

RED RIBBON WEEK

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER TOOL KIT
LIFE IS A PUZZLE, SOLVE IT DRUG FREE.

**RESOURCES AND
ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE
DRUG-FREE LIVING AND
OPIOID AWARENESS**



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LIFE IS A

PUZZLE,

SOLVE IT

**DRUG
FREE™**



RED RIBBON WEEK® OCTOBER 23-31
WWW.REDRIBBON.ORG



INTRODUCTION



Dear Educators and Leaders,

The Alaska Department of Health (DOH) has developed the Red Ribbon Week Teacher Toolkit for schools and would like to extend an invitation to participate in our Door Decorating Contest. I am personally thrilled to offer our educators, administrators, school nurses, students, and families this resource and opportunity, as we find new ways to come together and collectively respond to the rising public health crisis related to opioid overdoses and deaths in Alaska.

Schools serve as the heart of Alaska's communities and are in a unique position to take action. This toolkit provides resources and guidance to:

- Integrate prevention education into classrooms, equipping students with the knowledge they need to stay safe.
- Support parents in having positive and effective conversations about these challenging topics at home.
- Have fun creating unique door designs that encourage students to live drug-free, with the opportunity to win exciting prizes!

As Red Ribbon Week approaches, we look forward to seeing how you incorporate the Teacher Toolkit into your efforts. It is designed to help you engage students in prevention education and foster a safe, healthy learning environment. Together, we can make a difference in protecting our youth from the dangers they face today. Your commitment and dedication are key to the success of our students!

Thank you for your ongoing partnership,

SECOND ANNUAL:
Red Ribbon Week Door
Decorating Contest



MEET JET THE RAVEN!

Clever, curious, and always learning.



Jet is always looking for answers and enjoys solving puzzles. With a sharp mind and a curious spirit, Jet reminds us that education and learning are powerful tools to help us make healthy choices.

This year, Jet is excited to introduce our Second Annual Door Decorating Contest! Work with your classmates to design a puzzle-inspired door that celebrates living drug-free. Remember, one wrong piece can ruin the whole picture—just like drugs can impact our lives. Staying drug-free keeps the puzzle complete!



DOOR DECORATING INFORMATION

- Contest runs **October 1 – October 29, 2025**
- Submissions due: **October 29 at 4:00 PM**
- Winners chosen: **Between October 30 – November 3**
- Winning classrooms will receive prizes and statewide recognition!
- Scan the QR code and complete the form



NAVIGATING CONVERSATIONS



Conversations between educators and youth can be challenging at times, especially when it comes to developing skills that encourage youth to make healthy choices. The following are examples of topics to discuss with teens between the ages of 13-17. Be sure to decide age-appropriateness of topics, which depends on the young person and their experiences.

- **Communication:** Make sure they know they can reach out to you if they're ever in a risky situation. Set clear rules and let them know that their health and safety matter the most.

- **Values:** Discuss your cultural and family values and how those connect to making choices about drugs.

- **Family History:** Share any family history of drug use that might mean they have a higher chance of experiencing addiction.

- **Peer Pressure:** Let them know that most young people don't use drugs, despite what social media feeds say. Create a secret word or sign together, and practice using it when they want to leave a situation. Formulate a plan for where they can go to feel safe without their friends knowing they're uncomfortable.

- **Decision Making:** Applaud their critical thinking. Speak to them with respect, providing helpful advice. Help them understand that being an adult means making choices that help both their short-term and long-term goals. Talk about how using drugs can affect their physical health, mental health, school or work, legal troubles and relationships.

- **Supportive Relationships:** Discuss the benefits of being around people who share their values and encourage making healthy choices.
Teach Healthy Relationships: Explore Alaska's 4th R Program for Essential Classroom Tools!

- **Consequences:** Discuss what can happen in the short and long term if they use drugs. This includes how it can affect their thinking, school, mental health and physical health. Talk about the dangers of driving or being with someone who's impaired and how legal problems can affect their goals.

Teachers, collaborate with your school's administration to develop a plan if you suspect a student is under the influence.

Every school in Alaska is equipped with two doses of naloxone and training materials are available on the Department of Education's website.

<https://education.alaska.gov/elearning/naloxone>

GO BEYOND CONVERSATION

Parents and trusted adults can nurture positive elements to help prevent drug use. These can include:

Keeping a strong connection with their child and keeping communication open..

Teaching them to handle social situations, solve problems, and stick up for what they believe.

Guiding them to take part in activities that help them grow, align with their community's values, and connect positive role models.

Encouraging them to surround themselves with friends who make healthy choices.

Empowering them to feel in control of their lives and capable of dealing with changes.

Providing appropriate supervision to ensure their safety and well-being.

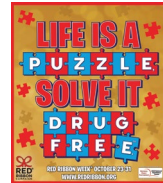




EATING GOOD FOOD	PLAYING & MOVING AROUND	GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP		
HAVING A SAFE PLACE TO SLEEP	FEELING WORRIED OR SAD	SAD OR SCARY THINGS HAPPENING		
DOING FUN THINGS YOU LIKE	SAYING SORRY WHEN YOU'RE WRONG	BEING STRONG WHEN THINGS ARE HARD		
BEING KIND TO OTHERS	GOING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES	HAVING SOMEONE YOU TRUST		

WRITE YOUR OWN!

RED RIBBON WEEK YOUTH PLEDGE FORM:



I Support Red Ribbon Week®

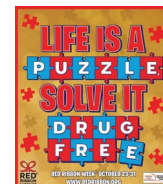
I Pledge To Grow Up Safe, Healthy & Drug Free By:

-  Understanding the dangers of drug use and abuse.
-  Respecting myself and being drug free.
-  Spreading the word to family and friends about the importance of being healthy and drug free.

Name _____ School _____

Download tips for fun Red Ribbon activities at www.redribbon.org

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I Support Red Ribbon Week®

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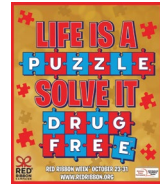
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RED RIBBON WEEK ADULT PLEDGE FORM:



I Support Red Ribbon Week®

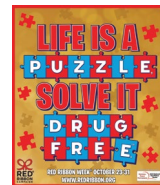
I Pledge To Help Kids Grow Up Safe, Healthy & Drug Free By:

-  Talking to my kids about the dangers of drug use and abuse and setting clear rules about not using drugs.
-  Working together with the parents of my children's friends to set common boundaries and monitor behavior so that our rules are respected and reinforced.
-  Setting a good example for our children by not using illegal drugs or medicine without a prescription.
-  Visiting www.redribbon.org to learn more and spread the message to family and friends.

Name _____ School _____

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SAMPLE LETTER/ EMAIL TO FAMILIES



PARENT NOTIFICATION SAMPLE FORM (ENGLISH)

Dear Parents and/or Guardians,

Our school district is participating in substance use prevention programs for elementary students.

Research shows that starting prevention education early can help reduce substance use in high school. Our goal is to support your child's healthy growth and learning throughout their education.

Scan the QR code below for a brochure from the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education called Growing Up Drug Free – A Parent's Guide to Prevention. It explains why starting substance use prevention early is important.

The program will teach kids about how the brain and lungs work, along with lessons on emotional health. Everything will be age-appropriate and use language your child already knows.

<https://operationprevention.discoveryeducation.com/player/502840ed-1fc8-47d2-8ed5-bb91cf65e202>



To have your child opt out of this education program return this form signed below.

☐ I do not want my child to receive the preventative education

Child's Name

Parent's Signature

SAMPLE SPIRIT WEEK DAYS & CONVERSATION STARTERS

OCTOBER

23

“Everyday Heroes” (Prevention)

Spirit Theme: Dress as someone who is making a difference in the world—whether it’s a community leader, health professional, or first responder.

Discussion Topics:

- Discuss the importance of interdiction in stopping drugs before they reach our communities. Talk about how different agencies and departments in Alaska work together to fight the opioid epidemic and why individual choices also make a difference.

OCTOBER

24

“Unity for Prevention” (Prevention)

Spirit Theme: Wear team gear or school colors to show solidarity in living drug-free.

Discussion Topics:

- Explore how being part of a community helps prevent drug misuse. Focus on how prevention is key to reducing harm and how students can contribute by staying involved in positive activities and supporting each other.

OCTOBER

27

“Shine Bright for Recovery” (Recovery)

Spirit Theme: Wear something that shines or glows to show your support for recovery and the power of second chances.

Discussion Topics:

- Discuss how recovery is a process of rebuilding health and purpose after setbacks or harmful choices.
- Talk about the importance of seeking help, reducing stigma, and supporting mental health and substance use recovery.
- Encourage open conversations about how healthy coping skills, community support, and personal resilience can create lasting changes. substances like drugs and alcohol.

SAMPLE SPIRIT WEEK DAYS & CONVERSATION STARTERS

OCTOBER

28

“Be Bold, Be Safe” (Harm Reduction)

Spirit Theme: Wear something bold and unique to express your individuality and commitment to safety.

Discussion Topics:

- Introduce harm reduction strategies that help individuals reduce risks associated with substance use. Talk about how making informed choices and standing up for one’s health—despite peer pressure—can prevent harmful consequences.

OCTOBER

29

“Red for Recovery” (Treatment)

Spirit Theme: Wear red to support those who are seeking or have gone through treatment for substance misuse.

Discussion Topics:

- Focus on the importance of treatment in overcoming addiction. Talk about how treatment programs are a vital part of Alaska’s response to the opioid crisis and how recovery is a lifelong journey that takes support and dedication.

OCTOBER

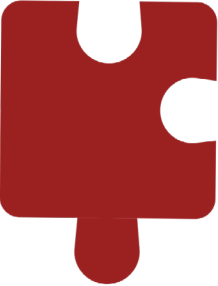
30

“Our Future is Bright!” (Recovery)

Spirit Theme: Dress as your future self in a career or role you envision after graduation.

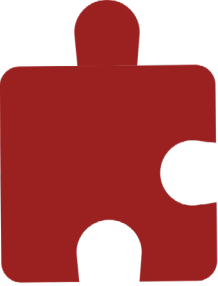
Discussion Topics:

- Discuss how living a drug-free lifestyle opens the door to endless possibilities in the future. Talk about recovery as a chance for people who have struggled to reclaim their lives and pursue their dreams.



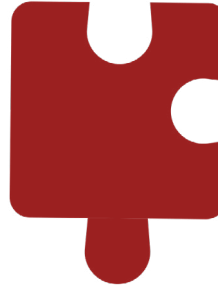
PARENT RESOURCES

- [Parent Toolkit](#) – Operation Prevention, Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Department of Justice
- [Growing up Drug Free](#) – Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Department of Justice
- [Red Ribbon Week Resources](#) – Red Ribbon Week takes place each year from October 23 through 31st.
- [Project Launch](#) – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- [One Pill Can Kill](#)
- [Family Summit](#)
- [Operation Prevention](#)



EDUCATOR RESOURCES

- [The Science of Addiction, National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)
- [Fentanyl Awareness Guide for Parents, Teens and College Students](#)
- [Lesson Plans & Activities](#) – National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- [School & Educator Resources](#) – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- [Educator Toolkit](#) – Operation Prevention, Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Department of Justice
- [Montana Meth Prevention](#)
- [National Fentanyl Awareness Day](#)
- [Fentanyl Lesson Plan](#) – Natural High
- [The Science of Addiction](#) – Operation Prevention



OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

- [Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America](#)
- [Drug Enforcement Administration](#)
- [Drug Free America Foundation](#)
- [DUI Resources: A Guide To Charges, Treatment, and Supportive Services](#)
- [Lock Your Meds](#)
- [Drunk Driving Statistics](#)
- [How to Quit Cigarettes](#)
- [Mothers Against Drunk Driving](#)
- [National Association for Children of Alcoholics](#)
- [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#)
- [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)
- [Natural High Red Ribbon Resources](#)
- [NIDA for Teens](#)
- [Students Against Destructive Decisions](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)

Why Participate?

The Red Ribbon Week Door Decorating Contest encourages teachers and students to work together to decorate their classroom doors based on this year's theme:

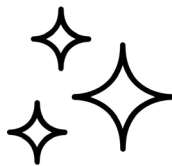


Life is a Puzzle, Solve It Drug Free.

Red Ribbon Week Decoration Contest Information

The Alaska Department of Health, in partnership with Governor Mike Dunleavy and other statewide partners, are excited to announce the second annual of the Red Ribbon Week Door Decorating Contest, open to all schools across Alaska! This is a fantastic opportunity for your school to get involved in the nation's longest-running drug prevention campaign and inspire students to live healthy, drug-free lives.

By participating, your school can:



Spark meaningful conversations around the dangers of drugs and the importance of living drug-free.



Engage students in a fun and creative activity that promotes healthy choices.



Compete for a chance to win great prizes and statewide recognition!



How to Get Involved:

1

Decorate Your Door:

Collaborate with your students to create a puzzle-themed door that highlights the importance of living drug-free. We encourage you to incorporate imagery and messages that inspire students to make healthy choices.

2

Submit Your Photos:

Simply take photos of your decorated doors (no students in the photos, please!) and submit them to our contest portal:

[Online Contest Portal Link.](#)

3

Access Classroom Resources:

Collaborate with your students to create a puzzle-themed door that highlights the importance of living drug-free. We encourage you to incorporate imagery and messages that inspire students to make healthy choices.

Prizes & Recognition

Prizes:

Amazon gift cards and other great prizes will be given to the winning Elementary, Middle School and High School classroom.

Recognition:

Classrooms with the winning design will receive special recognition from Governor Dunleavy and/or Commissioner Hedberg!

■ Important Dates

Submission Period: *October 1st – October 29th, 2025*

Winners Announced: Shortly after Red Ribbon Week ends
(*October 30rd – November 3rd*)

We highly encourage all schools across Alaska to participate in this exciting campaign. Together, we can empower our students to live healthy, drug-free lives. Let's make this Red Ribbon Week unforgettable!

We look forward to seeing your creative entries!