

**Boston Renaissance Charter Public School
1415 Hyde Park Ave.
Hyde Park, MA**

Substance Use Prevention and Support Services Policy

Overview

The BRCPS Board of Trustees and Head of School have identified a set of programs and resources to be provided to students and families for the prevention of substance use and abuse among students.

These programs and resources, described below, shall be centered primarily on education- and prevention-oriented measures, and also shall include strategies for identification, support, treatment, and re-entry. BRCPS knows that 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. These strategies will equip our students with the knowledge, confidence, and skills to maintain healthy, drug-free lifestyles, and to seek support when they encounter unsafe circumstances, be it on school grounds, or in their communities outside of school hours.

Statement of Prohibition

BRCPS is committed to providing a tobacco-free, alcohol-free, and drug-free learning environment to its students. BRCPS prohibits possession and/or consumption of alcohol, tobacco, or any controlled substance on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 § 37H. Students may not, under any circumstances, possess, consume, buy, sell, or give to another student any beverage containing alcohol, any tobacco product, or any substance classified as a controlled substance under state or federal law. Students may not sell or give to another student prescription medicines of any kind. Any student found to be in violation of this substance abuse prevention policy shall be subject to disciplinary action and mandatory substance-related intervention and support services.

Additionally, any student who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol at school or during a school-sponsored event or activity shall be subject to disciplinary action and mandatory substance-related intervention and support services. BRCPS will include the parents or guardians of students found to be in violation of the prohibition policy in the investigation and disciplinary process.

School-based Programs and Resources: Prevention, Intervention, and Support

At BRCPS, the prevention of substance abuse is supported through a range of programs and resources, outlined below.

Staff Professional Development

Faculty 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. BRCPS provides ongoing training, so that all school staff know district policies, procedures, and protocols for prevention, intervention, and follow-up in preventing and responding to substance use and abuse. Each August, and at times throughout the school year, BRCPS staff are provided training on the early warning signs and behaviors that indicate a student may be experiencing substance use problems, and are trained on the internal referral systems and protocols. The BRCPS Climate & Culture team, led by the Director of School Safety, is primarily responsible for implementing substance use prevention curricula; these staff members receive specific training and professional development on the implementation of evidence-based curricula and effective strategies for preventing substance use.

Curriculum-based Education and Prevention Strategies

To provide students with an evidence-based prevention curriculum, BRCPS has partnered with the Courage to Speak Foundation, and will be implementing the Courage to Speak (CTS) drug prevention curriculum for grades 5-6. Based on the book *Sunny's Story* by Ginger Katz, highly interactive classroom lessons are taught by teachers. Students take part in skill and asset-building activities through: Creative Writing, Art, Group Discussion, Scientific Demonstration, and Refusal Skills.

The CTS program has been evaluated by Yale University and been demonstrated to be effective in increasing knowledge and perceptions of harm of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. Evaluation has also shown the program to have a significant effect on parental communication about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, and a positive effect on increasing students' intent to avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, among other positive findings. CTS is an evidenced based program, designed for use in elementary and middle schools, and is developmentally and culturally appropriate for BRCPS grades 5 and 6.

Access to Resources and Services

BRCPS has a strong, highly-qualified team of mental health professionals employed at the school. This team of licensed social workers and school psychologists works closely with the Climate & Culture team, whose primary role is assistance with student discipline and enforcement of the school's code of conduct. Working collaboratively with teachers and administrators, these school-based support staff play a key role in identifying and referring students identified as being at high risk for substance use or related problems and working with their families.

The Mental Health team works with individual students and their families, making referrals to community services to address a wide variety of mental, behavioral, and physical health problems, including substance use. These counselors maintain a resource list for the network of services available in the Boston area, and cultivate relationships with local family-services

and behavioral health providers. Partnership and collaboration between BRCPS and these community behavioral health providers is a cornerstone of the BRCPS approach to substance abuse prevention and treatment. These referral services are combined with significant school-based counseling and intervention services provided onsite to ensure students are identified, supported, and monitored throughout their time at BRCPS.

Policies and Protocols

BRCPS families are informed of the consequences for violating the policies on an annual basis, with the distribution of the BRCPS Family Handbook. Families must sign and return the Handbook confirmation sheet, indicating that they have received, read, and understand the policy. BRCPS will give special attention to communicating with families of students in grades 5 and 6, who may be most at risk for substance-related peer pressure. In the event that a student should violate the substance use policy, the Director of School Safety shall be responsible for the enforcement and application of consequences. The Director of School Safety, in coordination with the administration, will be the primary point of contact with students' family. A member of the mental health team shall be responsible for referrals for services.

Collaboration with Families

BRCPS believes school-home collaborations are critical to preventing substance use and abuse. Providing parents/guardians with information regarding the BRCPS substance use prevention and education policies is critical, as they play a key role in their success. We inform parents/guardians of the school's substance use prevention and education policies on an annual basis in the BRCPS Family Handbook. In addition, the policy will be posted on our school website. This information will also be made available through various family engagement programming, and other related programming.