

# SCHOOL SUBSTANCE USE POLICY



## *A Comprehensive Guide for School Substance Use Policy Development*



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## **Introduction**

*According to the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey report on academic performance, students who do not engage in risky health behaviors like alcohol and drug use are more likely to have higher grades.*

Effective substance use policies are an essential part of creating a healthy, safe school environment for students, staff, and communities. It is recommended that schools review and revise their policies at least once every two years. The information in this guide is based on current research and best practice strategies for preventing and addressing substance use among young people. It is a tool to assist schools in partnering with students, staff, families, and community members in developing a substance use policy that meets local needs.

This guide is for policies related to alcohol and other drug use. For recommendations regarding school tobacco-free policies, please refer to *Creating and Maintaining a Tobacco-Free School Policy*, on the Partnership For a Tobacco-Free Maine website (see Appendix A) or visit [www.tobaccofreemaine.org](http://www.tobaccofreemaine.org) for more information.

This guide was developed by Maine's Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHS), in collaboration with the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Maine Department of Education, Healthy Maine Partnerships, and other State and local partners.

For assistance with creating or revising local substance use school policy, contact your local Healthy Maine Partnership:  
[http://www.healthymainepartnerships.org/Local\\_Partnerships.aspx](http://www.healthymainepartnerships.org/Local_Partnerships.aspx).

## School Substance Use Policy Checklist

The checklist below identifies elements of a comprehensive substance use policy that are considered evidence-based or best practice. This tool will help local school substance use policy committees determine which aspects of the school's policy may be missing or may need to be modified. Rate each component by considering your current school substance use policy and how effective it is at addressing the elements listed below. Keep in mind that it is not necessary to address every component at once. Use the scores to confirm strengths, determine gaps and prioritize areas that need to be addressed.

**0: This component is not currently a part of our policy**

**1: This component is mentioned in our policy, but has not been implemented**

**2: This component is a part of our policy, but has been inconsistently implemented**

**3: This component is a part of our policy, and has been implemented effectively and consistently**

KEY COMPONENTS	RATE
<b>1. PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT/DEFINITIONS</b>	
<b>Our school has a substance use policy that:</b>	
• States a philosophy about substance use and abuse	
• States a rationale and the goals it aims to accomplish	
• Defines the population to which it applies	
• Has clearly written text that is easily understood by diverse audiences	
• Has clearly defined terms	
<b>2. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</b>	
<b>The policy was developed with the support and involvement of the following stakeholders:</b>	
• School administrators	
• School board and/or school policy committee	
• Teachers and staff	
• Students	
• Parents, guardians, and families	
• Community members	
• Law enforcement	
• Prevention, intervention and treatment professionals	
<b>3. COMMUNICATION</b>	
<b>There are the following provisions for communication of the policy:</b>	
• A clear strategy for dissemination of the policy	
• A process to address community questions and concerns while promoting the value of the policy	
<b>4. PREVENTION/EDUCATION</b>	
<b>There are prevention components in the policy:</b>	
• Health Education curriculum including evidence-based substance use prevention curriculum programs	
• A plan to create, promote and maintain a healthy, positive school climate including:	
○ Mission and vision statements for the school that address health, safety and	

a positive school climate	
○ Acceptable behaviors for students and adults are clearly stated	
○ A process for students and adults that routinely evaluates health, safety and school climate	
<b>5. PROHIBITIONS</b>	
<b>The policy prohibits substances and behaviors according to standards that are agreed upon by our community, and is:</b>	
• Consistent with state and local laws.	
• Reflects community values.	
• Based on practices that are evidence-based and effective.	
<b>6. ENFORCEMENT</b>	
<b>There are consistent enforcement strategies in the policy:</b>	
• A clear system for monitoring, identifying, and reporting violations.	
• Training and support for those expected to enforce the policy.	
• Provisions for due process.	
<b>7. CONSEQUENCES</b>	
<b>Consequences are clearly stated and are reflective of community values:</b>	
• Address alcohol and other drug use by:	
▪ Students	
▪ Staff and other adults	
• Based on evidence-based practices.	
• Reflect community values and are supported by the community.	
• Age-appropriate.	
• Appropriate to the situation.	
• Clearly aligned to violations.	
• Clearly defines criteria that can increase or reduce the consequences.	
<b>8. INTERVENTION AND TREATMENT</b>	
<b>There are provisions for interventions in the policy, including:</b>	
• Assessment and screening of substance abuse treatment needs.	
• A system to connect students with necessary services and programs (either in school or by referral), which may include:	
▪ Student Assistance Teams	
▪ Preventative interventions for youth who are not in need of treatment	
▪ Counseling for youth who are in need of treatment	
<b>The policy has referral and treatment protocols , including:</b>	
• Substance abuse screenings and assessments provided by trained staff.	
• Treatment services either in school or by referral.	
<b>9. REVIEW/REVISION</b>	
<b>There are procedures to periodically review and revise the policy, including:</b>	
• Timetable for periodic review and revision.	
• Procedure to convene a policy committee.	
• Process to evaluate, review and revise the policy.	

## 1. Philosophy Statement/Definitions

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** *“Our school is committed to the safety and well-being of our students, staff, and families.”*

A strong philosophy statement demonstrates your school’s commitment to promote a healthy and safe environment for your students, staff, and community members. It establishes a “big-picture” approach that defines the policy as a positive, preventive action rather than just a disciplinary tool. It also defines and distinguishes all terms used in the policy, including prohibited substances and activities.

**A comprehensive school substance use policy should include the following:**

- ☐ A clear statement about the need to prevent and address substance use and abuse as part of creating a healthy, safe and positive school climate.
- ☐ A rationale and the goals the policy aims to accomplish.
  - Why is the policy being developed and implemented?
- ☐ The population(s) to which it applies.
  - Who will be affected by the policy? Students? Visitors? Staff?
- ☐ Clearly written text that will be easily understood by diverse audiences.
- ☐ Clearly defined and distinguished terms.

### **Sample Philosophy Statement**

from the Maine School Management Association (MSMA)<sup>2</sup>

The School Board and staff of the school unit support a safe and healthy learning environment for students which is free of the detrimental effects of drugs and alcohol. Accomplishing this goal requires a cooperative effort among school staff, students, parents, law enforcement and organizations concerned with the use of drugs and alcohol by school-aged youth.

In order to promote the safety, health and well-being of students, the School Board endorses a three-pronged approach to address the issue of drug and alcohol use: prevention/education, intervention and discipline. The Superintendent is responsible for developing appropriate administrative procedures, curricula and programs to implement this policy.

## 2. Community Involvement

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** *“The school should reflect the input and involvement of diverse stakeholders.”*

School substance use policies are most effective when they reflect the values and commitments of all members of the school community. To create this “grass-roots” support, the process of policy development should include a wide representation of interested parties, including students, families, staff, and community members. School policies will have the most impact if they are aligned with community efforts to prevent or address youth substance use. Community prevention or treatment professionals are valuable resources for advice and expertise.

In creating or revising school policy, broad community participation on the Substance Use Policy Committee is encouraged. School District Policy Committees are typically standing sub-committees of the School Board that meet regularly during the school year. These committees work to ensure that the school’s policies are consistent and current with all state and federal laws. They also may propose new or amended policies that will be considered by the entire school board. Ensure that Policy Committee meetings are accessible to all members of the school community by scheduling them at times and locations that are convenient to all members, including those who work outside of the school.

### **Where possible, a Substance Use Policy Committee should include:**

- ☐ Students—recruit a diverse representation of students with different interests and peer groups.
- ☐ Parents/guardians and family members—include parents who are already engaged with the school such as members of a PTO or booster group, but also reach out to families who may have experience with substance abuse and recovery.
- ☐ Community health coalition members – such as the local Healthy Maine Partnership (HMP) affiliate or Drug-Free Communities Coalition. Find contact information for your local HMP at <http://www.healthymainepartnerships.org/>.
- ☐ School administrators, school board members and staff - including teachers, school counselors, social workers, nurses, coaches/athletic directors, and/or co-curricular advisors.
- ☐ Law enforcement—including local police department or sheriff’s office, school resource officers (SROs), juvenile community corrections officers (JCCOs), and Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).
- ☐ Substance abuse prevention and treatment specialists.

### 3. Communication

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** *“All members of the school community should be informed about the school substance use policy and understand what the policy means for them.”*

Community knowledge and understanding are critical aspects of creating a successful and effective school substance use policy. Research shows that a clear understanding of the consequences of drug and alcohol use discourages young people from engaging in those behaviors. The Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey consistently indicates that high school students who believe they would be caught by the police are less likely to smoke marijuana than their peers. As part of the process, create a clear, written plan that informs all community members of the new or revised policy and explains the reasoning behind it. In promoting the new school policy, explain why it is a positive change for the school and community.

#### **Recommendations for communicating about the policy:**

- ☐ Provide opportunities for all community members to learn about the policy by distributing it widely:
  - Display the policy on school and town bulletin boards and websites, and include in local newsletters.
  - Partner with local media to promote the new school policy.
  - Include a copy of the policy in your faculty handbook, or include it as a part of new employee orientation.
- ☐ Engage directly with members of the school community:
  - Review the policy with all staff at the beginning of each school year, and with all students during orientation.
  - Ensure that all parents receive the policy annually, and require that parents and students sign an agreement stating they have reviewed it.
  - Convene a community forum, or designate time during a town meeting to present the policy to the public.
- ☐ Ensure that co-curricular policies – specific policies that apply to sports teams, clubs, or school events – clearly identify and address consequences of substance use:
  - Disseminate the policy to coaches and advisors before the season begins, and ensure that they address the policy with the participating students and parents, verbally, as well as in written form.
  - If participants and parents are signing a document endorsing their understanding of specific club or team policies, make sure that expectations



and consequences are clearly stated and in alignment with the school substance use policy.

- Provide all participants and parents with a written copy of both the specific team/club policy and the school substance use policy.

## 4. Prevention/Education

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** *“The primary goal of a substance use policy is to prevent substance use, and keep young people healthy and successful.”*

Research shows, that individuals who begin using substances as teenagers, are more likely to struggle with dependence as adults. Efforts to prevent alcohol and drug use among young people are at the core of a school substance use policy. A policy that is well-communicated, enforced consistently, and fairly, is the key to creating a healthy, safe and positive school climate. Students who feel safe at school are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs.

Using an evidence-based curriculum is an important element of a school's substance use prevention efforts. There are many successful prevention programs that have been studied and evaluated for use with students in a classroom setting. For a full list of evidence-based prevention programs that have been reviewed and approved by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, please visit

<http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/>. Substance use and abuse curriculum programs should be part of the school district's health education curriculum and aligned to the Maine Learning Results. For information visit the Maine DOE Health Education website:

<http://www.maine.gov/doe/healthed>.

### **Steps you can take to create a school climate that supports students in staying drug and alcohol free:**

- ☐ Take advantage of opportunities to reinforce the principle that your school is drug and alcohol free. Create a brief, clear statement that is included in printed materials like event programs or newsletters, websites, and shared through social media. Consider making it a routine announcement at events hosted by the school community such as athletic events.
- ☐ Ask staff to be role-models for your school's values about substance use. Suggest that they try to be conscious of the language they use or the stories they tell in front of students so as not to inadvertently send the wrong message.
- ☐ Be consistent in how the substance use policy is enforced, instilling confidence that all students will be treated fairly.
- ☐ Train staff on how to respond to students who are struggling with substance use or who may come from families where substance abuse is a concern. Make sure that all students know where they can go to get help for themselves or their friends.
- ☐ Reward and recognize positive behaviors and actions.

## 5. Prohibitions

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** *“Our school policy prohibits substances and behaviors according to standards that are agreed upon by our community.”*

This section of the policy explains the “who, what, where, when, and how” of prohibited substances and actions. It is essential to be clear and specific in outlining prohibited substances, behaviors, and conduct. Vague or ambiguous policies are difficult to enforce. It is recommended that local law enforcement engage in the policy work to ensure that definitions in the policy are consistent with the definitions used in laws and statutes.

**For maximum effectiveness, ensure that the school policy states:**

- ☐ To whom the policy applies:
  - Create clear policy to be followed by students, staff, and visitors.
- ☐ Where the policy applies:
  - School buildings, grounds, including vehicles parked on school property.
  - School-sponsored off-campus events, including athletic events and field trips.
  - If included in the policy, clearly define prohibitions for non-school events.
- ☐ Which substances are prohibited, and what determines use and/or possession (such as the presence of a substance in a backpack, locker, or car on school property).
- ☐ What are expectations for behavior:
  - Clothing or accessories advertising and/or promoting alcohol or other substances will be prohibited.
  - Alcohol and /or drugs are not allowed on school grounds.
- ☐ How the policy is consistent with state and local laws.
- ☐ The distinction between prescribed medications and abused medications.

**Special considerations for co-curricular policies:**

- ☐ Duration – will it apply year-round, only during the sports season, or only during the school year?
- ☐ Where does the policy apply?
  - School-sponsored off-campus events, including athletic events and field trips.
  - Non school-sponsored off-campus parties.

## 6. Enforcement

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** *“The school substance use policy is enforced fairly and consistently for all students.”*

This section of the policy describes the ways in which the policy will be enforced. School policies regarding substance use need to be consistently enforced to be effective. Evidence suggests that when it comes to deterrence, youth certainty of being caught is far more important than the nature of the punishment itself. The Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) data confirms that when youth believe they are going to get caught, they are less likely to drink alcohol or use other drugs.

In your policy, include a clearly written procedure describing the steps to be taken when violations of the policy occur.

### **Steps you can take to ensure that enforcement is fair and consistent:**

- ☐ Educate all students about the policy and the reasoning behind it *before* violations occur. Emphasize that the purpose of the policy is not to “punish,” but to keep all students safe and to support those in need of help.
- ☐ Make it clear that the policy should not deter students from seeking help or support around substance use. Clearly identify staff members (such as school counselors or social workers) who can provide students with treatment or referrals.
- ☐ Ensure that students, coaches, and co-curricular leaders carefully review the policy and consequences before the start of each season.
- ☐ Educate coaches and co-curricular leaders regarding the importance of consistent enforcement for all students who violate policies.
- ☐ Provide parents with information about the policy and consequences for violations. Encourage them to discuss the policy with their child.
- ☐ Encourage staff to act as role models by enforcing rules fairly and supporting responsible behavior.
- ☐ Communicate with local law enforcement agencies proactively so that there is a common understanding of when and how law enforcement should be involved in responding to school substance use violations.
- ☐ Make it safe for students to report policy violations by other students without fear of repercussions.
- ☐ Consider providing lessened consequences for self-reported violations so that students are more likely to step forward and receive the help they need.

**Ensuring Due Process:**

A clear description of your school's procedure to ensure due process, including an appeal process, should be included in your policy.

Your substance use policy should clearly state that a violation of the policy may be a violation of the law. Include a specific protocol to follow if a violation occurs. Each school's protocol may differ, but it is important to ensure that yours is a result of a community decision. All who are enforcing the policy should be aware of this protocol.

Your school's appeal process should be clearly outlined. Students and parents need the right to appeal the school administration's decision to the School Board, while protecting the student's privacy.

## 7. Consequences

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** *“Consequences are clearly stated in the school policy and are reflective of community values.”*

This section of your school policy should state which disciplinary sanctions will be imposed for which violations, consistent with local, state, and federal laws. Clear rules and consequences at school serve as protective factors for substance use prevention. The disciplinary section of your policy should clearly detail what consequences will result from each offense. The policy should describe the extent of school authority in the discipline and the specific steps that will be taken depending on the level of offense. These specifications may differ from school to school, and will depend on what your school and community agrees are appropriate. This is another reason it is critical to involve a diverse group of community members when writing your policy.

It is especially important that those responsible for enforcing the rules, (school personnel, law enforcement and community partners), are consistent with consequences and enforcement that is appropriate for both age and offense. Therefore it is critical to have open and ongoing communication among staff throughout the school district, and between school staff, community partners, and law enforcement.

### Alternatives to suspension

School connectedness can be a powerful protective factor for preventing youth substance abuse. Suspending or expelling students who violate the substance use policy can have negative effects on their academic and emotional success. The Federal Department of Education recommends that schools remove students from the classroom only as a last resort, and that efforts are made to engage with students (and their families) to return them to a positive learning environment as quickly as possible.

Whenever possible, schools are encouraged to consider alternatives to suspension in determining consequences under the school substance abuse policy. These alternative consequences demonstrate that violations are taken very seriously, but keep the student connected to school supports and resources. One type of alternative consequence that has been used successfully in Maine is diversion. Evidence-based diversion programs (such as the Student Intervention Reintegration Program [SIRP]) provide students who violate the substance use policy with information and skills to make low-risk choices about alcohol and drugs.

For more information on evidence-based diversion programs in Maine or to make a referral to a class in your area, visit <http://sirp.adcareme.org/>.

**The policy should specifically address actions taken for the following violations:**

- ☐ Suspected of using alcohol or other drugs at school, or at school-sponsored events.
- ☐ Found in possession of alcohol or other drugs at school, or at school-sponsored events.
- ☐ Found using alcohol or other drugs at school, or at school-sponsored events.
- ☐ Selling or distributing alcohol or other drugs at school, or at school-sponsored events.

**Appropriate consequences should be:**

- ☐ Reflective of community values.
- ☐ Based on evidence or best practice whenever possible.
- ☐ Consistent, non-discriminatory, and reasonable.
- ☐ Reviewed, known, and understood by all stakeholders.
- ☐ Appropriate to:
  - Level of offense.
    - For example, supplying or distributing alcohol or other drugs should be given a greater consequence than possession or use of alcohol or other drugs.
  - Age and/or development of offender.
  - Circumstances of the incident and/or substance used.
    - For example, first-time offenses versus repeated offenses will carry different consequences.
  - The school's available resources.
- ☐ Enforceable.
- ☐ Predictable.
- ☐ Not unreasonably severe or punitive.
- ☐ Able to separate the student from the behavior, i.e. does not result in "labeling" the student as a troublemaker or substance abuser, which can result in feeling stigmatized.

**Suggestions for applying consequences:**

- ☐ Involve parents and/or guardians and the student when choosing the consequence or intervention.
- ☐ Use loss of privileges that do not restrict educational opportunities.

- ☐ Use out-of-school suspension and expulsion only when deemed absolutely necessary.
- ☐ Offer alternative consequences (such as diversion programs).
- ☐ Ask the student to write personal reflection, including how substance use might interfere with their goals.
- ☐ Partner with law enforcement when determining consequences.
- ☐ Provide referrals for evaluation, counseling, and/or treatment (See Section 8, Treatment).

**Special considerations for co-curricular activities:**

In athletic or co-curricular settings, consider using loss of privileges that do not result in complete expulsion from the group or team. For example, allow the student to continue to practice, but not play a specified number of games.



## 8. Intervention and Treatment

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** *“Our school community is committed to helping students who are struggling with substance use get the help they need.”*

Research indicates that many individuals who abuse substances begin developing these unhealthy patterns of behavior as adolescents. Intervening with students who are using substances provides an opportunity for education, treatment, and support. In addition to disciplinary responses, policies should include language that encourages student supports, intervention and/or treatment. This may include encouraging the use of diversion programs; identifying local community referrals and youth treatment programs; and providing staff training and education. The policy may also identify those within the school or community who are responsible for assessing and developing intervention plans with students who are at risk of substance abuse.

For information on local intervention and treatment programs in your area, search the following resources:

- ❑ Maine Substance Abuse Treatment Services Directory  
[https://portal.maine.gov/provider/provdev.provider\\_search.main\\_page](https://portal.maine.gov/provider/provdev.provider_search.main_page).
- ❑ U.S Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Behavioral Health Treatment Services locator <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator/home>.

## 9. Review/Revision

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** *“There are provisions for periodically reviewing and revising the policy.”*

This section of the policy describes your school’s procedures to periodically review and revise the substance use policy. The school district’s policy committee should be convened at least every two years to review the implementation and effectiveness of the policy. -A regularly scheduled review process keeps the content current and reinforces its importance.

Evaluation should always be part of policy review. Consider what data you will need to collect regarding the effectiveness of the policy, so that this can help shape your revisions.

### **To effectively evaluate, review and revise the policy:**

- ☐ Include key stakeholders in the process.
- ☐ Outline a realistic timetable.
- ☐ Describe the procedure to be followed by the policy committee.
- ☐ Evaluate how the policy is working or isn’t working.
- ☐ Ask students, parents, administrators, staff, community partners and law enforcement for feedback regarding the policy, its enforcement, and its impact.
- ☐ Review data regarding substance use rates as measured by student survey data (for Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey data, go to <https://data.mainepublichealth.gov/miyhs/>).
- ☐ Develop a process for gathering additional information as needed.
- ☐ Examine new research, strategies and resources since the policy was last reviewed.
- ☐ Review the policy with help from legal advisors.

*Thank you for caring about the youth of Maine  
and taking the time and effort to create a  
healthy, safe school environment for students,  
staff, and community members.*

# APPENDICES

Appendix A: Resources

Appendix B: Risk and Protective Factors

Appendix C: School Substance Use Policy Action Plan

## **Appendix A: Resources**

*Some websites, books, programs, and organizations you may find useful include:*

### **GENERAL:**

- ❑ Maine's Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHS): <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/osa/>
- ❑ AdCare Educational Institute of Maine: <http://adcareme.org/>
- ❑ U.S. Department of Education School Climate & Discipline Resources: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html>
- ❑ Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP): <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>

### **PREVENTION:**

- ❑ Maine SAMHS Prevention Team: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/osa/prevention/index.htm>
- ❑ Maine SAMHS Information and Resource Center: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/osa/irc/index.htm>
- ❑ Partnership for a Tobacco-Free Maine, Creating and Maintaining a Tobacco-Free School Policy: [www.tobaccofreemaine.org/prevent\\_protect/documents/SchoolPolicy.pdf](http://www.tobaccofreemaine.org/prevent_protect/documents/SchoolPolicy.pdf)
- ❑ Maine's Best Practices in Bullying and Harassment Prevention: Maine Governor's Children's Cabinet. (2006) Maine's Best Practices in Bullying and Harassment Prevention: A Guide for Schools and Communities: <http://maine.gov/doe/bullying/>
- ❑ Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices: <http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/>
- ❑ SAMHSA Publications Ordering (free prevention and treatment resources from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration): <http://store.samhsa.gov/home>

### **INTERVENTION/ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION:**

- ❑ AdCare's Student Intervention and Reintegration Program: <http://sirp.adcareme.org/>
- ❑ PRIME for Life: <http://www.askpri.org>

## **TREATMENT:**

- ❑ SAMHS searchable directory of licensed alcohol and drug use treatment agencies and prevention programs operating in the State of Maine:  
<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/osa/help/index.htm>
- ❑ SAMHSA Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator:  
<http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>
- ❑ 2-1-1 Maine: A comprehensive state-wide directory of over 8,000 health and human services available in Maine. <http://www.211maine.org/> The toll free 2-1-1 hotline connects callers to trained call specialists who can help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## **RECOVERY:**

- ❑ SAMHS listing of support group meetings in Maine:  
<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/osa/help/selfhelp.htm>
- ❑ Maine Association of Addiction Recovery (MAAR):  
<http://www.masap.org/site/maar.asp>

## Appendix B: Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Substance Use

	<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>Protective Factor</b>
<b>Age of onset (when someone begins using alcohol or drugs)</b>	The earlier the age at which someone starts using alcohol or other drugs, the greater the risk that they may develop problems with substance abuse later in life.	Delaying alcohol use until the legal drinking age reduces the risk of developing alcohol-related problems as an adult.
<b>Poor school achievement and low school connectedness</b>	Students who have low commitment to school, poor achievement, or significant academic disruption are more likely to become involved with alcohol or drug use.	Students who are connected to school and perceive their school environment as supportive are less likely to use substances.
<b>Youth perception that their parents approve/disapprove of their alcohol or drug use</b>	Young people who believe their parent(s) approve of or are indifferent to their substance use are at greater risk for using drugs or alcohol.	Youth who perceive that their parent(s) strongly disapprove of alcohol or drug use are less likely to use substances.
<b>Peers engaging in problem behavior</b>	Youth who report that many of their peers use alcohol or drugs are more likely to report using substances themselves.	Young people who have strong social relationships with peers who do not use substances are less likely to use drugs or alcohol.
<b>Early and persistent problem behaviors, risk-taking, and high sensation-seeking</b>	Young people who display aggressive or anti-social behavior as children are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol throughout adolescence and adulthood.	Positive social skills and relationships reduce the risk that a young person will engage in problem drug and alcohol behaviors.
<b>Parental monitoring (or perception of monitoring)</b>	Young people whose parent(s)/guardians don't monitor their activities and behaviors are more likely to use substances.	Parent(s)/guardians who pay close attention their teen's activities decrease the likelihood that their child will use alcohol or drugs.
<b>Parent or older sibling drug or alcohol use</b>	A family history of substance use or abuse is a significant risk factor for adolescents' use of alcohol or drugs.	Youth who do not have a family history of substance use have a lower risk of drug and alcohol use.
<b>Low perception of harm</b>	Youth who perceive little or no risk of harm from alcohol or drug use are more likely to engage in those behaviors.	Youth who perceive drug and alcohol use as very risk or causing significant harm are less likely to use substances.
<b>Strong parental relationships and family cohesion</b>	Youth who do not have supportive family relationships are at higher risk for substance use and abuse.	Adolescents who have close relationships with their parent(s)/guardians are less likely to use substances.
<b>Youth access and availability</b>	Youth who have easy access to alcohol or drugs (from friends, family, or parties) are more likely to have increased use of substances.	Youth who do not have regular access to alcohol or drugs are less likely to engage in substance use behavior.

For citations and more information, visit: <http://captus.samhsa.gov/access-resources/common-risk-and-protective-factors-alcohol-and-drug-use>

## Appendix C: School Substance Use Policy Action Plan

**Directions:** Use this form as a template to develop an action plan that will serve as a road map for creating/evaluating/reviewing/revising your policy.

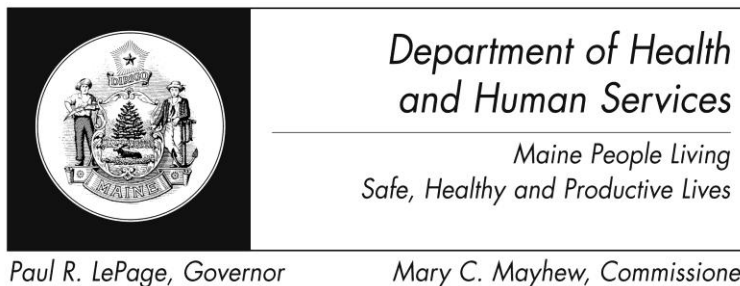
<b>Action Steps</b> <i>What Will Be Done?</i>	<b>Responsibilities</b> <i>Who Will Do It?</i>	<b>Timeline</b> <i>By When?</i> <i>(Day/Month)</i>	<b>Resources</b> <i>A. Resources Available</i> <i>B. Resources Needed (financial, human, political &amp; other)</i>	<b>Potential Barriers</b> <i>A. What individuals or organizations might resist?</i> <i>B. How?</i>	<b>Evidence Of Success</b> <i>A. How will you know that you are making progress?</i> <i>B. What are your benchmarks?</i>
<b>Step 1:</b>			<b>A.</b>  <b>B.</b>	<b>A.</b>  <b>B.</b>	
<b>Step 2:</b>			<b>A.</b>  <b>B.</b>	<b>A.</b>  <b>B.</b>	
<b>Step 3:</b>			<b>A.</b>  <b>B.</b>	<b>A.</b>  <b>B.</b>	
<b>Step 4:</b>			<b>A.</b>  <b>B.</b>	<b>A.</b>  <b>B.</b>	
<b>Step 5:</b>			<b>A.</b>  <b>B.</b>	<b>A.</b>  <b>B.</b>	



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*Paul R. LePage, Governor*

*Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner*

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