**Benefits of School Policies & Engaging Youth**

 **Benefits of Tobacco-Free Policies in Schools**

Schools are more than just educational institutions—they are central to shaping healthy habits in youth. Adopting tobacco-free policies offers multiple benefits:

**Health & Safety**

* Protects students, staff, and visitors from the harms of secondhand smoke.
* Reduces the risk of addiction by limiting youth exposure to tobacco.
* Decreases fire hazards caused by smoking materials.

 **Stronger Prevention Messaging**

* Reinforces classroom lessons with consistent, real-world anti-tobacco messages.
* Helps youth understand that tobacco use is not a “normal” behavior.
* Offers positive adult role models who lead by example.

 **Legal & Community Benefits**

* Minimizes liability for schools by eliminating tobacco use on campus.
* Fosters a healthy, safe school climate that supports student success and well-being.

 **The Power of Youth Engagement**

According to the CDC, youth are key allies in the movement toward tobacco-free communities. Their involvement brings unique strengths:

 **Motivators & Mobilizers**

* Youth inspire peers and rally others more effectively than adults.
* Many are personally motivated by family loss, health struggles, or anger at industry manipulation.

 **Creative & Insightful**

* Youth understand youth—their insights help shape relevant, effective policies.
* Their fresh ideas and perspectives add creativity and innovation to outreach and advocacy.

 **Effective Advocates**

* Young voices get noticed by media and policymakers.
* They add authenticity and credibility to campaigns and messages.

 **Strategic Allies**

* Youth can expose tobacco industry tactics, helping others see through marketing strategies.
* They bring energy, passion, and genuine concern to the movement—often volunteering their time to protect their future.

 **Make a Change – Start with a Plan**

Whether you're a student, educator, parent, or community leader—anyone can spark change. Work together to:

* Implement strong tobacco-free policies in schools
* Engage and empower youth as partners
* Promote a healthier, tobacco-free future