



What Parents Need to Know: Legalization of Marijuana in Virginia & the Potential Impact on Teens



**Student Assistance Services
Department of Pupil Services**

What is a SAS?

Team of 8 master's level trained staff

Regionally Assigned

Member of each school's UMHT

Education & Support

Classroom presentations, advisory lessons, individual counseling, group counseling, 3-day education program

Professional Development for LCPS staff, presentations for parents & community organizations

ADDITIONAL DUTIES: Restorative Practices Leads, Co-leads, trainers, and practitioners.

Sources of Strength Trainers and Leads. Committee Members of Gang Response Intervention Team, Domestic Abuse Response Team.

The Law

- At 21 years of age, legal possession of up to one ounce of cannabis (without intent to distribute)
- People under the age of 21 caught with the drug face a \$25 fine, but would also be required to enter a substance abuse treatment and education program
- Illegal to consume the drug in public or offer it to people in public, as a gift or otherwise. First offense - \$25 fine, second offense - mandatory drug treatment, third offense - Class 4 misdemeanor.
- Allows for gifting, up to an ounce
- Possession on the grounds of a public K-12 school while it's open would constitute a Class 2 misdemeanor
- Retail sales won't begin until 2024
- Allows home cultivation of up to four plants beginning on July 1, 2021. The amendments would require the plants to be labeled with identification information, out of sight from public view, and out of range of individuals under the age of 21.

Lessons Learned



In youth marijuana use in legal vs non legal states



Perceived risk among adolescents



Psychosis, ER visits, Alcohol Use, Addiction

Trends

Increase in potency

More easily concealed - edibles/drinkables/vaping products

Easier access (online, through social media)

Adolescent Brain Development

Rapid brain development continues until age 25

As the brain is growing, it changes more rapidly, making it more vulnerable to the effects of any drug, including THC

Addiction is not the only concern - Marijuana has a significant impact on mood regulation, perception, learning, memory & motivation¹

Because of its impact on memory and cognition, marijuana is directly linked to negative academic outcomes including low grades, increased risk of not completing high school, not enrolling or completing college and low educational achievement and lower income.²

Risk factors - age, genetics, mental health disorders/symptoms

¹NIDA. 2019, December 24. Marijuana DrugFacts. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana> on 2021, April 19.

²Guenther, Alan. January/February 2019. Legalizing Recreational Marijuana: a Board of Education Perspective. Retrieved from <https://www.njsba.org/news-publications/school-leader/jan-feb-2019-vol-49-no-4/legalizing-recreational-marijuana-a-board-of-education-perspective/> on 2021, April 13.

Talking to Your Student

Identify a philosophy

Set aside time to talk

Approach from a non-judgmental stance

Connect with school SAS

Encourage open dialogue and questions - remain calm

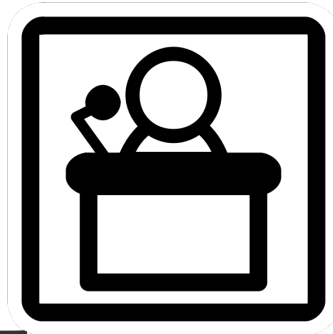
Reminders for yourself & your child:

- Still not legal for them
- Legality does not mean safety
- Potency of THC products is constantly increasing
- Teen brain is still developing & vulnerable

We are Here to Help



Consultation



Education



Support

SAS Website for staff assignments and links to resources for education & support:

<https://www.lcps.org/Page/1398>

Check out our SAS Newsletter for articles, events & resource links: <https://smore.com/214wu>

Jennifer Evans, Supervisor of Student Assistance Services: Jennifer.Evans@lcps.org

Questions?

SAS Website for staff assignments and links to resources for education & support:

<https://www.lcps.org/Page/1398>

Check out our SAS Newsletter for articles, events and resource links:

<https://smore.com/214wu>

Supervisor Jen Evans, at Jennifer.Evans@lcps.org