

American Lung Association Helps Schools Comply With Tobacco Free Schools Policy

All North Carolina schools have taken the first step in providing safer schools for our children by adopting the 100% Tobacco Free Schools (TFS) policy. This means that tobacco use is prohibited by all students and staff on school grounds, including outside and off-campus events. Schools that comply with the TFS policy have an 11% lower adolescent smoking rate compared to schools that do not comply, according to a study in 2000.

The American Lung Association has two in-school programs that will help you comply with your school's TFS policy. Alternative to Suspension (ATS) is a 4-session tobacco education program that is offered, as a punitive program, to students who violate the TFS policy. Instead of missing class time due to suspension, students participate in a four-session program designed to move them along the continuum of quitting tobacco use altogether. Although punitive, ATS is a positive learning experience for participants.

Students finishing ATS often express a desire to quit smoking and segue easily into the American Lung Association's premier teen smoking cessation program, Not On Tobacco (N-O-T). The program addresses many of the issues that concern teens as they try to quit smoking. The program boasts a 27% quit rate in North Carolina.

Alternative to Suspension (ATS)	Not-On-Tobacco (N-O-T)
Mandatory	Voluntary
4 Sessions	10 Sessions
Encourages behavior change	Creates behavior change
Goal is to increase readiness for change, using the stages of change	Goal is for participants to quit smoking or to significantly reduce the number of cigarettes they smoke

Both programs are offered to your school through a grant from the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund. The American Lung Association will train your staff, provide program manuals and supplies, and provide monthly technical support to program facilitators. Call Gabrielle Steele at 919-832-8326 or gsteeleac.org for details on how to get started.