

Substance Use and Abuse Prevention Policy

Our Mission

Our mission at KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School and KIPP Academy Boston Charter School (“KIPP:MA”) is to create a school environment where students develop the academic skills, intellectual habits and character traits necessary to maximize their potential in high school, college and the world beyond.

Mass. General Laws chapter 71, section 96 (as amended by [St. 2016, c. 52, s. 15](#)):

Section 96. Each public school shall have a policy regarding substance use prevention and the education of its students about the dangers of substance abuse. The school shall notify the parents or guardians of all students attending the school of the policy and shall post the policy on the school's website. The policy, and any standards and rules enforcing the policy, shall be prescribed by the school committee in conjunction with the superintendent or the board of trustees of a charter school.

The department of elementary and secondary education, in consultation with the department of public health, shall provide guidance and recommendations to assist schools with developing and implementing effective substance use prevention and abuse education policies and shall make such guidance and recommendations publicly available on the department’s website. Guidance and recommendations may include educating parents or guardians on recognizing warning signs of substance abuse and providing available resources. Guidance and recommendations shall be reviewed and regularly updated to reflect applicable research and best practices.

Each school district and charter school shall file its substance use prevention and abuse education policies with the department of elementary and secondary education in a manner and form prescribed by the department.

Since 2014, Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, s. 96 has required each public school to have policies regarding substance use prevention and the education of its students

about the dangers of substance abuse, to notify students' parents or guardians about the policies, and to post the policies on the school's website. The 2016 amendment to the statute now requires schools to file these policies with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE). The law also directs ESE to provide guidance and recommendations to assist schools with developing and implementing effective substance use prevention and abuse education policies. This guidance is intended to assist schools and districts as they develop or review and revise substance use prevention policies.

Like many states across the country, Massachusetts is facing a growing epidemic of opioid addiction, and the Commonwealth is taking action to address it. Schools play an important role in preventing substance use among students and educating students about the dangers of substance abuse.

I Leadership

KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School ("KIPP Lynn") and KIPP Academy Boston Charter School ("KIPP Boston"), collectively ("KIPP:MA") are committed to maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment. Leadership is essential in developing and implementing effective substance use prevention and abuse education policies. In adopting or updating policies, our board of trustees will work in conjunction with school leadership teams, school counseling teams, school nursing teams, and regional office compliance ("substance use and abuse prevention team") in developing clearly defined goals to prevent and address substance use and abuse among our students. This leadership should result in strong links between identified needs and prevention program/system designs.

Comprehensive substance use prevention programs involve the use of multiple strategies that include education and training; social competency skill development; social norms with expectations for behavior; policies, procedures and protocols; and problem identification and referral services. Our substance use and abuse prevention team will play a key role in implementing and overseeing these programs.

Annually, the substance use and abuse prevention team, consisting of a member of each school leadership team, a representative from each school counseling team, a representative from each school nursing team, as well as the director of compliance, shall meet to review our policy, policy implementation, and to make any recommendation for amending either the policy or policy implementation procedures. This meeting will take place by the end of February during each school year.

II Professional development

Our teachers and staff see students on a daily basis and often recognize changes in student performance, demeanor, and appearance that indicate a student may be at risk. KIPP:MA will provide tiered training, so that all school staff know KIPP:MA policies, procedures, and

protocols for prevention, intervention, and follow-up in preventing and responding to substance use and abuse. A training team consisting of our school counseling team and our school nurses will provide this training annually.

All teachers and staff will be provided training on the early warning signs and behaviors that indicate a student may be experiencing substance use problems, and should be aware of building-based referral systems and other protocols to follow.

KIPP:MA will implement the annual use of verbal screening tools in a middle school grade (grades 5-8) and a high school grade (9-12) to help identify risk for substance use related problems. Our school nurses and counselors will attend training to properly administer these tools.

Teachers and staff responsible for implementing substance use prevention curricula will receive either in-house or external training and professional development on implementing evidence-based programs and effective strategies for preventing substance use.

III) Access to resources and services

Everyone at KIPP:MA can play a key role in identifying and referring students with substance use related problems and working with their families. Teachers and the school counseling team will work collaboratively with substance use counseling professionals and mental health specialists to meet the needs of those students most at risk.

KIPP:MA will ensure that our school counseling team have access to information and strategies necessary to facilitate referrals to community services for the wide variety of mental health problems that students experience, including substance use. By March 1 of each year, Directors of School Operations, working with school counselors and school nurses will update our resource list for the network of services available through the agencies in their areas.

Collaboration between schools and community behavioral health providers can address student-specific issues, including interventions such as small group, individual supports, and school re-entry plans. These efforts can support school staff including consultation on general as well as student-specific challenges and plans for school and community provider responses when necessary.

IV) Academic and non-academic strategies

Integrating substance use prevention and education into schools is one of the easiest ways to reach youth and young adults. KIPP:MA will implement an evidence-based substance abuse prevention curriculum for grades 5 to 12. The program will be developmentally appropriate and demonstrate cultural competency.

Our school counseling teams will work directly with students who are identified as being at risk. Whenever possible, our school counseling team will seek to involve the student's family. Each school will designate one member of their counseling team to serve as the point of contact and support for students who are considered to be at risk. This point of contact person will be included in the student and family handbook, as well as noted on the KIPP:MA website.

V) Policies and protocols

KIPP:MA substance use on school grounds and at a school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions, or programs, whether on or off school grounds. Each school's student handbook outlines the details of these policies, including enforcement provisions, intervention provisions, and treatment opportunities for students and staff. Each school's code of conduct outlines the consequences for violating the policies. These policies will be discussed annually with students and distributed in writing to all students and family in each school's student and family handbook.

By January 31, 2017, all student handbooks will be updated to include information for families on the use of verbal screening tools to screen student for substance use disorders. This information will also be distributed to families in writing, including opt-out provisions and will include information on working with at-risk students, communication with students, staff, parents/guardians, and confidentiality. The policies will include procedures for re-integrating students who have been absent and/or in recovery.

VI) Collaboration with families

Families are essential partners in our efforts to prevent substance use. Parental/Guardian input, particularly from parents/guardians of students with substance related-problems, helps identify and prioritize the needs of the school community.

Because of the important of school-community-home collaborations in weaving together the resources for comprehensive, multifaceted approaches to preventing substance use and abuse, members of each school's family counsel, as well as the larger school community, will be invited to participate in contributing to the development and implementation of substance use and abuse prevention policies.

Providing parents/guardians with information regarding KIPP:MA's substance use prevention and abuse education policies is critical, as they play a key role in their success. Families will be inform about KIPP:MA's substance use prevention and abuse education policies on an annual basis.

This policy will be posted on the KIPP:MA website under the policy tab. Student and family handbooks will also contain information on their school's policies, procedures and protocols. This information will also be made available through family counsel. Materials should be easily understandable and culturally appropriate.

Any evidence-based prevention curricula selected for use at KIPP:MA must contain an education component specifically designed for parents/guardians and other actively involved family members. This outreach can help parents/guardians and family members to keep students safe from substance use, by modeling skills and attitudes at home, thereby supporting the prevention component of OUR initiative. Effective programs involve parents/guardians through regular activities and by using more than one approach.

VERBAL SCREENING TOOLS

State law provides that by the 2017-2018 school year, and subject to appropriation, public schools shall utilize a verbal screening tool to screen students annually, at two different grade levels, for substance use disorders. The relevant sections of the statute read as follows:

Mass. General Laws chapter 71, section 97 (as amended by [St. 2016, c. 52, s. 15](#)):

Section 97. (a) Subject to appropriation, each city, town, regional school district, charter school or vocational school district shall utilize a verbal screening tool to screen pupils for substance use disorders. Screenings shall occur on an annual basis and occur at 2 different grade levels as recommended by the department of elementary and secondary education, in consultation with the department of public health. Parents or guardians of a pupil to be screened pursuant to this section shall be notified prior to the start of the school year. Verbal screening tools shall be approved by the department of elementary and secondary education, in conjunction with the department of public health. De-identified screening results shall be reported to the department of public health, in a manner to be determined by the department of public health, not later than 90 days after completion of the screening.

(b) A pupil or the pupil's parent or guardian may opt out of the screening by written notification at any time prior to or during the screening. A city, town, regional school district, charter school or vocational school district utilizing a verbal screening tool shall comply with the department of elementary and secondary education's regulations relative to consent.

(c) Any statement, response or disclosure made by a pupil during a verbal substance use disorder screening shall be considered confidential information and shall not be disclosed by a person receiving the statement, response or disclosure to any other person without the prior written consent of the pupil, parent or guardian, except in cases of immediate medical emergency or a disclosure is otherwise required by state law. Such consent shall be documented

on a form approved by the department of public health and shall not be subject to discovery or subpoena in any civil, criminal, legislative or administrative proceeding. No record of any statement, response or disclosure shall be made in any form, written, electronic or otherwise, that includes information identifying the pupil.

(d) The department of elementary and secondary education shall notify each school district in writing of the requirement to screen students for substance use disorders pursuant to this section. School districts with alternative substance use screening policies may, on a form provided by the department, opt out of the required verbal screening tool. The form shall be signed by the school superintendent and provide a detailed description of the alternative substance use program the district has implemented and the reasons why the required verbal screening tool is not appropriate for the district.

(e) No person shall have a cause of action for loss or damage caused by an act or omission resulting from the implementation of this section.

[Section 63 of St. 2016, c. 52](#), reads as follows:

Each city, town, regional school district, charter school or vocational school district shall implement the verbal substance use disorder screenings required by section 97 of chapter 71 of the General Laws by the 2017-2018 school year.

Further, Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, s. 97, is subject to appropriation, which means schools and districts may voluntarily implement the actions described, but they are not required to do so unless and until funding is appropriated.

In short, the requirement to conduct verbal screenings of students for substance use disorder does not take effect until the 2017-2018 school year, and even then is subject to appropriation of funding for this purpose. ESE is working with the Department of Public Health on guidance for schools concerning these verbal screenings, and will publish it within the next several months to assist schools in planning.

If you have questions or comments on this policy, please reach out to jhayes@kipppma.org.