



Students Against Destructive Decisions Position Statements

SADD empowers and mobilizes students and adult allies to engage in positive change through leadership and smart decision-making. SADD endorses the following policies and positions that promote student health and safety.

I. **Mobility Safety**

SADD believes mobility is the gateway to increase education, experience social interactions, and develop into a productive community member. As an organization founded in traffic safety, SADD empowers all individuals to make the safest choice possible when it comes to their mobility and transit.

A. *A Vision for Zero Roadway Fatalities*

SADD supports policies that integrate the safety, skills, and convenience of all road users in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of transportation networks.

SADD supports and encourages the adoption of the Vision Zero approach, a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all through a systematic focus on solutions supported by proactive policies, data analysis, equitable enforcement, and engagement programs.

B. *Seat Belts*

SADD advocates for every person riding in a vehicle to properly wear a seat belt. Every trip. Every seat. Every time. SADD supports primary seat belt laws that require use of occupant restraints without the need to observe or cite the driver for another offense. SADD also supports in-vehicle technology related to occupant protection, including rear seat belt reminder system requirements.

C. *Drivers Education*

SADD supports access to affordable and quality driver's education. SADD believes that parental or caring adult engagement is critical to teaching a young person to drive and to supporting opportunities for continuous learning.

D. *Driver Licensing*

SADD supports graduated driver's licensing laws (GDL) that establish a slow increase to the risks facing novice drivers. There should be three phases: a permit phase during, a provisional phase, and an unrestricted phase when all conditions have been met. SADD believes that model GDL policy laws should

prevent distracted driving, limit passengers, decrease nighttime driving, and increase and include cell phone use provisions and seat belt use requirements. As part of these requirements, SADD also supports extending the phases if a violation has taken place. Zero tolerance should be applied for impaired driving convictions.

E. *Distraction*

SADD empowers students to be focused drivers and helpful passengers when traveling in a vehicle. SADD supports policies, programs, and behaviors that avoid auditory, cognitive, manual, and visual distractions of a driver. SADD believes that all distractions while behind the wheel are dangerous and should be avoided. This includes digital distraction, which is especially dangerous when using a handheld device such as a cell phone. SADD is supportive of state laws that ban the use of handheld devices while driving and that apply additional restrictions that prioritize safe, attentive driving for young and novice drivers.

F. *Impaired Driving*

SADD supports any policy, program, and practice that will eliminate impairment from alcohol or drugs behind the wheel. SADD supports ignition interlocks and other in-vehicle technologies that prevent drivers from driving impaired. SADD also encourages policies that place a focus on DUI and Drug Court programs that include treatment for substance abuse that are proven to prevent repeat offenses.

G. *Automated Enforcement*

SADD supports automated enforcement, such as speed and traffic light cameras, to prevent risky driving behavior as part of an equitable enforcement strategy.

H. *Autonomous Vehicles*

SADD believes that advances in technology are a key part of the equation to achieve zero roadway fatalities and supports efforts to advance technologies that reduce crashes through technology.

I. *Mobility Opportunities*

SADD believes that students should have access to forms of transportation that provide the greatest degree of safety for their current situation, whether that be by walking, biking, public transit, or other forms of sustainable, equitable, and less-costly forms of transportation.

II. Substance Use

SADD recognizes that underage use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs is a significant problem for students, their families, and our communities. Students and young adults are at a vulnerable time of their life, where lifelong substance use disorders often begin. As such, recognition, prevention and treatment in this population is essential. Furthermore, substance use can often worsen and complicate other mental health disorders.

A. Alcohol

SADD believes that underage drinking and alcohol misuse creates obstacles that prohibit students from reaching their fullest potential and living a safe and healthy life. SADD recognizes that alcohol use is a choice, and the pressures on students to drink and engage in other unhealthy behaviors are strong. SADD, at any level, will not alienate those students who make poor choices around alcohol use, but rather aim to inform and educate them to make positive decisions in the future. SADD is an inclusive, not an exclusive, organization. As SADD seeks to empower students, engage parents, mobilize communities, and change lives, we uphold the following positions specifically related to alcohol:

1. Education through Prevention & Intervention

SADD supports federal, state, and local efforts that implement prevention education and focus on underage drinking. SADD supports evidence-based strategies that lead to long-term behavior change, delaying the onset of first consumption. These programs should identify the effects alcohol has on the body and the risks that come from alcohol use, including impaired driving, bodily harm and the effects on one's mental health.

SADD believes in empowering students with the knowledge to take action if they see someone who is at risk after consuming alcohol, as long as their own personal safety and morals are not in jeopardy.

2. Marketing & Advertising of Alcohol

Marketing and advertising of alcohol to underage audiences increases the risk of premature and illegal consumption. SADD supports advertising that does not minimize the impact the materials have on student behaviors and attitudes.

3. Legal Drinking Age

Research shows that brain development and social factors continue to be best served by delaying the onset of the first use of alcohol. SADD supports a national drinking age of 21. SADD believes in maintaining a drinking age of 21 in all states and territories.

4. Reducing Alcohol Access

Through enforcement, SADD supports policies that reduce student access to alcohol and sound strategies to enforce those policies with appropriate consequences for all parties through evidence-informed administrative, civil, and criminal contexts.

5. Providing Alcohol to Minors

Adults who provide alcohol to underage persons are endangering the young people involved and those around them. SADD supports the criminalization of providing alcohol to any underage person. Further, SADD supports any policy, procedure, or practice that strengthens the penalties related to providing alcohol to minors, including social hosting laws.

B. *Cannabis*

SADD defines consumption as using cannabis in a way that is intended to alter psychological, physical, or social functioning. Cannabis includes any product that contains tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and/or cannabidiol (CBD). SADD recognizes that cannabis is the most used federally illegal substance in the U.S. Increasingly, young people today do not consider cannabis use a destructive decision. SADD believes there is no safe way for students to consume cannabis.

1. Legalization & Recreational Use

SADD recognizes that the landscape of states and localities legalizing recreational cannabis use is ever changing. As a law-abiding organization, SADD recognizes that cannabis remains a federally illicit substance and therefore does not condone its use. SADD recognizes that the enforcement of cannabis laws has resulted in disproportionate punishment and incarceration, specifically of people of color. SADD believes that cannabis laws should aim to deter cannabis use and facilitate rehabilitation as needed.

2. Providing Cannabis to Minors

Adults who provide cannabis to underage persons are endangering the young people involved and those around them. SADD supports the criminalization of providing cannabis to any underage person. Further, SADD supports any policy, procedure, or practice that strengthens the penalties related to providing cannabis to minors.

C. *Prescription Drugs*

Medications prescribed and taken as directed by healthcare professionals can enhance the well-being of young people, but when misused, the results can be catastrophic. SADD strongly encourages meaningful conversations with healthcare professionals when making decisions regarding powerful prescription drugs. SADD supports policies that reduce access to misused medications and provide access to treatment to overcome substance abuse disorders.

D. *Illicit Substances*

SADD provides and encourages education about the dangers of illicit drugs in schools and communities. As a strong advocate for the Controlled Substances Act, SADD supports policies that protect young people by correctly labeling the substances that are a threat to their health and safety.

E. *Tobacco*

SADD believes that tobacco related death and disease is preventable. Nicotine found in commercial tobacco products and e-cigarettes is a highly addictive substance. SADD supports measures to eliminate student tobacco use and the exposure to secondhand smoke.

SADD recognizes that certain populations are disproportionately impacted by tobacco use, including Black Americans and other communities of color, persons with lower incomes or education, indigenous people, and the LGBTQ+ community. To create a tobacco-free future, these disparities in tobacco use must be eliminated.

1. *Marketing & Advertising of Tobacco*

SADD believes that flavored tobacco products, retailer proximity to schools, low prices, and marketing leads to increased usage of tobacco products by students and young adults. SADD supports the prohibition of flavored tobacco products and direct and indirect tobacco industry marketing of products to youth. SADD supports the federal minimum sales age of 21 in all states and territories.

2. *Providing Tobacco to Minors*

Adults who provide or sell tobacco products to underage persons are endangering the young people involved and those around them. SADD supports the criminalization of providing tobacco to any underage person. Further, SADD supports any policy, procedure, or practice that strengthens the penalties of providing tobacco.

3. *Smokefree Schools and Colleges*

SADD believes that all students have the right to breathe smoke free air. SADD believes that Schools for students of all ages including college Campuses should be smoke free establishments including e-cigarettes.

F. *Zero Tolerance*

SADD believes there is no responsible way to break the law. SADD supports zero tolerance policies for illegal substance use. SADD supports students who have made destructive decisions regarding substances by creating a space of inclusion and education.

III. **Personal Health & Safety**

A student's personal health and safety are critical to their success and well-being. SADD takes a holistic approach to this category, focusing not only on physical health, but mental health and multidimensional wellness, and believes that students should have access to and education about a multifaceted array of methods to keep themselves and those around them safe and well.

A. *Mental Wellness*

SADD recognizes that students and adult allies are under immense pressure from ever-emerging issues that increasingly contributed to depression, stress and anxiety. An individual's ability to make positive decisions is directly impacted by their mental health and well-being. SADD is a resource for all students, providing equitable access to opportunities to improve their mental wellness and well-being while gaining access to community-based support services.

SADD supports the hiring of mental health specialists to serve students and schools. SADD believes that schools should recognize and consider the health disparities that exist across identities when developing mental health and wellness programming. SADD supports providing education professionals and adult allies with professional development to provide proactive mental health services.

SADD believes that peer-to-peer outreach is critical to students feeling empowered and able to proactively take advantage of mental health resources and assist their peers in recognizing available outlets.

B. *Healthy Relationships*

Building and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships is critical to students' growth, development, mental wellness, and physical well-being. SADD maintains that healthy relationships between two people are characterized by communication, respect, equality, and trust. In those relationships, it is critical for students to have the freedom to be themselves. SADD advocates for increased access to education and support regarding interpersonal relationships in schools and communities nationwide.

C. *Digital Wellness*

Digital wellness is central to mental health, self-esteem, and healthy relationships, especially for students. Digital wellness intersects with many other areas of wellness, and SADD believes it should be central to conversations about mental health, physical health, and safety. SADD supports policies, technology, and media that protects and preserves students' privacy, attention, and overall well-being. In programming and outreach, SADD will lead conversations and collaboration across ages and industries to work toward healthy and safe digital engagement.

IV. Leadership Development

A. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

SADD is an all-inclusive organization that fosters a sense of belonging among students from a wide range of identities and experiences who are committed to improving the health and safety of all students and communities. SADD is dedicated to celebrating individual differences such as race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, socio-economic status, learning styles, ability, age, etc.

SADD will continually strive to recognize where we have opportunities to grow. This growth includes building our awareness of individual and collective conscious and unconscious biases which cause harm (physically, mentally, and emotionally) to our greater community. In partnership with our students, families, and partners we must do all we can to ensure the values of respect, equity, diversity, and inclusion are instilled in our work. SADD is committed to ensuring our schools are a safe space for ALL students.

B. Peer-to-Peer Learning

As the nation's oldest and largest peer-to-peer prevention and activism organization, SADD will promote and pursue policies and programming that empowers students to be advocates for change. SADD believes that peer-to-peer activism is a critical part of any theory to change behavior. SADD will support programs that use a peer-to-peer approach to bring about positive change.

C. Leaders of Today

SADD supports proactive policies and programs that provide leadership and growth opportunities for students. By increasing a student's leadership capacity, SADD believes you positively enhance the trajectory for that individual and their ability to bring about effective change