

Dear Parents:

At the School District of Palm Beach County we are committed to ensuring our children are healthy and live in healthy communities. As part of this effort, one of our districts goals is to ensure that our schools are tobacco-free.

On July 1, 2012 the The School Board of Palm Beach County adopted a 100% tobacco free school policy. This policy prohibits all tobacco use by everyone, everywhere on campus, at all times – including school events after regular school hours. This policy also prohibits students from bringing tobacco products on campus. You can find a copy of our policy 7.19 at <http://www.palmbeachschools.org/policies/>.

The School Board adopted this policy for three reasons:

*1. Support families to keep their children off tobacco*

Tobacco use is the single leading cause of preventable death and disease in our state. Ninety percent of adults who are addicted to tobacco began before the age of 18, and the average age of initiation is between 12 and 14 years old. Most parents – even those who use tobacco – do not want their children to become addicted. Youth spend a great deal of their time at school and school-related events. Allowing the use of tobacco products on campus implies school approval of such use. Keeping tobacco off campus means students have less opportunity to see their friends and teachers using tobacco, and less access to tobacco products. This means they will be less likely to try – and possibly become addicted – to tobacco.

*2. Provide a safe environment for students and staff*

We must provide a safe learning and work environment for students and staff. Exposure to secondhand smoke can trigger an asthma attack or exacerbate respiratory problems. Clusters of employees and visitors smoking outside near building entrance or at school sponsored events place others at risk. This does not meet the standard of a safe environment.

*3. A cleaner campus*

Discarded smoking materials litter school grounds, parking lots, vehicles, and stadiums. Cleaning or replacing items damaged by smoke or smoking materials is costly. Prohibiting tobacco from campus will mean a cleaner environment for students, staff and school visitors.

Signs communicating this policy shall be prominently posted and properly maintained where tobacco use and smoking are regulated by this policy, including all building entrances, grounds, and vehicles. Sandpiper Shores shall also notify students, parents/guardians, staff, contractors and other school visitors annually of the tobaccofree policy in written materials including, but not limited, to handbooks, manuals, contracts, newspapers, and newsletters. We will also let you know of upcoming tobacco education and cessation classes for those who use tobacco and want to stop.

The School District of Palm Beach County is confident that through your participation we will assure a healthier environment for our staff, students and community. If you have questions or comments about the policy, please contact us for more information.

Educationally yours,

Pamela Popaca,Principal