

Local schools say no to smoking anywhere on campus

Area schools are snuffing out smoking on campus.

Robyne Lindley, chairperson for the Southeast Tobacco Free Oklahoma Coalition, said five more schools have adopted the 24/7 Tobacco Free policy.

"We're thrilled," Lindley said. "it's important to proactively protect the students from secondhand smoke and the exposure to tobacco use."

The new policy means tobacco will not be used by anyone, anywhere, anytime on school campus. The new rule includes all school events, including the ones that take place outdoors.

Savanna, Haywood, Quinton, Frink-Chambers and Lakewood Christian have all recently put the policy into effect. They join McAlester, Krebs, Kiowa and Pittsburg in completely stopping tobacco use on school property.

"Children's perceptions about tobacco use can often be blurred when it is not allowed during school hours but is allowed at school functions like basketball or baseball games," Lindley said. "Kids see the inconsistency. That's why 24/7 is so important."

But what do the smokers think? Frink-Chambers Superintendent Ron Joslin said some parents and faculty do use tobacco products. The school has held several after school events since the policy was adopted. He said smokers were agreeable to waiting until they were off school property to have a smoke.

"It's not been a problem at all. I think everybody knows it's coming and they're not going to be able to smoke in public at all," Joslin said. "A lot of other schools have the policy. I think people are simply getting used to not being able to smoke."

Lakewood Christian Vice-principal Judy Warren said she'd experienced the same reaction at her school.

"We've had no opposition whatsoever. It's never been an issue. We've always had a similar type of policy," Warren said. "We just reworded it to match the tobacco coalition's policy. We also posted metal signs around the school saying tobacco is not allowed on the premises."

Lindley said these kinds of reactions are becoming more and more common.

"It's not taking away an adult's right to smoke. It's not about them using tobacco, it's where they use it," Lindley said. "This policy provides students with positive role modeling and a safe environment. It also sends a consistent message that tobacco use is bad for you. The schools report that the policy is well received by the public and implemented with great ease."

For more information on the 24/7 Tobacco Free policy, contact Lindley at 423-1267.

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