



## DRUGS MISUSE POLICY

### Background Information

A drug may be defined as any substance which affects physical or mental functions. As such, drugs include a range of materials, many of which are legal in our culture although prohibited from use at school. These include alcohol and tobacco products.

This policy addresses the use of prescription drugs, legal and illegal drugs at school and gives guidance to teachers, parents, students and administrators on the consequences of a drug incident at the school.

### Rationale and Objectives

The Primary objective of this policy is to provide for a school environment free of drugs, whether the drugs in question are legal or illegal.

**The following values underpin all that follows in the policy and may need to be referred to when the policy itself is unclear in its application to one of the many situations which may arise.**

Every student has the right to come to school to learn in an atmosphere free from the distractions and dangers imposed by drug use.

Parents have the right to expect that their children will be educated in an atmosphere free from the distractions and dangers imposed by drug use. It is the responsibility of the school to guarantee that the rights of students and parents are respected in this matter.

The school acknowledges that it shares responsibility with parents and the wider community to provide students and parents with factual information on drug abuse and advice on the legal questions surrounding the use of drugs. Principles underpinning the school's Drugs Policy are:

1. Parents and students have a right to be consulted in the formulation of the policy to contribute to the ongoing application of the policy.
2. The school acknowledges that it shares with parents responsibility to inform students of the best ways of resisting pressures to become involved in drug use and experiences to build their self esteem to the level where they feel confident to make informed decisions for themselves.
3. The school commits itself to deal compassionately with students who become involved in situations of illegal drug use but such treatment must always be given within the context of due regard for the needs and rights of the whole school community.
4. The school commits itself to work closely with the police and welfare agencies in this matter and with other secondary schools which face common problems in this area.
5. Experience suggests that students who divulge information to staff of the school on drug matters sometimes do so at considerable risk to themselves. The school commits itself to the protection of students who have the courage to assist the school community in this way.
6. It is the responsibility of the Principal to advise the Board on the formulation of policy and the responsibility of the Board to support the school in the difficult decisions it may be called upon to make in these matters.

7. Teachers share with parents the responsibility for modelling appropriate drug usage both in and out of school. Teachers accept that they are under an obvious professional obligation to set an example to their students in this matter.
8. This policy will apply to all school activities including school social events, camps, excursions and sporting events in which the school may participate. Students travelling away from school on official school activities are automatically covered by the policy.
9. Although this policy refers directly to drugs, it will by extension apply to the implements involved in the use of drugs. Such implements indicate an intention to use the prohibited drug and will attract penalties consistent with the use of drugs at school.

**a) Administration of Drugs to Students**

From time to time parents may request that members of staff administer prescribed medication during school hours. All such requests **MUST** be referred to the Principal (or the Principal's nominee). If the Principal agrees that the situation requires supervised administration of medication the following procedures are to be followed:

1. The student's parents must make a written request to the Principal including instructions for administration of the drug, and any special needs of the student.
2. The Principal will authorise a staff member to administer the medication.
3. Only the designated member of staff has this authority.
4. The designated member of staff must ensure that all medication is in a container labelled by a health care professional or pharmacist, showing:
  - The name of drug
  - Use by date
  - Name of medical practitioner prescribing the drug
  - Name of student
  - Dosage
  - Frequency of administration
  - Medication which is not so labelled must not be administered.
5. Non prescription medication such as analgesics are not to be administered by school staff unless the designated member of staff is a registered nurse or equivalent.
6. All medication is to be kept in a lockable cupboard.
7. An official register on the Administration of Drugs to students is to be kept by the designated member of staff.
8. Parents are to be notified in writing of the school's policy including the requirement that the school takes no responsibility to ensure that medication is not out of date or that sufficient quantities of the medication are provided.
9. The designated member of staff is to return all unused medication to parents when the parents inform the school in writing that medication is no longer needed or is past the use-by date.
10. If a member of school staff becomes aware that a student has possession of a medication without written advice from a parent, or the parent's advice is inconsistent with the medical instructions provided, he/she should confiscate the medication, store it securely and notify the Principal. The Principal or designated member of staff will contact the parents.
11. The designated member of staff for the 200.... school year is (name of staff member authorised to give medication).

## b) Response to Drug Use Policy

**Preamble:** This policy explains the College's position on the use or possession of harmful substances commonly called drugs. It applies to the use or possession of both 'legal' and 'illegal' drugs.

**Drug:** For the purpose of this policy, a drug is considered to be any substance that interferes with the physical, psychological, emotional, or intellectual capacity of a student, other than those prescribed or endorsed by a recognised medical practitioner (and taken as prescribed). It does not ordinarily include substances commonly found in food or drink legally available to students under the age of 16, such as food dyes and caffeine, although the abuse of these substances would also be of concern to the College.

**Category A Drugs:** It is illegal for a person to either arrange to sell, purchase, possess, or use these drugs in the state of Queensland.

**Category B Drugs:** It is illegal for the particular child to either arrange to sell, purchase, possess, or use these drugs in the state of Queensland and/or the student deliberately misuses a prescription drug (including taking a drug prescribed for or meant for use by another student).

It is against College rules for a student to possess, use, distribute or purchase Category A and Category B drugs. A student cannot defend the use of any drug on the basis that it is a legal drug (for example, tobacco use over the age of 16 or the use of alcohol over the age of 18 will be considered a breach of College rules and are dealt with in this policy).

**Application of the policy:** The policy applies at any time the student is in College uniform, is on the College grounds, is attending or travelling to or from a College function, or is (according to the Headmaster) associated with a College activity.

**Powers of the Principal (Headmaster):** The College Board empowers the Principal (including a member of staff who is acting in that capacity) to investigate drug use and to use his or her discretion in weighing evidence and assessing individual circumstances. However, as a general rule, it will support the use of all reasonable steps to investigate drug abuse as well as the application of the most serious consequences for a breach of this policy.

The Headmaster or Principal is empowered to use all reasonable and legal means to investigate drug use, including searching of lockers, bags, and uniforms. These investigations will be conducted in the company of a senior member of staff and/or a parent and/or, where appropriate, the police.

**Drug education:** The College recognises that it has a role to play in educating students about the harmful effects of drugs. It shares this responsibility with parents and the community at large. However, a claim that a student has not been sufficiently educated about drug use will not be accepted as an excuse for a breach of this policy.

### **The right to be appraised of an investigation:**

If a student is reasonably suspected of breaching this policy:

1. He or she will be informed that an investigation is taking place.
2. He or she will be given an opportunity to personally explain any issues or events.
3. He or she will be invited to have a parent or member of staff present at any interviews if and when he/she is accused of breaching this policy.

### **Consequences for drug use:**

1. Arranging to sell or otherwise distribute, selling, purchasing, possessing, or using Category A drugs, or assisting another student to do these things, will normally result in some or all of the following:
  - Parents being informed and called to a meeting with the Principal or his delegate.
  - The matter being reported to the Police.
  - The student's immediate suspension for a period determined by the Principal.
  - The student's expulsion from the College (after consultation with the Board Chair or Deputy Chair).
2. Arranging to sell or otherwise distribute, selling, purchasing, possessing, or using Category B drugs, or being present while and aware that another student is selling (or arranging to distribute), purchasing, possessing, or using a Category A drug (and not immediately reporting the matter to a teacher) will normally result in some of all of the following:
  - Parents being informed and called to a meeting with the Principal or his delegate.
  - The imposition of suitable punishment, which may include detention(s) or the student's immediate suspension for a period determined by the Principal.
  - Where the student has previously breached the policy, or where the Principal believes that the first offence constitutes a serious potential threat to the welfare of other students, the student may be expelled from the College (after consultation with the Board Chair or Deputy Chair).

### **Support for students found in breach of this policy:**

The College believes that it best serves the interests of parents and the welfare of students by taking a firm stance with regard to the use of drugs. However, it will endeavour to support students and the parents of students who breach this policy through counselling at the College and/or by referring the parties to an outside counsellor or agency.

### **Confidentiality:**

This policy will be applied with due regard to the College's Privacy Policy. However, the College believes that, while it will not publicise the names of those concerned, the College community should be informed if and when students are expelled.