



CANADA'S CENTRE  
FOR DIGITAL AND  
MEDIA LITERACY

## Making Your School a Commercial-free Zone

Schools are supposed to be public spaces, but more and more advertisers are using them to target youth. Corporations know just how much time kids spend at school, whether in class, in after-school activities or just hanging out with their friends, and they don't want to pass up a chance to reach them there. A school setting delivers a captive youth audience and implies the endorsement of teachers and the education system.

Use the following tips for raising awareness and taking action on the commercialization of education in your school community:

- Develop a policy for your school or school board. Work with your parent and student councils and school administrators to develop guidelines and policies for commercialization and corporate partnerships in your school. If your school board or district doesn't have a policy regarding corporate involvement, work with your trustees to encourage your board to create one. If your school already has a corporate partnership, encourage your student and parent councils to look at ways of minimizing the ad presence in school.

For examples of guidelines and policies on corporate advertising and partnerships in schools, see Ethical Guidelines for Education/Business Partnerships from the Conference Board of Canada: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/ebp/ethical/eg-k12.aspx>.

- Start a "No Logo" day at school. Challenge students to come to school without any logos on their clothing, bags, etc. They'll be surprised at how hard it is just to get dressed without any advertising on you!
- Hold an "Advertising Treasure Hunt". Students make a list of all the logos and other advertising materials in the school (soft drink machines, sponsored educational materials, etc.).
- Organize an "Advertising Diary" project. Have people record every ad and commercial message they see or hear, from the moment they wake up until they go to bed. Don't forget to include online ads!
- Write a letter. Your local newspaper is a great place get the word out about the commercialization of schools. Invite a reporter to your No Logo Day or Advertising Treasure Hunt.
- Finally, encourage media education at your school and community. The best antidote to advertising and commercialization is to learn to recognize messages and to think critically about them.

