



# Cannabis Near Schools: What You Need to Know

Cannabis is now legal in Vermont. But there are laws about where it can be sold and grown. Across the state, advocates are working together to ensure the laws work better to protect young people and our communities.



## CANNABIS BUFFER ZONES

To help keep kids safe, Vermont law restricts all retailers—including cannabis retailers—from operating storefronts that have a boundary with a school property. It further restricts them from operating within 500 feet of the property.



500 FEET



## THE BOUNDARY LOOPHOLE

While Vermont law (18 V.S.A. § 4237) is intended to restrict cannabis retailers from operating near schools (see above), there appears to be a loophole: cannabis retailers must share a physical boundary with school property in order for the 500 feet “buffer” to be effective. In this sense, cannabis retailers can operate within 500 feet of school property, so long as a physical boundary is not shared.

Prevention advocates are working to amend the law to ensure that cannabis sales near school property are eliminated. **Buffer zones work**, reducing youth exposure to alcohol

and tobacco, and they can work for cannabis retailers, too.

Cannabis cultivation (growing) differs from cannabis retail regulation, as it does not have a school buffer zone in statute. Vermont Act 65 had mandated that outdoor cannabis cultivation be exempted from municipality zoning, similar to other farming practices. This was intended to prevent communities from effectively prohibiting commercial cultivation. That has led to some outdoor cannabis cultivation close to school property.

## CONSIDERATIONS

**Change Vermont statute** to restrict the sales of all regulated substances, including cannabis, from operating within 500 feet of schools, regardless of sharing a common boundary.

Encourage municipalities to create Cannabis Cultivation Districts, or areas where it is preferred to grow cannabis. This can be used as a tool by municipalities to limit cultivation in areas frequented by youth.

