



## **CHIME Institute's Schwarzenegger Community School**

### **AB 889 - Annual Notice to Parents and Guardians Regarding Synthetic Drugs**

As part of our commitment to keeping our school community safe and informed, we want to share important information regarding the dangers of synthetic drugs.

Recent legislation (AB 889) requires that we provide you with updated information to help protect your child from the harmful effects of these substances.

#### **What Are Synthetic Drugs?**

Synthetic drugs are chemically altered substances designed to mimic the effects of illegal drugs like marijuana, cocaine, and ecstasy.

Synthetic drugs include but are not limited to synthetic cannabinoids ("synthetic marijuana," "Spice," "K2"), methamphetamines, bath salts, and fentanyl.

These substances are often sold under misleading names, such as "herbal incense," "bath salts," or "synthetic marijuana" (e.g., K2 or Spice).

Despite being marketed as safe or legal alternatives, synthetic drugs can be highly dangerous and unpredictable.

#### **Risks and Consequences of Using Synthetic Drugs**

- **Unpredictable Effects:** Synthetic drugs can have unpredictable and dangerous effects on the body and mind. Users may experience extreme anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations, seizures, heart problems, or aggressive behavior.
- **Serious Health Issues:** The chemical makeup of synthetic drugs is constantly changing, making it difficult to know their true effects. Severe side effects can include organ damage, mental health disorders, or even death.
- **Addiction:** Like other illegal drugs, synthetic drugs can be highly addictive.

Over time, users may develop a dependency that can lead to long-term health problems and social, emotional, and academic difficulties. • **Legal Consequences:** While synthetic drugs are sometimes marketed as "legal highs," they are banned in many states, including California.

Possession, distribution, or use can result in legal action, including fines, arrest, or incarceration. **Warning Signs** It's important to recognize the signs that may indicate your child has been exposed to or is using synthetic drugs.

*These may include:*

- Sudden behavioral changes, including aggression, paranoia, or confusion
- Unexplained health issues like rapid heart rate, nausea, or hallucinations
- Possession of unusual or suspicious packaging labeled as “herbal incense,” “bath salts,” or similar

### **Dangers of Social Media and the Marketing of Synthetic Drugs and Fentanyl (AB 2690)**

Parents should also be aware of the link between social media and the marketing and sales of synthetic drugs and fentanyl. Parents should take appropriate precautions and monitor their child's social media usage.

- Social media platforms have been used by drug sellers to promote fentanyl sales and exchange contact information with buyers for transactions, making it easier for drug users to learn who they can buy from.
- Common Platforms used in illicit drug sales include Instagram, Facebook, X (Twitter), Discord, Snapchat, TikTok, Telegram, and Pinterest.
- Drug sellers often use covert strategies to evade law enforcement detection and to exclude potential buyers who are not using the latest terminology. For example, sellers frequently modify code names, symbols, and emojis associated with illicit substances when advertising on social media platforms.
- The ability to remain anonymous across social media platforms allows buyers and sellers to embrace the privacy it affords them and simplifies transactions.

### **How to Protect Your Child**

- **Educate:** Talk openly with your child about the dangers of synthetic drugs and the consequences they can have on health and well-being.
- **Monitor:** Be aware of your child's behavior and their social circle. Stay alert to changes in mood, habits, or academic performance.
- **Communicate:** Encourage open communication so your child feels comfortable coming to you if they encounter these substances.
- **Supervise:** Be mindful of where your child is getting information or products, especially online, where synthetic drugs are often sold.

At CHIME Institute's Schwarzenegger Community School, we are committed to providing a safe environment for all students. We take substance abuse prevention seriously.

**Resources:**

If you have concerns or suspect your child may be using synthetic drugs, please seek support from a healthcare professional or contact the following resources for help: National Drug Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357) If you, or someone you know, is struggling with substance abuse, there is a free helpline available toll free, 24/7, year-round, with interpretation as an option provided by the Los Angeles County's Substance Abuse Service Helpline (844) 804-7500.

Together, we can protect our children from the dangers of synthetic drugs and foster a safe, healthy, and positive learning environment. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our Main Office and you will be directed to our counseling department.