Policy title: Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to define the school’s approach to the use or misuse of alcohol and other drugs (see definition in this document) on school grounds, during school hours, or when students are representing the school. The school encourages positive wellbeing for students and staff, which does not include the inappropriate use of drugs and alcohol.

Related documents (eg, procedure):

Teachers’ Policy and Procedures Handbook (smoking)

Summary overview:

The school grounds are smoking, illicit drug and alcohol-free zones.
A student found supplying or selling illegal substances will be reported to the police and excluded from the school while anyone found in possession of or using illegal substances is liable to be suspended or expelled.
A student found using or possessing tobacco or alcohol within the terms of this policy may be immediately suspended, excluded or expelled from school. This decision will be at the discretion of the Educational Administrator and dependent upon the seriousness of the circumstances.
Note that the minimum age for the legal purchasing of cigarettes and alcohol is 18 years.

Scope:

The policy is applicable to students applies:
- on school premises
- at functions, excursions or camps organised by the school
- when members of the school community are representing the school.

Policy details

Our aim is that all members of the school community convey, by their actions and teachings, that they do not condone the inappropriate use of alcohol and other drugs. We have a pastoral interest in the health and social, personal and legal wellbeing of our students and we view the use of alcohol and other drugs to be harmful to physical and psychological health.

We regard the home environment as the most important agent of education in all social issues, including drug education. The school aims to form a mutually supportive relationship with parents and students in this matter. Effective supervision of students’ social activities outside of the school will help create a safe social environment that minimises the risk of drug and alcohol use.

The school will involve the parent community by holding parent awareness programs and sessions to facilitate discussion and sharing of strategies to assist our young people avoid alcohol and other drugs. We will also help our students who voluntarily seek help to access counselling services. Discretion and confidentiality will be observed.
Legislative context:

In some circumstances the school has an obligation to report drugs and alcohol issues to the police. The school operates within a state and federal government duty of care and compliance context.

Roles and responsibilities:

Students – have a responsibility not to consume, possess, sell or supply alcohol and other drugs on school grounds, during school hours or when representing the school at any time.

Staff – have a responsibility not to consume, sell or supply alcohol and other drugs on school grounds or when representing the school. The role of teaching staff at the school is to provide factual information and attempt to develop attitudes, values and decision-making that enables students to make appropriate choices throughout their school lives and beyond.

Parents – have a responsibility to support school policies and to effectively supervise students’ social activities outside of the school to minimise the risk of alcohol/drug use.

Management – will respond to suspected incidents that breach this policy by:

- protecting the welfare of all members of the school community
- supporting the wellbeing and educational careers of the student involved
- behaving in a manner that is both firm and fair.

Consequences of a breach in this policy

1) The first priority is to establish and respond to the immediate health and welfare needs of the student concerned. The seriousness of each situation will be taken into consideration at the time.

2) Search – Where a staff member of this school reasonably suspects that a student has a prohibited substance as defined by this policy in their possession, the Educational Administrator or appointed nominee may request a search of the student’s possessions. The student will be requested to display the contents of their clothing, locker and/or bag in the presence of a second adult witness. All necessary safety precautions will be taken when searching personal effects. The student’s person may not be searched.

3) Student smoking – If a student is found to be smoking or in possession of cigarettes/tobacco on school grounds (or out of bounds) during school hours or at a school event, they may be suspended from school depending on the circumstances (see items (5) and (7) over page.

4) Student in possession of alcohol or drugs (see definition) – the student will be suspended from school while the matter is investigated. Depending on the seriousness of the incident, the student may be excluded or expelled.

5) Repeated occurrences – If a student repeatedly breaches this policy, whether or not they may return to school or be excluded or expelled will be at the discretion of the Educational Administrator, and dependent upon the seriousness of the circumstances.
6) Police involvement – The police will be notified in the case of illicit substances being found in the possession of or used by students during school hours on/off the school grounds or at any school-based event.

7) Suspension from school – may be served internally and may involve a community service component. A signed contract between the student (and parent/guardian) and the school will be necessary prior to school re-entry.

8) Parents – will be contacted in instances of possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs, or at the discretion of the Educational Administrator.

Complaint resolution process:

All complaints or grievances will be managed in accordance with the Complaints and Grievances Policy.

Definitions:

A drug is any substance (with the exception of food and water) which, when taken into the body, alters the body’s function either physically and/or psychologically. Drugs may be legal (eg, alcohol, caffeine and tobacco) or illegal (eg, cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine and heroin). Psychoactive drugs affect the central nervous system and alter a person’s mood, thinking and behaviour.

The school defines the term ‘drugs and alcohol’ to encompass any prohibited drug (including drug paraphernalia) as well as alcohol, tobacco/cigarettes and prescription medication not prescribed for the user or used inappropriately. In addition, we do not permit the possession, sale, supply, exchange of, or negotiation in relation to, any of the above.

Other:

The Constitution of the Mount Barker Waldorf School confers on the Board the power to make sub-rules. This policy is a sub-rule of the Constitution and operates as if it were a term of the Constitution.