

CHEMICAL HEALTH POLICY

The Agawam School Committee recognizes that the use of drugs/alcohol illegally and/or inappropriately constitutes a hazard to the positive development of students, and that the welfare of certain students is being compromised by drugs/alcohol-related problems. Accordingly, the School Committee shall attempt to clarify through this policy and the accompanying administrative rules the rights and responsibilities of the principals, teachers, students, and parents in dealing with the complex legal, social, educational, and emotional conditions associated with drug/alcohol use and abuse.

At the same time, the School Committee shall attempt to make clear the different forms of actions, which depending upon the severity of a drug/alcohol-related incident, must be taken and those which shall be left to the discretion of the principal, teachers, and students.

While the School Committee cannot and shall not allow the sale, use, or possession of illegal drugs/alcohol on school property, the School Committee strongly desires to demonstrate its abiding concern for the welfare of an individual student and the general welfare of the school population by offering expert, continued, and supportive advice and counsel to its students.

In cases where a student violates this policy by the use of drugs/alcohol illegally or is involved in the sale, possession, or exchange of drugs/alcohol within the school or within the school boundaries and/or at school-sponsored events/activities, the student will be disciplined in accordance with the School Committee approved policy governing student drug/alcohol abuse.

In order to ensure safety, a search of a student's person may include the use of a breathalyzer when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is under the influence of and/or in possession of alcohol or a controlled substance. The refusal of a student to participate in the breathalyzer may lead to disciplinary penalty equal to the offense of which the student is suspected.

If the student tests positive, the student will be disciplined according to the discipline policies outlined in the Agawam Public Schools *Code of Conduct Handbook* for students. **If the student is found to be in possession** of alcohol or a controlled substance, the student will be disciplined according to the discipline policies outlined in the Agawam Public Schools *Code of Conduct Handbook* for students.

In addition, under M.G.L. c.71, sect.37H, any student found in possession of illegal controlled substances is subject to possible long-term suspension or expulsion, and in the discretion of the principal, a hearing pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, sect. 37H will be conducted. Consequences could include expulsion from school, suspension, community service to the school, meeting with an outside agency, and/or an assessment done by an outside agency with a plan of action (such as an in-patient or out-patient treatment program) submitted to the school.

Because supportive action by the parents/guardians is crucial to the success of any counseling, the parents/guardians will be encouraged to contact the principal if they are concerned about their child's possible drug/alcohol related behavior, and the principal will encourage the parents/guardians to become involved in any aspect of drug/alcohol counseling deemed desirable.

Agawam Public Schools 2007-2008

Approved by the Agawam School Committee on January 8, 2008, by a vote of 7 – 0.