

Prevention for Stronger Schools

Substance misuse prevention in schools goes beyond health class and can have profound effects on every part of a student's academic and personal life. Strong prevention policies help students stay in school, stay engaged, and stay on track for future success.

Why Prevention Matters

Prevention programs that focus on the whole student help create community and a communal mindset around better choices.

Students who feel connected to their school community are less likely to misuse substances.

Successful prevention goes beyond reducing harm and helps build lifelong skills in confidence, resilience, coping, and decision-making.

Prevention programs improve attendance, academic performance, and mental health.

Vermont does not require suspension for substance misuse—schools have the power to choose supportive approaches such as referrals to counseling and family conferences.

Vermont Success Stories

Schools that implemented student support rooms saw **fewer repeat violations.**

Graduation rates improve after integrating prevention into their student support model.

Truancy rates decline after integrating prevention programs.

Coordinated policies around school climate, engagement, and substance misuse are linked to **reductions in risk behaviors.**

Source: Grantee reported outcomes.

Ideas to Advocate For

Evidence-based prevention programs that start in elementary school and continue through high school.

Clear policies that focus on support and connection instead of punishment.

Universal screening to identify students who may need help early.

In-school alternatives like clubs, art, sports, or service groups that keep students connected.

