SCHOOLS TOOLKIT · FOR PRINCIPALS, NURSES, COUNSELORS AND STAFF

Every school needs a fentanyl plan.

How to prepare your school, respond to an overdose, and support your community afterward.

75%	4 in 10	12	2 mg
Of overdose deaths among ages 10 to 19 involved fentanyl, 2020 to 2024.[1]	Teens who died of an overdose had signs of a mental health condition or treatment.[2]	States required every public high school to keep naloxone, as of January 2025.[3]	A potentially deadly dose of fentanyl. About what fits on the tip of a pencil.[4]

PREPARE YOUR SCHOOL

Should our school stock naloxone?

Yes. It's safe, simple and sold over the counter. A growing number of states require it in high schools. Keep more than one dose with your AEDs and first aid kits.[3]

What goes in a response plan?

Where naloxone is kept and who checks dates. Who responds and who calls 911. How families are told, how privacy is protected, and how students are supported after.[5]

Are staff protected if they give it?

Every state has a naloxone access law, and most protect people who give it in good faith. Check your state law and have counsel review your plan.[6]

Who should be trained?

As many adults as you can: nurses, coaches, office staff, bus drivers, security and teachers. Many health departments train for free. Consider high school students too.[5]

Does naloxone send the wrong message?

No. It's emergency gear, like an AED or an EpiPen. It doesn't mean you expect an overdose. It means you're ready.

How should we teach students?

Facts, not scare tactics. Cover fake pills, social media and how to get help. The Teachers and Students sheets are a good place to start.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Every school needs naloxone on hand, adults trained to use it, and a written plan.

RESPOND AND RECOVER

What does an overdose look like?

Tiny "pinpoint" pupils. Slow or stopped breathing. Blue or gray lips and fingertips. Choking or gurgling sounds. A student who won't wake up.[5]

How do we involve parents?

Send home fact sheets, host a parent night, and explain your emergency plan. Point families to the Parents guide in this library.

How do we support grieving students and staff?

Grief can look like anger or withdrawal. Be flexible. Keep counseling open for weeks, not days. Remember that staff may be grieving too.

What happens after an overdose or a death?

Activate your crisis team. Tell families as your policy requires. Offer counseling, and check on students at higher risk. Share only what the family has approved.

Can students get in trouble for calling 911?

All 50 states and D.C. have Good Samaritan laws. Make sure your discipline policy encourages students to get help for a friend.[7]

SCHOOL OVERDOSE RESPONSE

1. **Call 911 and alert responders**
   Send someone for the nurse and the nearest naloxone.
2. **Give naloxone**
   One spray in a nostril. Repeat after 2 to 3 minutes if nothing changes.
3. **Support breathing**
   Rescue breaths or CPR if trained and needed.
4. **Protect the student**
   Recovery position. Clear other students from the area.
5. **Stay and follow up**
   Hand off to EMS, tell the family, and document per policy.

GET HELP

EMERGENCY
911

POISON HELP
1-800-222-1222

SAMHSA HELPLINE
1-800-662-4357

FIND TREATMENT
FindTreatment.gov

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE
Call or text 988

Fentanyl Families Network
For families who have lost a loved one. Scan to join.

About us. United Against Fentanyl is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that interrupts the use of illicit fentanyl through innovative, bold, and effective initiatives. Learn more at unitedagainstfentanyl.org.

SOURCES

1. CDC, National Fentanyl Awareness Day Toolkit: overdose deaths among people ages 10 to 19, 2020 to 2024.
2. Tanz LJ, et al. Drug Overdose Deaths Among Persons Aged 10 to 19 Years, United States, July 2019 to December 2021. MMWR 2022;71(50):1576 to 1582.
3. Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association, Naloxone in High Schools state map, Jan. 2025.
4. U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, fake pill public awareness campaign, dea.gov/onepill.
5. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Overdose Prevention and Response Toolkit, 2023; CDC, Stop Overdose.
6. Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association, Naloxone Access: Summary of State Laws, 2025.
7. Harm Reduction Legal Project, 50-state survey of overdose Good Samaritan laws, current as of Dec. 31, 2025.

For education only. Not medical or legal advice. In an emergency, call 911. Updated November 2026.

SCHOOLS TOOLKIT · FOR TEACHERS

Your students listen to you.

How to talk about fentanyl in class, notice warning signs, and connect students to help. You don't need to be an expert.

10	76%	1 in 4	2 mg
High school students die from fentanyl in an average week.[1]	Of teen overdose deaths in 2023 involved fentanyl.[2]	Teen overdose deaths showed signs of fake pills.[3]	A potentially deadly dose of fentanyl. About what fits on the tip of a pencil.[4]

TALKING WITH STUDENTS

Is it my place to talk about fentanyl?

Yes. Share facts, listen, and connect students with help. Follow your school's policies, and bring in your counselor or nurse.

How do I open a discussion?

Ask: "What have you heard about fake pills?" or "What would you do if a friend wouldn't wake up?" Let them talk, then correct myths with facts.

Why do teens take pills?

Often to cope with stress, anxiety, sleep or pain, not to party. About 4 in 10 teens who died had signs of a mental health condition or treatment.[3]

What should every student hear?

Any pill that didn't come from a pharmacy can contain fentanyl. You can't see, smell or taste it. Dealers find teens online. Calling 911 is always right.[4]

What should I avoid?

Scare tactics, graphic images, and words like "addict" that shame people. Assume someone in the room has lost someone.[5]

THE BOTTOM LINE

Facts, not fear. A student who knows how to help a friend can save a life.

NOTICING CONCERNS AND GETTING HELP

What signs might I notice?

Sudden changes in grades, attendance, mood, friends or looks. Falling asleep in class. Talk about pills. These have many causes, so share concern, don't accuse.[6]

What if a student tells me about drug use?

Stay calm and thank them. Don't promise to keep it secret if someone could be in danger. Walk them to the counselor. If someone is in danger now, call 911.

What if there's an overdose in my room?

Call 911, send for the nurse and naloxone, and follow your school's plan. Learn where naloxone is kept before you ever need it.

What if I'm worried about a student?

Follow your school's referral process. Talk with the counselor, nurse or an administrator. Write down what you saw. Never confront a student in front of others.

What if a student is grieving?

Acknowledge the loss. Say the person's name if the student does. Be flexible with work. Refer them to counseling, and check in again weeks later.

A 15-MINUTE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. **Set ground rules**
   Respect, no names, and it's okay to pass.
2. **Ask what they know**
   "What have you heard about fake pills?"
3. **Share the facts**
   Hand out the Students sheet and read it together.
4. **Practice helping**
   Call 911, give naloxone, stay.
5. **Close with support**
   Name who they can talk to at school, and share 988.

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SOURCES

1. CDC mortality data, as cited in United Against Fentanyl's organizational summary (2025).
2. KFF, "Teens, Drugs, and Overdose: Contrasting Pre-Pandemic and Current Trends," analysis of CDC WONDER data, 2023 deaths.
3. Tanz LJ, et al. Drug Overdose Deaths Among Persons Aged 10 to 19 Years, United States, July 2019 to December 2021. MMWR 2022;71(50):1576 to 1582.
4. U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, fake pill public awareness campaign, dea.gov/onepill.
5. National Institute on Drug Abuse, Words Matter: Terms to Use and Avoid When Talking About Addiction.
6. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Overdose Prevention and Response Toolkit, 2023; CDC, Stop Overdose.

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SCHOOLS TOOLKIT · FOR STUDENTS

Real talk about fake pills.

What fentanyl is, why it's different from anything before it, and how you can help a friend.

2 mg	16%	76%	1 in 4
A potentially deadly dose of fentanyl. About what fits on the tip of a pencil.[1]	Fentanyl pills tested by the DEA in 2026 that held a potentially deadly dose.[2]	Of teen overdose deaths in 2023 involved fentanyl.[3]	Teen overdose deaths showed signs of fake pills.[4]

KNOW THE FACTS

What is fentanyl?

A man-made opioid about 50 times stronger than heroin. Cartels make it illegally and press it into pills because it's cheap and strong.[5]

My friend was fine last time. So it's safe?

No. Fentanyl isn't mixed evenly. One pill can have none and the next can have a deadly amount.[1]

Is fentanyl only in pills?

No. It's also found in powders like cocaine and meth. Any drug that didn't come from a pharmacy can contain it.[6]

Can I tell if a pill is fake?

No. Fake pills look exactly like real Xanax, Percocet or Adderall. You can't see, smell or taste fentanyl.[1]

Where do people get fake pills?

Often online, through social media and messaging apps. If anyone offers you pills online, block them, report them, and tell an adult.[1]

What if I'm stressed and want to feel better?

That feeling is real, and you're not alone. Talk to a parent, counselor or coach, or call or text 988 any time.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If a pharmacist didn't hand it to you with your name on it, don't take it.

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND

How do I know if someone is overdosing?

They won't wake up or answer to their name. Their breathing is very slow or stopped. Their lips look blue or gray. They may make choking or gurgling sounds.[7]

What is Narcan, and can I use it?

A nasal spray that can reverse an overdose. Anyone can use it, and it can't hurt someone who hasn't taken opioids. Many schools and health departments give it out free.[9]

How can we look out for each other?

Make a pact: no pills unless they come from a pharmacy. Know where Narcan is kept at school. Save 911 and 988 in your phone.

Will I get in trouble for calling 911?

All 50 states and D.C. have Good Samaritan laws that offer legal protection to people who call for help. Saving a life comes first. Always call.[8]

Isn't telling an adult snitching?

No. Telling a trusted adult isn't getting your friend in trouble. It's getting them help, and it could save their life.

IF A FRIEND WON'T WAKE UP

1. **Call 911**
   Say your friend isn't breathing or won't wake up.
2. **Use Narcan**
   Spray it in one nostril. No change in 2 to 3 minutes? Give another.
3. **Get help nearby**
   Shout for an adult, a nurse or a coach.
4. **Turn them on their side**
   This keeps them from choking.
5. **Stay with them**
   Don't leave until help arrives.

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1. U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, fake pill public awareness campaign, dea.gov/onepill.
2. U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Operation Engage, "Seattle" fact page, dea.gov/operation-engage/seattle (2025 and 2026 laboratory testing and seizures).
3. KFF, "Teens, Drugs, and Overdose: Contrasting Pre-Pandemic and Current Trends," analysis of CDC WONDER data, 2023 deaths.
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8. Harm Reduction Legal Project, 50-state survey of overdose Good Samaritan laws, current as of Dec. 31, 2025.
9. U.S. Food and Drug Administration, approval of Narcan 4 mg naloxone nasal spray for over-the-counter use, Mar. 29, 2023.

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