



ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE GEELONG

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DRUGS POLICY

The motto "Ad Alta Virtute" is a reminder to members of the St. Joseph's College community of our human dignity and that we should strive for greatness in various ways. The College perceives drug abuse to threaten that dignity. Similarly, misuse of drugs challenges key values espoused and implied by our Mission Statement: self respect; respect for others; development of individual talents; and self discipline. Boys who lack 'resilience', the ability to transcend problems, are particularly vulnerable; however, drugs may affect any boy. Therefore, in pursuit of the welfare of all its members, the College seeks to minimise potential or actual drug-related harm through appropriate whole-school education, action and reaction. Effective drug prevention and intervention strategies necessitate co-operation between school, home and community.

Definition of Drugs

For the purpose of these guidelines a drug is defined as: "Any substance, with the exception of food and water, which, when taken into the body, alters its function physically and/or psychologically. Drugs can be broadly defined in four categories:

- **Depressants:** sedatives that affect the central nervous system. They can induce sleep and relieve anxiety, eg. Alcohol, opiates.
- **Stimulants:** these drugs can act as an anaesthetic and as a central nervous system stimulant, eg. Cocaine, marijuana.
- **Hallucinogens:** drugs that produce images (auditory or visual) that are perceived but not real.
- **Miscellaneous:** this definition includes all drugs of dependence, such as medications, tobacco, steroids, amphetamines, as well as solvents which may be inhaled.

Harm Minimisation

- Harm minimisation deals with the prevention and reduction of drug-related harm through education and intervention.
- Our curriculum and drug education program aims to minimise harm by providing a supportive environment which allows our students to be equipped with the social skills needed to deal with a variety of drug-related issues.
- Our drug education program aims to develop resilience in our students to encourage an attitude of abstinence and hence the minimisation of harm.
- We acknowledge the possible presence of drugs in our school community and aim to minimise the related harm that drugs cause.
- Our drug education curriculum content tries to take into account the welfare needs of our students.
- We aim to incorporate strategies such as early intervention, specialist treatment and supply control into our harm minimisation procedure.

Drug Education In The Curriculum

Through our curriculum, the College aims to provide students with a broad and informative education regarding drug issues. The program aims to:

- Provide information about a variety of drugs and drug related issues.
- Educate students about Harm Minimisation principles.
- Enable students to make informative decisions regarding drug use.
- Foster the notion that Drug Education is a shared responsibility between home, school and the community.

The Drug Education program is cross curricula – starting in the primary school and going through to the senior levels. Topics have been selected at different Year Levels to focus on the needs of students that are relevant to their age levels. A variety of teaching methods are used to provide students with sufficient information to make appropriate decisions regarding their health. The majority of Drug Education is conducted in Health and Physical Education, Religious Education and Pastoral Care, but all Key Learning Areas are encouraged to run with drug related issues when appropriate.



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We acknowledge the fact that our needs may change over the years regarding what we include in our program so our plans are flexible in what we may offer. Thus the program will be reviewed regularly. The following programs are currently being conducted.

- Primary General overview on a range of drugs
- Year 7 Skills for life development: responsibility, decision making, self confidence, peer relationships, goal setting.
- Year 8 Alcohol and Tobacco, Depressants, Stimulants, Prescription Drugs, Inhalants, Analgesics, Hallucinogens.
- Year 9 Marijuana, Alcohol, Tobacco.
- Year 10 Drug Issues, Harm Minimisation, Marijuana.
- Year 11 Alcohol, Liquor Laws, Drink Driving.

Our program aims to utilise the Police in Schools Program as much as possible when it is available. We would also aim to encourage parental involvement through information nights and to take an active role in their son(s) education in this matter.

Staff development is also important and professional development days are a crucial part of our Drug Education Program.

Intervention

1. Identification of Drug Issues and Incidents

The school is most likely to identify potential and actual drug-related problems in the lives of its students through:

- Class room reporting of information (with appropriate consideration of confidentiality).
- The exploration of apparently unrelated issues such as truancy, declining academic performance or deteriorating behaviour.
- Self reporting.
- Peer reporting.
- Following up parental or community concern.
- Analysing anecdotal evidence.
- Observing physical symptoms.

With regard to cannabis, amphetamines and similar, the College distinguishes between students who consume drugs and those who supply them. The latter may attract a more substantial disciplinary reaction.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

When a drug-related incident is identified, it is to be handled by the following people, in descending order of responsibility;

- A Deputy Principal
- Student Welfare Co-ordinator
- Year Level Co-ordinator
- The teacher or other adult on the spot.

Teachers or other adults faced with an incident should engage the assistance of one of the above as soon as possible. Specialist professional assistance will be accessed where relevant; for example, medical assistance may be a priority.

3. Immediate Action Steps

The school's first responsibility is to ensure the safety of the students involved, and any students in the vicinity.

It is important that adults maintain a calm, non-threatening, firm demeanour.

Parents should be notified as soon as possible

Teachers or other adults on the spot should attempt to:

- Isolate the student(s)
- Confiscate the drug(s)
- Seek medical assistance as appropriate, for example, call an ambulance if necessary
- Try to ascertain which drugs have been involved, the amount taken, the means of administration, the source
- Seek the assistance of a Deputy Principal, the Student Welfare Co-ordinator or Year Level Co-ordinator.



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If a locker or bag search is considered necessary, the student should be made aware of what is required and another teacher be present. A locker is school property and student permission, while desirable, is not essential for a search. A school bag is private property and may not be searched without permission unless the teacher judges a search necessary to avert a possible danger to others.

The Principal will inform police when he/she is satisfied that a situation is criminal and necessitates such an involvement. If students are interviewed by police at school, an adult will be present.

4. Follow-up Action

The Student Welfare Co-ordinator will provide counselling support to students and their parents as necessary. In consultation with parents, the Student Welfare Co-ordinator may refer students to agencies outside the school. These include:

- Al Anon
- Alateen
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Clockwork Agency
- Direct Line
- Families Anonymous
- Geelong Community Health Services
- Quitline
- Rain

Staff and students will be debriefed as necessary by a Deputy Principal.

Disciplinary decisions will be taken and implemented by a Deputy Principal after consultation with the Principal.

Any media contact will be with the Principal.

The Principal will file a report of the incident and its outcomes to the point of the report.

5. Confidentiality

Students have a right to privacy, but a teacher cannot guarantee total confidentiality because she/he may be bound by Mandatory Reporting and/or an obligation to minimise harm.

A teacher should advise a student from the outset of the possibility of disclosure of information.

Issues of disclosure should be referred to the Principal.

6. Referral

While it is important for teachers to fulfil their pastoral care role with students, sometimes issues are beyond their experience, training and/or resources. When in doubt, it is important for teachers to consult and seek appropriate advice and assistance. It should also involve the designated welfare staff and parents/guardians.

Policy Implementation

Guidelines:

1. Parents, staff, students and relevant community members will be consulted in the review of this policy. A drug education core group will be responsible for coordination and implementation.
2. Parents, staff, students and relevant community members will be informed about the policy through their regular information channels.
3. Staff will be encouraged and supported, through funding and/or time release, to participate in professional development.
4. Well-informed staff will be able to offer relevant and supportive drug education programs and support to students both in the classroom and outside the classroom.
5. Well-informed staff are better able to identify students "at risk" and be able to access suitable advice and support for the student, staff and family.
6. Drug related curriculum and welfare programs will be supported by the purchase of suitable teaching resources.