

Tobacco-free campus guide



Why we should make campuses tobacco-free
– and how to do it

Tobacco-free campus guide

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Tobacco-free campus guide

is a publication of the Non-Smokers' Rights Association (NSRA)
and the Smoking and Health Action Foundation (SHAF).

The NSRA is a national health organization with offices in Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal.
SHAF is the research arm of the NSRA.

In 2000, the NSRA was the inaugural recipient of the American Cancer Society's international Luther L. Terry Award. The Association was cited in the "Outstanding Organization" category.

Purpose of the campus guide

Despite the overall success in recent decades of bringing down the smoking rate in Canada, the prevalence of smoking among young adults aged 20-24 remains higher than any other age demographic. Addressing tobacco use at the post-secondary level is critical—20% of Canadian young adults try their first cigarette after the age of 18, and the majority who smoke become addicted regular smokers after that age.¹ Moreover, Canadian data indicate that in addition to 23% of young adults being identified as current smokers,² another 20% are in a dangerously susceptible “experimental puffer” category.³

Post-secondary students are the youngest legal targets of tobacco marketing, and tobacco of all forms remains the most widely used lethal substance on campus, affecting both smokers and non-smokers.

In spite of encouraging news that every post-secondary campus participating in a recent Canadian study reported having, or being in the process of creating, a tobacco control policy, there exists a gap between policy intent and outcome.⁴ Researchers fear a growing, albeit inadvertent, tolerance for smoking and tobacco use on Canadian campuses. However, surveys demonstrate broad student support for proposed campus tobacco control policies, even among smokers.^{5,6,7,8}

The aim of this guide is to offer information to increase support for, and the creation or improvement of, tobacco-free measures at Canadian post-secondary schools. Using a selection of the best examples from colleges and universities in Canada and elsewhere, this guide outlines how to develop, implement and support a comprehensive tobacco-free campus including:

- Protection from second-hand smoke and a ban on the use of all forms of tobacco except within designated smoking areas (DSAs), and if feasible, everywhere on campus;
- An end to all forms of tobacco sales and promotion on campus; and
- An ethically and socially responsible mandatory standard or core principle that ensures that the institution, its staff and students are not financially or materially associated through the institution with the tobacco industry.

Upon graduation, students should be facing bright futures with degrees and diplomas in hand, not burdened with life-threatening addictions to tobacco industry products.



Tobacco facts

- 1 Cigarettes are lethal consumer products that when used exactly as intended kill half of all long-term users. An estimated 37,000 Canadians die each year from tobacco industry products, taking with them at least another 1,100 non-smokers from exposure to second-hand smoke.⁹
- 2 Outdoor exposure to second-hand smoke is a serious concern. In crowded conditions on patios and in doorways, air quality (measured by fine particulate matter) can be comparable to indoor levels during active smoking.¹⁰ There is no known safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke.¹¹
- 3 Students are less likely to smoke if they attend a school that prohibits smoking as part of a comprehensive tobacco policy, and if they perceive tobacco policies to be well enforced.¹²
- 4 The tobacco industry has a long history of misleading and deceiving governments, scientific communities and the public at great cost to human life. For decades, the tobacco industry funded research to create doubt and to undermine medical evidence to delay tobacco control laws for as long as possible. Today, Big Tobacco seeks respectability and legitimacy through associations with third parties such as universities and colleges.¹³
- 5 Among other measures, the federal *Tobacco Act* prohibits sponsorship and tobacco advertising in print media. In addition, some provinces and territories have legislation that bans the sale of tobacco at post-secondary schools (British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, PEI, Newfoundland and Labrador), requires smoke-free buffer zones around doorways on campuses (Quebec 9 m, Alberta 5 m, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories and Nunavut all 3 m), or requires 100% smoke-free campuses (Yukon). However, individual institutions can and should go beyond these minimal requirements to further protect the health and well-being of students and staff.

What is a tobacco-free campus policy?

A smoke-free campus policy protects non-smokers from involuntary exposure to second-hand smoke (SHS). A tobacco-free campus policy includes protection from SHS, a ban on the use of any type of tobacco on campus, and provides protection from social exposure to tobacco products. Addressing social exposure to tobacco is important for eliminating visual and sensory cues — important for preventing students from starting to smoke, helping ex-smokers stay off cigarettes, and helping smokers to quit.¹⁴ As such, a tobacco-free policy should be recognized as part of a broader policy to improve the overall health and well-being of students and staff.

Benefits of a comprehensive policy

Benefits include:

- A safer and healthier environment for everyone;
- A cleaner environment with reduced risk of fire indoors and out;
- Reduced risk of legal action over involuntary exposure to SHS; and
- An enhanced institutional profile as a socially responsible community leader.

Key elements of a tobacco-free policy

A comprehensive, written policy should include the following key elements:

1 Smoke-free and tobacco-free residences, including inside private units

An American national study from 2001 found that smoke-free dormitories actually have a preventative effect, helping those who are not regular smokers before college avoid taking up tobacco during college.¹⁵ It appears that most, if not all, post-secondary schools in Canada now boast 100% smoke-free residences.

If a school residential property is managed by a private company under a multi-year contract, contract renewal can be made contingent upon the introduction of a smoke and tobacco-free policy.

2 Outdoor Designated Smoking Areas (DSAs), or if feasible, a 100% smoke and tobacco-free campus

In some cases it will not be feasible to prohibit smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco products everywhere on campus, e.g., if outdoor smoking has not been restricted before, or if the campus is isolated, making safety more of a concern, etc. As such, consider establishing outdoor DSAs while being mindful of campus location and size (urban and compact vs. suburban and sprawling), campus population, busy areas and campus “hot spots” for smoking, etc.

DSAs should be clearly marked and located at least 7 metres, preferably 9 metres, away from building entrances, operable windows, air intakes and thoroughfares.¹⁶ If the campus is geographically compact, making it easy for students to step off school property, and if adequate resources can be allocated for enforcement and safety, consider making the campus 100% smoke and tobacco-free.

Holland College on Prince Edward Island has a 100% smoke-free campus:

“Holland College is a smoke free facility. This Regulation applies to all buildings and properties owned or operated by Holland College; facilities leased, rented or loaned to Adult Community Education (ACE); where staff of ACE are working; where ACE has control of the applicable section of the building, and where the public is being served.”¹⁷



Holland College on Prince Edward Island has a 100% smoke-free campus. Image courtesy of Holland College.



Tobacco Free Campus

Smoking and use of tobacco products are prohibited on this campus

Sample tobacco-free campus signage. Image courtesy of the Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program, Arkansas Department of Health.

3 The provision and promotion of cessation resources and services to all students, faculty and campus staff.

The University of Windsor's policy stresses the importance of supporting smokers who want to quit:

"The University also recognizes tobacco as an addictive substance and is committed to delivering programs and education aimed at providing protection from tobacco smoke pollution while providing support for those with tobacco addictions and for smoking cessation."¹⁸

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology specifically mentions smoking cessation support in its policy and offers a number of related online audio/slide presentations for a general adult audience.¹⁹

It is beneficial and cost-effective to provide coverage of medications including both prescription and over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapies (NRT including the patch, gum, lozenge or inhaler) in student and employee health care plans.

Leave The Pack Behind (LTPB), a recognized best practice, is a comprehensive, age-tailored, tobacco control initiative for young adults on post-secondary campuses across Ontario. LTPB has developed a number of resources for smokers and their friends who want to help them quit.²⁰



QUITRUNCHILL is a (primarily) on-line self-help program designed to help older youth and young adults establish and sustain a pattern of physical activity that will facilitate smoking cessation, abstinence and reduce stress. Image courtesy of Leave The Pack Behind.

4 A ban on tobacco advertising, promotions and sales on campus

Despite recent amendments to the federal Tobacco Act, tobacco "informational" advertising is still permitted in bars and tobacco is readily available for purchase on many campuses. All forms of tobacco advertising and sales should be prohibited on campuses.

The policy of Ontario's Lambton College states that it **"will not condone the promotion, advertising, or sale of any tobacco products or related paraphernalia on College property."**²¹

5 A ban on tobacco industry funding for research projects, grants, student scholarships and any other type of arrangement or association.

In 2007, the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta passed the following motion:

Be it resolved that the School of Public Health will not accept or administer funding (including direct or indirect, such as scholarships and consultancies) for any purpose (including research, advocacy, student support, infrastructure or other university-related activities) from the tobacco industry (including individual companies or their component parts that are engaged in the production, manufacture, distribution, promotion, marketing, or sale of tobacco or tobacco products as their primary business) or from funds, foundations or people advocating directly or indirectly on behalf of the tobacco industry and any of its related products.²²



The University of Alberta's School of Public Health banned tobacco industry funding in 2007. Image courtesy of Mack Male. www.mastermaq.ca.

6 A ban on companies that manufacture or sell tobacco participating in campus career fairs or other vocational or recruitment activities.

We are not currently aware of any Canadian post-secondary institutions that have written policies, although it is understood that some schools have unwritten policies preventing tobacco companies from participating in career fairs. The McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas at Austin recently adopted a policy that, among other things, bans tobacco companies from participating in on-campus career fairs. However, the policy unfortunately does not prohibit tobacco companies from engaging in on-campus interviews or information sessions.²³

7 The divestment of tobacco industry stock by the educational institution.

Post-secondary schools should have a policy that deals with political and social issues related to its investment strategy, and that recognizes tobacco companies as being socially injurious. In 2006, a student group was instrumental in getting the University of Lethbridge to become the first university in Canada to divest from Big Tobacco. The University of Toronto and McGill University followed suit in 2007.²⁴

The University of Toronto's Advisory Board on Tobacco recommends:

"...that the University of Toronto adopt a policy of divestment in tobacco company securities. We define a tobacco company as one that derives 10% or more of its revenue from tobacco products. This restriction should also be applied to pooled funds where 10% or more of the pool is invested in tobacco stocks. The process of divestment should be carried out as soon as possible but in a way that is consistent with the goal of minimizing the financial effect of the divestment to the University's portfolio."²⁵

World Health Organization treaty justifies tobacco-free campus policies

Canada is one of more than 170 countries that has ratified the World Health Organization's *Framework Convention on Tobacco Control* (FCTC). This landmark health treaty includes commitments to establish smoke-free environments (Article 8) and to prevent tobacco industry interference in the formulation of health policy (Article 5.3).



The University of Toronto divested itself of tobacco industry securities in 2007.

Steps to a tobacco-free campus policy

Step 1: Develop the policy

Depending on your institution's current position and how many aspects of a comprehensive tobacco-free policy are being addressed at once, the timeline may be considerable. The strategy will also vary—for example, the steps needed to create a smoke-free campus will differ significantly from those required to divest an institution's holdings in tobacco.

Organize

Ideally, someone from within the school's administration will champion the issue and help to start the process with a goal, a timeline and a directive to bring stakeholders together as a committee. For the creation of a smoke-free campus policy, stakeholders should be represented by administration, the student union, faculty, security, health and safety, clinical services, unions, and grounds and facilities maintenance. However, research demonstrates that the downside to wide representation on a committee can be a lack of focus and ownership of the policy—which can be compounded by the significant time that can elapse between policy development and implementation.²⁶ This can hopefully be minimized by setting a timeline goal: perhaps 6 months for 6 meetings to hammer out a policy suitable for submission to the institution's governing body or legal department. Another model, used at Brock University, was a core committee of about 8 people who invited input from others for consideration—an approach that helped to speed up the process.

Review the status quo

Examine your institution's current situation and/or policy and compare to better practices at other institutions as indicated in this guide. If feasible, consider a survey to gauge campus support for the policy in question (and to determine baseline measures on which to build future evaluations). Before developing its policy, Camosun College in Victoria, BC conducted a survey that could be adapted to meet your campus's needs.²⁷

Develop a policy

With respect to smoking on campus, keep in mind that it is easier and more prudent to advance in a step-wise progression with outdoor DSAs rather than adopting and attempting to enforce a 100% smoke-free campus from the outset. A gradual progression to becoming smoke-free builds support and avoids the unfortunate situation of having to claw back on restrictions or even revoke a policy. Students report feelings of confusion, unfairness and anger when tobacco policies are not adequately enforced, and research indicates that student behaviour can be directly influenced by perceived inconsistencies of enforcement.²⁸

Determine who will be responsible for enforcement and how it will be carried out. Include this in job descriptions. Do not rely on students for enforcement, and do not assume that enforcement is everyone's duty (this usually means that no one ends up doing it). Fines should be one element of any enforcement regime. A policy that lacks teeth, such as fines, will be seriously compromised. Financial incentives to pay fines early can help reduce perceptions of "smoker punishment" and tying fines to the release of marks, as is common for library fines, ensures the policy is taken seriously.

Develop an overall implementation plan with a timeline and communication strategy. And very importantly, don't leave evaluation as an afterthought! Build it in as an important component of your policy which will serve to determine success as well as help to fine-tune it.

Prepare for policy change

Senior management, the legal department or your institution's governing body may need to approve the draft policy and implementation plan. Build these considerations and related timelines into the policy development process. At a minimum, offer one-hour face-to-face training sessions for key staff, such as those who will be enforcing the policy. Content should include enforcement procedures, administrative changes that will result from policy implementation,

and information on campus support services to help smokers quit. Before announcing the new policy to all staff, meet with senior and mid-level managers and inform them of the following:

- How information will be communicated to staff and students (e.g., signage, notices, website, intranet, newsletters, policy manuals, internal TV monitors);
- Responsibilities of staff and students; and
- What key messages need to be emphasized (e.g., where people can smoke, how the policy will be enforced).

Prepare for physical changes needed before the policy takes effect. For example, make sure that no tobacco will be sold on-campus by the relevant date and that ashtrays are only located in outdoor DSAs. It is also prudent to provide garbage and recycling containers in DSAs. If your budget allows it, you may wish to consider adding a bench or a partial shelter to the DSA to encourage use. Be sure that any shelter you consider is in accordance with all applicable legislation.



A designated smoking area at Thompson Rivers University, BC.

Sample Comprehensive Tobacco-Free Campus Policy*

TOBACCO-FREE POLICY FOR [UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE]

RATIONALE

[University/College] is committed to the prevention of illness and injury through the provision and maintenance of healthy and safe conditions on its premises and due diligence in its activities.

[University/College] also recognizes its responsibility not to facilitate tobacco use or to support, in any manner, the tobacco industry in the sale and promotion of addictive, lethal products.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is, in part, to:

- Provide physical protection from second-hand tobacco smoke and protection from social exposure to tobacco products;
- Provide and promote smoking cessation support; and
- Prevent smoking and tobacco use initiation, and to promote a tobacco-free lifestyle.

TOBACCO-FREE CAMPUS POLICY

All campus properties are tobacco-free: workplaces, lecture halls, corridors, residences, dining rooms, washrooms, sports fields, assembly areas, building entrances as well as vehicles owned, rented or leased by [University/College]. If tobacco use is permitted, it shall be limited to outdoor designated smoking areas.

OUTDOOR DESIGNATED SMOKING AREAS (DSAs)

Except in outdoor DSAs, smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco are prohibited on campus, including all properties and vehicles owned, rented or leased by [University/College].

ENFORCEMENT

After an educational implementation period, the Tobacco-Free Campus Policy will be enforced by staff using warnings, signage, and fines.

SALE AND PROMOTION OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS

[University/College] prohibits the promotion, advertising, or sale of any tobacco products or related paraphernalia on [University/College] owned, rented or leased property. In addition and in accordance with the federal *Tobacco Act*, corporate tobacco sponsorship of [University/College] events or groups is prohibited.

PROVISION AND PROMOTION OF CESSATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Evidence-based cessation support services will be provided and promoted on campus.

PARTICIPATION OF TOBACCO COMPANIES IN JOB RECRUITMENT FAIRS

Companies that manufacture, distribute or sell tobacco products are excluded from participating in campus career fairs and other recruitment activities.

FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH TOBACCO COMPANIES

[University/College] will not knowingly accept funding or other forms of support, including research grants, staff positions, or student scholarships, from tobacco companies or from any agencies or foundations in which the tobacco industry has an influence, either directly or indirectly.

INVESTMENTS IN TOBACCO COMPANIES

[University/College] will not invest, directly or indirectly, in any tobacco company. Where the [University/College] owns tobacco assets, divestment of such assets will take place by [date].

Signed and dated by management

Step 2: Implement the policy

Announce the policy and the timeline for implementation to staff, students, on-campus retailers, contractors and/or relevant leaseholders. Ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to monitor and respond to feedback throughout the implementation process. Implement the communications plan with messages that include:

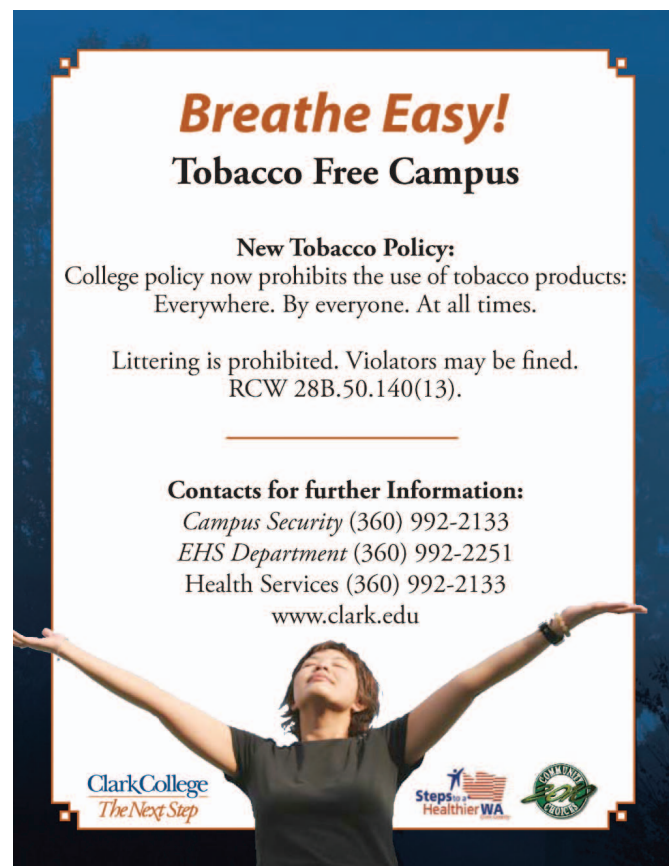
- Rationale for the policy, including health effects of exposure to SHS;
- The percentage of young adults who smoke, based on your campus survey results or the latest Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey (CTUMS) data for people in your province or territory aged 20-24²⁹ (young adults typically overestimate the percentage of their peers who smoke);^{30,31}
- Timeline for implementation; and
- Availability of advice and help for smokers who want to quit.

Make copies of the policy available for staff and students, and take every opportunity to communicate the policy through all available channels, including student and staff handbooks, the school's website, etc. Simple messages for inclusion in student orientation materials together with smoking cessation information will help to drive home the importance of the policy and of students' cooperation.



Sample messaging. Image courtesy of University of Kentucky.

Consider using handouts the size of business cards to facilitate education and enforcement of tobacco-free and/or smoke-free areas. Such cards, which are in use at schools in the United States, Australia and at Brock University in Canada, can be given to staff and students who breach the policy. The back of the card can provide information about the location of designated smoking areas (if applicable) as well as information about smoking cessation services and support.



An example of a handout for a tobacco-free campus. Image courtesy of Clark College, Washington.



**XXX UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE
IS A SMOKE-FREE CAMPUS.**

**Please restrict your smoking to
Designated Smoking Areas**

An example of a handout for a smoke-free campus (front).

**FOR INFORMATION ON THE LOCATION OF
DESIGNATED SMOKING AREAS AND
OUR SMOKE-FREE POLICY VISIT
www.XXXXXX.**

**Interested in quitting?
www.xxx or
www.leavethepackbehind.org.**

An example of a handout for a smoke-free campus (back).

Good, clear signs will help with compliance and enforcement. A campus map can be used to develop the signage placement strategy. Considerations include type, size, location and number of signs for each building or “hotspot” on campus. Priority locations include doorways, partially enclosed outdoor areas where people congregate, patios, bus stops and spectator areas for sports.

The tobacco-free campus can be promoted using a combination of media sources such as signage, university and college handbooks, websites, brochures, social media, closed-circuit TV, etc.

Effective February 1, 2011



NO SMOKING
on Camosun College property
except in Designated Smoking Areas

Smoking and Tobacco Product Policy O-5.12



www.camosun.ca/smokefree

Camosun College in Victoria communicates its smoke-free policy in a variety of ways, including this sign with campus map. Image courtesy of Camosun College.

Step 3: Monitor and evaluate the policy

1. Promote a campus contact telephone line and email address so that students and staff can provide feedback or submit complaints. Monitor and respond to input from staff, students and visitors—especially on implementation and enforcement questions. Identify areas of non-compliance or confusion and make sure the policy is being applied equitably. If compliance is high, the policy may become self-enforcing over time. However, research to date suggests the need for a continued focus on enforcement—unlike the adult population, young adults appear to tolerate smoking among their peers rather than address it directly.³²
2. Consider doing an education blitz at the beginning of each school term. To promote policy compliance, Sault College in Ontario security personnel hand out reminder cards to use the DSAs for the first month of each semester.³³
3. Evaluate the policy. Key indicators of success may include:
 - Compliance by user groups (observed behaviour);
 - Awareness of location of DSAs or other components of the policy (among smokers and non-smokers, staff and students);
 - Perception of enforcement;
 - Reduction of complaints;
 - Reports by campus security, or grounds maintenance;
 - Impact of the policy on tobacco use among different groups (e.g., students, staff, males, females, various age groups);
 - Objectives met; and
 - Level of support for potential future enhancements to the policy.

A graduated but firm approach to enforcement is recommended, starting with verbal warnings and increasing to penalties if warnings and signage continue to be ignored. Experience suggests that word of mouth is the best control—after one or two fines are given, word gets around that the school is serious about enforcement and behaviour changes. And as mentioned earlier, financial incentives to pay fines early can help to reduce perceptions of “smoker punishment.”



Endnotes

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Smoking and health: information and resources

Non-Smokers' Rights Association (NSRA)
www.nsra-adnf.ca

Leave The Pack Behind
www.leavethepackbehind.org

Education Bringing Youth Tobacco Truths (E-BUTT)
www.divestfromtobacco.blogspot.com

The Lung Association, British Columbia – Tobacco Reduction Campus Toolkit
www.bc.lung.ca/smoking_and_tobacco/pdfs/Tobacco%20Reduction%20Campus%20Toolkit.pdf

The Lung Association, British Columbia – Tobacco-Free Post Secondary Initiative – Research Templates & Findings
www.bc.lung.ca/smoking_and_tobacco/tobacco_free_research.html

FRESH AIR on Campus – The Tobacco-Free Post-Secondary Initiative
www.facebook.com/FreshAirOnCampus

Smokers' Helpline
www.smokershelpline.ca

BC Cancer Agency – Tobacco Control Policies at Canadian Undergraduate Campuses, 2009
www.bccancer.bc.ca/PPI/Prevention/research.htm

Health Canada – Tobacco
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/tobac-tabac/index-eng.php

Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium
www.ttac.org/services/college/campus/index.html

Americans for Non-Smokers' Rights – US Colleges and Universities with Smokefree Air Policies
www.no-smoke.org/pdf/smokefreecollegesuniversities.pdf

Action on Smoking and Health Australia – Guide for a tobacco-free campus
www.ashaust.org.au/pdfs/TFcampusGuideAus09.pdf

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Tobacco-free campus policies common questions and answers

Q Is second-hand smoke (SHS) really harmful?

A The medical evidence is irrefutable. SHS causes discomfort as well as serious disease in non-smokers. A Health Canada warning on cigarette packs says SHS can cause “death from lung cancer.”

Q Why should our campus go tobacco-free?

A [University/College] has legal responsibilities to provide safe environments for students and staff from SHS. And it has an ethical responsibility not to support tobacco marketing and use in any way.

Q Why should tobacco not be sold on campus when it is so easily available off campus?

A By not allowing tobacco sales on campus, [University/College] informs its students, staff and visitors that it does not see tobacco industry products as “normal” products and does not want this institution to legitimize a product that will kill one out of two students whose addiction leads to long-term use.

Q Doesn't the campus policy interfere with the rights of smokers?

A In law, smoking is a limited privilege rather than a right. The rights of non-smokers to breathe clean air clearly takes precedence over smokers' now-withdrawn privilege of putting toxins into the air shared by others.

Q What happens when smokers violate the campus tobacco-free policy?

A Staff and student peer group pressure will combine to make the policy largely self-regulating. If polite requests combined with the distribution of health literature do not work, campus security or a phone/email complaints service can be contacted to secure enforcement.

Non-Smokers' Rights Association
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