

ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE GEELONG
POLICY 4.08 DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Background

1. 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.

2. St Joseph's College acknowledges a duty of care and a responsibility to create and maintain a safe, healthy, work and educational environment for all students, staff and visitors. The College recognises the possession of illegal drugs; the sale and distribution of illegal drugs; the illegal possession and/or consumption of drugs and alcohol by a minor, as well as the inappropriate use of some prescription medications and alcohol can affect and impair the ability to function in a safe manner. The College acknowledges the right of students, staff and visitors to work and learn in a safe, enjoyable environment.

POLICY

Policy Commitment

3. St Joseph's College will educate and encourage students to make positive moral and legal choices in relation to drugs. Poor or illegal choices in this area will have appropriate consequences and sanctions applied by the College.

Definition of Drugs

4. 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:

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

Harm Minimisation

5. 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. The 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.

6. The drug education curriculum content tries to take into account the welfare needs of our students. It incorporates strategies such as early intervention, specialist treatment and supply control into our harm minimisation procedure.

Drug Education In The Curriculum

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

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

8. 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 Curriculum Areas are encouraged to run with drug related issues when appropriate.

9. 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.

- a. Year 7 Skills for life development: responsibility, decision making, self confidence, peer relationships, goal setting.
- b. Year 8 Alcohol and Tobacco, Depressants, Stimulants, Prescription Drugs, Inhalants, Analgesics, Hallucinogens.
- c. Year 9 Marijuana, Alcohol, Tobacco.
- d. Year 10 Drug Issues, Harm Minimisation, Marijuana.
- e. Year 11 Alcohol, Liquor Laws, Drink Driving.

10. 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

Identification of Drug or Alcohol Issues and Incidents

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

- a. Classroom reporting of information assuming appropriate consideration of confidentiality.
- b. Observation of physical appearance and/or behavior.
- c. The exploration of apparently unrelated issues such as truancy, declining academic performance or deteriorating behavior.
- d. Self-reporting.
- e. Peer reporting.
- f. Following up a parental or community concern.

12. The College does not permit students, while in uniform or on the school premises or at or travelling to or from any College sanctioned occasion to:
- a. Possess, supply, trade or smoke or use products containing nicotine;
 - b. Possess, supply, trade or consume alcoholic beverages (students can consume alcoholic beverages at the Graduation Dinner as they are in the direct supervision of their parents and are considered graduates of St Joseph's);
 - c. Deliberately inhale solvents;
 - d. Possess, supply or trade drug-related equipment such as syringes, bongs, pipes, inhalers, except in cases of lawful medical use;
 - e. Possess, supply, trade or use illegal (prohibited) drugs;
 - f. Possess amounts of legal drugs other than for lawful medical use; and
 - g. Supply or trade any legal drugs.

Interventions and Sanctions

13. Any student who breaches this policy and or endangers the wellbeing of any other person as a result of his inappropriate use of drugs or alcohol may be subject to the sanctions as set out in this policy which could include the removal and termination of the student from the College or from any College activity. It could also include the involvement of the Police.

14. Any action taken by the College against any student as a result of any breach of this policy will have as its intent the physical health, emotional health and welfare of the student, the College community and the general public as its main priority.

15. Breaches of this policy may result in the following interventions and consequences:

- a. Any breach of this policy may result in, but not necessarily be limited to; a letter to parents, a meeting with the relevant wellbeing staff, attendance at a prescribed detention, community service and the possibility of compulsory attendance at a counselling programme, suspension or expulsion from the College. The student may also be required to give a written undertaking that he will avoid any similar breach of the policy.
- b. Serious breaches or second offences of minor breaches may result in suspension or expulsion and may require the student to attend a counselling programme as directed by the college.
- c. Breaches that involve illegal drugs, the selling or attempt to sell or ongoing breaches of this policy can result in an enrolment being terminated immediately.
- d. These penalties can apply if the person has been found guilty of any drug related offence which occurred outside school that, in the opinion of the Principal, reflects badly on the College or endangers the wellbeing of other students.
- e. Breaches involving any illegal use or dealing in drugs by any student will be reported to the police by the College.
- f. All decisions involving what penalty apply to any student for any breach of this policy will be at the sole discretion of the Principal.

Immediate Actions by the first aware College representative

16. In the event of an incident the immediate actions are:

- a. Ensure the safety of the students involved and any other student/s in the vicinity.
- b. Maintain a calm, non-threatening, firm demeanour.

- c. If possible notify a Deputy Principal, the Student Management Coordinator or the relevant Year Level Coordinator.
- d. Parents should be notified as soon as possible after some information has been gathered.
- e. Teachers or other adults on the spot **should** attempt to:
 - (1) isolate the student/s;
 - (2) confiscate the drug/s or alcohol;
 - (3) seek medical assistance as appropriate, and
 - (4) Ascertain which drugs have been taken, the amount taken, the means of administration and the source of the drug.
- f. If a locker or bag search is considered necessary, the student should be made aware of what is required and another teacher should 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 is necessary to avert a possible danger to others.

17. If an incident involving alcohol or drugs occurs while on a school camp or at any other event taking place off premises the steps outlined above should still be followed where possible.

18. 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

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

- a. a Deputy Principal;
- b. Head of House / Year Level Co-ordinator; and
- c. the teacher or other adult on the spot.

20. 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.

Follow-up Action

21. The Deputy Principal will coordinate counselling support to students and their parents as necessary. In consultation with parents, students may be referred to agencies outside the school.

22. 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.

23. Any media contact will be with the Principal.

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

Confidentiality

25. 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.

Referral

26. 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

27. The following will occur when reviewing and implementing this policy:
- a. Parents, staff, students and relevant community members will be consulted in the review of this policy.
 - b. A drug education core group will be responsible for coordination and implementation.
 - c. Parents, staff, students and relevant community members will be informed about the policy through their regular information channels.
 - d. Staff will be encouraged and supported, through funding and/or time release, to participate in professional development.
 - e. 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.
 - f. 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.
 - g. Drug related curriculum and welfare programs will be supported by the purchase of suitable teaching resources.

CONCLUSION

28. 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.

Policy Review

29. The custodian of this Policy is the Principal. It will be reviewed at a minimum annually to take account of any changed legislation, expectations or practices.

Authority

30. This policy has been provisionally authorised by the St Joseph’s College Geelong Board.