Substance Use Prevention Policy for:

MATCH CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Preface:

Match Charter Public School ("Match") seeks to create and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment and recognizes that it has a unique and important opportunity to proactively prevent substance use and misuse. As such, Match will collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including parents/guardians, students, teachers, administrators, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ("DESE") and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health ("DPH"), to provide its students with information on the dangers of opioid, alcohol, and other substance use and misuse, identify and support students who may be at risk for substance use and misuse, and to implement evidence-based, developmentally and culturally appropriate prevention programming. Match recognizes that collaborating with families and the community is essential for structuring comprehensive and multifaceted approaches to preventing substance use and misuse. This policy shall be reviewed on an annual basis.

Statement of Protocol:

The purpose of this policy is to outline prevention practices implemented at Match to decrease the likelihood that Match students will use or misuse dangerous substances and to identify any such use and misuse in the early stages, intervene effectively, and provide treatment and supportive resources to those students and families. The protocols detailed below shall at all times be subject to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Massachusetts student records laws, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and any other relevant federal or state law.

Administrative Guidelines:

Match shall review and update this policy as needed to reflect applicable research and best practices in accordance with MGL c. 71 s. 96 and s. 97 (as amended by St. 2016, c. 52, s. 15).

Educational Materials for Students and Families

I. Health Educational Programming: Match will provide a high-quality and evidence-based health and wellness curriculum that will include developmentally appropriate and culturally competent information about the dangers of substance abuse for students in grades 5-12. Such programming may include topics such as:

   a. The distinction between drug use and drug misuse/abuse;
   b. negative effects of different types of drugs/substances;
   c. factors that cause and affect addiction;
   d. addiction's effect on the body, the brain, and overall wellness; and
   e. methods to treat and support individuals who are addicted to substances.

   Match staff will discuss this policy with students and provide this policy to families on at least an annual basis.

II. Opiate Misuse Prevention Materials for Student Athletes: Due to the risk of injury and the subsequent need for pain management, student athletes may be at increased risk for opioid misuse. As such, prior to the start of each sports season, Match will provide to athletes and athletes' families with DPH-approved written education information on prescription opioid misuse prevention that is specific to athletics.

III. Resources for Students, Parents and Staff: On its website and in this policy, Match will provide links to relevant information, resources and organizations related to substance use and abuse that may

be helpful for parents, students and staff. Match recognizes that families play a critical role in the prevention of substance use and abuse, and shall encourage parents to contribute to prevention efforts.

IV. Intervention: A combination of several of the following behaviors happening simultaneously, or if there is a sudden onset of these behaviors, or if they become extreme, it may be a signal that the student is involved in drug or alcohol use or misuse, and in such a case, these behaviors should not be overlooked as normal adolescent behavior:

- A change in mood (temper flare-ups, irritability, defensiveness)
- A change in academics (skipping school, low grades, disciplinary action)
- A change in behavior (suddenly avoids eye contact, makes secretive phone calls, disappears for periods of time)
- A change in friends and a reluctance to have parents/family get to know the new friends
- A "nothing matters" attitude (lack of involvement in former interests, general low energy)
- Physical or mental changes (periods of sleeplessness or high energy, memory lapses, poor concentration, lack of coordination, slurred speech, significant weight loss/gain, etc.)
- Money is missing, or objects have disappeared

Getting help early is essential to protecting students, and Match will work to establish relationships with providers to whom it can refer a student in need, and have readily available resources to offer parents/guardians. Treatment can be provided to individuals at any stage and at any age, and should be tailored to the unique needs of the individual.

V. Point of Contact: Match has designated the Mental Health Professionals at each school to be the primary point of contact and support for students who are considered to be at risk. Staff members, parents and students should reach out to the Mental Health Professionals with any questions or concerns, or to learn more about available resources.

Professional Learning, Training and Referrals

I. Role of Staff. Match employs and contracts School-based Licensed Mental Health Professionals ("Mental Health Professionals") to provide services to students, as well as to provide trainings for staff for the variety of mental health problems that students can experience, including substance use. Given that Match staff members interact with students on a daily basis, they are often able to recognize changes in performance, demeanor, and/or appearance that may indicate that a student may be at risk for, or is already, using or experimenting with substances. Staff members will work together with Mental Health Professionals to collaborate with parents, families and the community to support students who are using or misusing, or are at risk of using or misusing, substances.

II. Training. Match provides a tiered system of support and training so that all school staff are informed about Match's policies, procedures and protocols for prevention, intervention, and follow-up when responding to substance use and misuse. Mental Health Professionals and/or school nurses will provide this training annually. Topics to be covered in training include the early warning signs and behaviors that indicate a student may be experiencing substance use problems, school-based referral systems, and related protocols. Additional professional development opportunities will be made available to staff who are directly responsible for implementing these supports with students. Staff who implement substance use prevention curricula and who conduct verbal screenings will undergo ongoing continuous training and professional development on implementing evidence-based programs and effective strategies for preventing substance use.

III. Referrals and Collaboration: School leaders and Mental Health Professionals will facilitate referrals to community behavioral health providers for the variety of mental health issues that students experience, including substance use or misuse and co-curring disorders, as necessary. Professional best practices should be followed related to communication between staff, parents/guardians, students, and outside providers, as well as for ongoing monitoring and re-entry to school plans, if required.

Substance Use Prohibition

I. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use: A student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, distribute or display away any beverage containing alcohol, any tobacco or nicotine product or tobacco or nicotine paraphernalia (including nicotine delivery systems such as vaporizers and e-cigarettes), marijuana or marijuana-derived products, opioids, steroids, or any other controlled substance on or within 500 feet of Match property or at any school-related function or off-campus school-sponsored event or extracurricular activity such as field trips or sporting events. Additionally, any student who is under the influence of drugs or alcoholic beverages while in attendance at school or participating in a school-sponsored event or activity will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with all applicable Match policies and procedures (including, without limitation, the Code of Conduct and the Student Discipline Policy).

II. Verbal Screening Tools: Match will use a verbal screening tool to screen students for substance use disorders in accordance with Mass. General Laws chapter 71, section 97 (as amended by St. 2016, c.52, s.15). In connection with the screening tool, Match will:

- Conduct screening on an annual basis for students in Grades 7 and 9;
- Notify parents of students who will be screened before the school year in which screening takes place starts; and
- Permit a student or a student's parent to opt out of the screening at any time by providing written notification to the building principal.

Match school nurses and/or Mental Health Professionals will attend training to properly administer these tools.

Any statement, response or disclosure made by a student during a verbal screening shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed by the person conducting the screening to any other person without the prior written consent of the pupil or parent/guardian, except in the case of immediate medical emergency or if disclosure is otherwise required by law. If given, such consent will be documented on the appropriate DPH form and shall not include any information which identifies the student.

Information for Families:

- Talking to Your Middle School-Aged Child about Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs
  - http://massclearinghouse.ehs.state.ma.us/ALCH/SA1020kit.html
- Alcohol and Other Drugs: Is Your Teen Using?
  - http://massclearinghouse.ehs.state.ma.us/ALCH/SA1066.html
- Tips for Protecting Your Kids from Addiction Brochure
  - http://massclearinghouse.ehs.state.ma.us/ALCH/SA3534kit.html
- How and when to start conversations and prevention resources for parents:
  - https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking,
  - https://drugfree.org/
  - https://www.mass.gov/learn-about-marijuana
  - https://www.mass.gov/substance-use-prevention-for-parents

- An extensive list of resources specific to certain categories of substance use and misuse (including alcohol, marijuana tobacco/nicotine and opioids), treatment options, recovery high schools, and resources from state agencies can be found at https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/safety/atod.html.

Last reviewed: July 2025