

OKLAHOMA CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS POSITION STATEMENT

24/7 No Tobacco Use School Policy

A founding mission of the Oklahoma Congress of Parents and Teachers is to support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children.

Tobacco related disease is Oklahoma's leading preventable cause of death, killing an estimated 6,000 Oklahomans each year. Every day an average of 40 Oklahoma children become regular smokers. Roughly one out of three will die prematurely as a result of their tobacco use.

Since most people begin using tobacco before the age of 18, programs that prevent tobacco use during the school years are critical. If smoking is prevented during childhood, it is unlikely it will be initiated in adulthood.

Clearly stated school policies have been proven to deter students from using tobacco. Most effective in reducing tobacco use among students are policies that prohibit tobacco use on school property and at all school functions, policies that require prevention education and policies that provide access to cessation programs rather than punitive measures.

The Oklahoma Congress of Parents and Teachers supports these proven policies and urges its members at all levels to support measures that protect our students from future addiction and chronic health problems.