

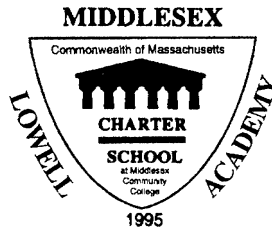
Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School Substance Use Policy

An Act Relative to Substance Use, Treatment, Education and Prevention was signed into law on March 14, 2016, as [Chapter 52 of the Acts of 2016](#). **Mass. General Laws chapter 71, section 96** (as amended by [St. 2016, c. 52, s. 15](#)):

I) Leadership Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School maintains a safe and supportive learning environment as part of their overall mission. LMACS leadership is essential in developing and implementing effective substance use prevention and abuse education policies. Per Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, s. 96, “the policy, and any standards and rules enforcing the policy, shall be prescribed by the school committee in conjunction with the superintendent or the board of trustees of a charter school.” In adopting or updating policies, the charter school board of trustees works in conjunction with school leaders to develop clearly defined goals to prevent and address substance use and abuse among youth. LMACS leadership results in strong links between identified local needs and prevention program/system designs. LMACS’ 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. Together with the LMACS leadership, The Treatment Intervention Team plays a key role in implementing and overseeing these programs.

II) 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. LMACS provides tiered training, so that all school staff know school policies, procedures, and protocols for prevention, intervention, and follow-up in preventing and responding to substance use and abuse.

All faculty and staff are provided training on the early warning signs and behaviors that indicate a student may be experiencing substance use problems, and are aware of building-based referral systems and other protocols to follow. When LMACS is planning to administer a verbal



screening tool to screen pupils for risk for substance use related problems, only qualified staff are allowed and trained to do so. (See below for more information on Verbal Screening Tools.)

LMACS Treatment Intervention Team are responsible for implementing substance use prevention curricula and have received specific training and professional development on implementing evidence-based programs and effective strategies for preventing substance use.

III) *Access to resources and services*

The Treatment Intervention Team has access to information and strategies necessary to facilitate referrals to community services for the wide variety of mental health problems that students experience, including substance use. LMACS maintains a resource list of services available through the agencies in the Lowell area.

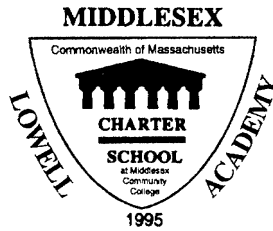
IV) *Academic and non-academic strategies*

Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School integrates substance use prevention education in many ways. LMACS implements an evidence-based substance abuse prevention curriculum through Health Class, assorted Life Skills Classes, Advising discussions, and guest speakers. These programs are developmentally appropriate and demonstrate cultural competency.

The LMACS Assistant Director is designated as the point of contact and support for students who are considered to be at risk. The Treatment Intervention Team includes the Assistant Director, School Social Workers, and the School Nurse.

A Bio-psychosocial Assessment is performed with each student during their first month as a student at LMACS. These assessments are completed by the Social Workers and cover a students' history of use or abuse. At-risk students are identified at that time and appropriate communication with students and parents/designated adult is confidential. If necessary, appropriate referrals are made. The Treatment Intervention Team has guidelines for reintegration of students if treatment is sought.

Faculty and the Treatment Intervention Team work to meet the needs of those students most at risk.

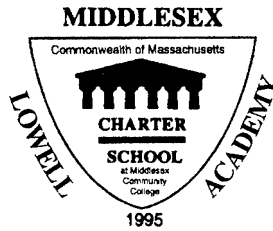


V) Policies and protocols

It is the policy of the Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School that a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use/consume, possess, buy/sell, be under the influence or give away any beverage containing alcohol; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled or illegal substance/drugs or look alike substance/drug, medication/prescription (inconsistent with the Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School Medication Policy) and/or volatile substances on school grounds and/or prior to or during school sponsored or school related activities or events. Such actions may result in the student being barred from school activities and events and/or may also result in further disciplinary action including, but not limited to expulsion from the Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School. All incoming students and their Designated Adult sign a Substance Abuse Policy Contract prior to their first day of school.

Staff shall take the following steps in regards to any student, who violates this policy

- The Director will investigate the allegation consistent with Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School policies and guidelines and take appropriate action (which could include, but is not limited to disciplinary and/or alternatives to disciplinary action) consistent with said policies and guidelines including, but not limited to contacting the student's designated adults.
- Any substance discovered in violation of this policy will be confiscated and the Lowell Police will be notified. Violations of this policy may constitute criminal acts.
- The Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School cooperates with law enforcement agencies to ensure that illicit activities by students and others are discouraged in and around the vicinity.
- The Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School follows this policy with the full consideration to the legal rights of the student(s) involved and the rights and safety of the school community.



- The Assistant Director provides assistance to any student voluntarily seeking alcohol, tobacco or drug treatment or advice.

VI) *Collaboration with families*

Families are essential partners in schools' efforts to prevent substance use. Parental input, particularly from parents of students with substance related-problems, helps identify and prioritize the needs of the school community.

Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School emphasizes the importance of school-community-home collaborations in weaving together the resources for comprehensive, multifaceted approaches to preventing substance use and abuse. Parents and Designated Adults are provided with information regarding the LMACS substance use prevention and abuse education policies.

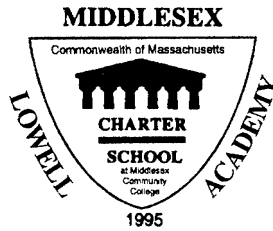
The Substance Use Prevention Policy is posted on the LMACS website and information on the LMACS policies, procedures, and protocols are included in the Student handbook.

VERBAL SCREENING TOOLS

State law provides that by the 2017-2018 school year, and subject to appropriation, Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School will utilize a verbal screening tool to screen students, for substance use disorders. The relevant sections of the statute read as follows:

Mass. General Laws chapter 71, section 97 (as amended by [St. 2016, c. 52, s. 15](#)):

Section 97. (a) Subject to appropriation, each city, town, regional school district, charter school or vocational school district shall utilize a verbal screening tool to screen pupils for substance use disorders. Screenings shall occur on an annual basis and occur at 2 different grade levels as recommended by the department of elementary and secondary education, in consultation with the department of public health. Parents or guardians of a pupil to be screened pursuant to this section shall be notified prior to the start of the school year. Verbal screening tools shall be approved by the department of elementary and secondary education, in conjunction with the department of public health. De-identified screening results shall be reported to the department of public health, in a manner to be determined by the department of public health, not later than



90 days after completion of the screening.

(b) A pupil or the pupil's parent or guardian may opt out of the screening by written notification at any time prior to or during the screening. A city, town, regional school district, charter school or vocational school district utilizing a verbal screening tool shall comply with the department of elementary and secondary education's regulations relative to consent.

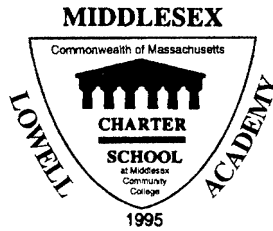
(c) Any statement, response or disclosure made by a pupil during a verbal substance use disorder screening shall be considered confidential information and shall not be disclosed by a person receiving the statement, response or disclosure to any other person without the prior written consent of the pupil, parent or guardian, except in cases of immediate medical emergency or a disclosure is otherwise required by state law. Such consent shall be documented on a form approved by the department of public health and shall not be subject to discovery or subpoena in any civil, criminal, legislative or administrative proceeding. No record of any statement, response or disclosure shall be made in any form, written, electronic or otherwise, that includes information identifying the pupil.

(d) The department of elementary and secondary education shall notify each school district in writing of the requirement to screen students for substance use disorders pursuant to this section. School districts with alternative substance use screening policies may, on a form provided by the department, opt out of the required verbal screening tool. The form shall be signed by the school superintendent and provide a detailed description of the alternative substance use program the district has implemented and the reasons why the required verbal screening tool is not appropriate for the district.

(e) No person shall have a cause of action for loss or damage caused by an act or omission resulting from the implementation of this section.

[Section 63 of St. 2016, c. 52](#), reads as follows:

Each city, town, regional school district, charter school or vocational school district shall implement the verbal substance use disorder screenings required by section 97 of chapter 71 of the General Laws by the 2017-2018 school year.



Further, Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, s. 97, is subject to appropriation, which means schools and districts may voluntarily implement the actions described, but they are not required to do so unless and until funding is appropriate

Updated 02/2017.
