhale, ingest, apply, use or possess an abusable glue, aerosol paint or substance containing a volatile chemical with intent to inhale, ingest, apply or use any of these in a manner:

1. Contrary to directions for use, cautions or warnings appearing on a label of a container of the glue, paint aerosol or substance; and
2. Designed to affect the central nervous system, create or induce a condition of intoxication, hallucination or elation, or change, distort, or disturb the person’s eyesight, thinking process, balance or coordination.

For purposes of this policy, inhalants are defined as follows:

Nitrous Oxide – Laughing Gas, Whippets, CO2 Cartridge
Amyl Nitrite – “Locker Room,” “Rush” “Poppers” “Snappers”
Butyl Nitrite – “Bullet,” “Climax”
Chlorohydrocarbons – Aerosol Paint Cans, Cleaning Fluids
Hydrocarbons – Aerosol Propellants, Gasoline, Glue, Butane

Further, no student, 18 years or older, shall intentionally, knowingly or recklessly deliver or sell potentially abusable inhalant materials as listed above to a minor student.

No person shall intentionally use or possess with intent to use inhalant paraphernalia to inhale, ingest, or otherwise introduce into the body an abusable glue, aerosol paint or substance or other substance that contains a volatile chemical.

Students who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and a recommendation for expulsion. Violators of this policy may also be required to complete an appropriate rehabilitation program.

The Board of Education shall incorporate into the curriculum at all levels education pertaining to potential inhalant abuse which is appropriate for students given their age, maturity, and grade level. Inhalant abuse educational programs/information for parents/guardians will be offered in a manner convenient to parents/guardians.

(cf. 5131.6 – Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
21a-240 Definitions, dependency producing drugs.

Policy adopted: Monday, August 26, 2019

INHALANT ABUSE

Products that fall into Inhalant Abuse categories are as follows:

Solvents

- Industrial or household solvents or solvent-containing products, including paint thinners or solvents, degreasers (dry-cleaning fluids), gasoline, glues (model airplane glue, rubber cement, household glue), nail polish remover, type correction fluid and thinner (“white out”), toxic markers, carburetor cleaner and octane booster.

Gases

- Gases used in household or commercial products, including butane lighters and propane tanks, whipping cream aerosols or dispensers (whippets), vegetable cooking spray, helium and refrigerant gases.
- Household aerosol propellants and associated solvents in items such as spray paints, hair or deodorant spray, air fresheners and fabric protector sprays.
- Medical anesthetic gases such as ether, chloroform, halothane and nitrous oxide (laughing gas).

Nitrites

- Aliphatic nitrites including cyclohexyl nitrite, which is available to the general public; amyl nitrate, which is available only by prescription; and butyl nitrite, which is now an illegal substance. Connecticut law prohibits the sale and distribution of nitrous oxide to minors.

Note: Per C.G.S. 21a-240 amyl nitrite benzene, butyl alcohol, butyl nitrite, ether, formaldehyde, methanol, nitrous oxide, are among those substances considered “restricted drugs or substance” *if sold, prescribed, dispensed, compounded, possessed, or controlled or delivered or administered to another person with the purpose that said chemical substances shall be breathed, inhaled, sniffed, or drunk to induce a stimulant, depressant or hallucinogenic effect upon the higher functions of the central nervous system.*

Implication of Use:

Vapors from inhalants are inhaled using a paper or plastic bag. Immediate negative effects include nausea, sneezing, coughing, nosebleeds, fatigue, and lack of coordination and loss of appetite. Inhaling solvents and aerosol sprays may decrease heart rate, decrease respiratory rate or impair judgement. Amyl nitrite and butyl nitrite may cause rapid pulse, headaches, or involuntary passing of urine and feces. Long term use may result in hepatitis or brain damage. Deeply inhaling vapors or using large amounts over a short time may result in violent behavior, unconsciousness or death. Long term use can cause weight loss fatigue, electrolyte imbalance, muscle fatigue or permanent damage to the nervous system.

Physical Signs of Inhalant Abuse:

- Unusual breath odor or chemical odor on clothing
- Slurred or disoriented speech
- Drunk, dazed or dizzy appearance
- Signs of paint or other products where they wouldn't normally be, such as on the face or fingers
- Red or runny eyes or nose
- Spots and/or sores around the mouth
- Nausea and/or loss of appetite

- Chronic inhalant abusers may exhibit such symptoms as anxiety, excitability, irritability or restlessness

Other Signs of Inhalant Abuse:

- Sitting with a pen or marker near nose
- Constantly smelling clothing sleeves
- Showing paint or stain marks on the face, fingers or clothing
- Hiding rags, clothes, or empty containers of the potentially abused products in closets, boxes and other hiding places
- Chemical-soaked rags, bags or socks
- Missing abusable household items

School-based Prevention Program:

Recent studies show that the problem of inhalant abuse continues to rise and the need for more education in the classroom is increasingly apparent. With the help of informed educators and an educational program, this problem can be lessened. In school-based prevention programs, the following should be considered:

DO:

- Review school policy regarding drug use and referral service
- Provide training for all school staff as well as for parents
- Start prevention efforts in the primary grades with age-appropriate instruction
- Ascertain current level of knowledge
- Teach and reinforce appropriate skills
 - Reading labels
 - Safety precautions
 - Following directions
 - Decision-making skills
 - Recognition of poisons/toxins
 - Refusal skills
 - Awareness of physical symptoms

DON'T

- Glamorize or promote usage
- Rely on scare tactics
- Tell too much, too soon
- Give details on “how to use” or trendy products being abused
- Limit prevention to secondary grade levels
- Link inhalants with drugs or a drug unit

Policy Implications:

Inhalant substances, chemicals that are neither alcoholic nor drugs, abusable by students of all ages now challenge many existing school policies. It is possible to modify the district’s existing policy pertaining to alcohol, drugs and tobacco to include the category of substances that are abusable by inhaling.