DRUG POLICY

St Mary's recognises that drug use is a complex issue and that drug use/abuse problems result from a combination of many factors. This policy aims to contribute to a supportive, caring and safe school environment in which all students can develop the skills required to achieve their full potential. The policy has been developed in consultation with school staff, students and parents and is consistent with State and Federal laws. It is intended that this policy will be comprehensive and relevant to all members of the school community. It will aim to address intervention, prevention and sanctions with regard to unlawful and unsafe drug use.

The school's Drug Policy is binding on all members of the school community. It will apply to students, staff, volunteer staff, ground staff and other workers while they are on school premises, at a school function or excursion. It is also intended to apply to school visitors and to parents attending any functions held on school premises unless otherwise negotiated with the Principal. The school supports the Western Australian law which prohibits the provision of alcohol to people under the age of 18 and does not condone alcohol being supplied at parties.

Definition
For the purposes of this document, 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. This definition includes all legal and illegal drugs.

Psychoactive Drugs

- **Depressants** - eg alcohol, opiates, heroin, cannabis
- **Stimulants** - eg nicotine, amphetamines, ecstasy
- **Hallucinogens** - eg LSD, cannabis, ecstasy
- **Others** - eg analgesics, prescription drugs

While not classified as illegal drugs, solvents, also called volatile substances or inhalants, are included in the school Drug Policy.

Policy

(a) Prevention of Unsafe and Unlawful Drug Use
As a participating member of the School Drug Education Project, St Mary's will follow the guidelines for a harm reduction approach to drug education. The school is committed to ensuring that an effective school drug education programme, as part of the Health Education Curriculum, is implemented.

The school:

i recognises that the teaching of a comprehensive drug education programme is sensitive and demanding and therefore should be delivered by appropriately trained teachers.
ii will ensure that Health Education is adequately resourced, that appropriate time is allocated on the timetable for year levels (K-10), that opportunities will be made for Years 11/12 to continue their drug education through cross curricular activities and that professional development is available for relevant staff.
iii will involve parents in drug education programmes where appropriate.
iv will ensure that the contents of the school drug education policy will be made known to all members of the school community through relevant school publications.
Students involved in drug use will be encouraged to seek assistance. The school will make counselling services and information regarding outside agencies available to students, staff and parents who voluntarily seek help with issues associated with drug use. Discretion and confidentiality will be observed as requested.

(b) **Intervention**

The following intervention procedures have been designed to address incidents of drug use, in ways which are in the best interest of all parties, while conforming to legal requirements.

St Mary’s endorses and implements the WA Government regulation that the school premises are a Smoke Free Zone.

Staff or parent functions where alcohol is served will take place after school hours or at an alternate venue.

St Mary’s does not permit students while in school uniform, on school premises, at any school related functions, on school camps or boarders under school care to

- possess and/or smoke tobacco products;
- possess and/or consume alcoholic beverages;
- inhale solvents deliberately;
- possess and/or use prohibited drugs (Misuse of Drugs Act, 1981);
- possess drug related equipment such as syringes, (except in the case of lawful use), bongs, pipes etc. (Misuse of Drugs Act, 1981);
- distribute and/or sell illegal substances (including tobacco and alcohol) or drug related equipment or be involved in situations which may put other students at risk; and
- possess excessive amounts of legal drugs (medicines). Drugs for medicinal purposes are to be used strictly in accordance with the school’s Medication Administration Policy guidelines.

**Responding to Incidents of Drug Use**

At all times, the school will respond to incidents of drug use in a manner to ensure the safety, and the emotional and physical health and welfare of the students involved. Each incident will be considered individually by the Principal, in consultation with appropriate staff, according to the given set of circumstances at the time.

Confidential records will be maintained about all instances of drug use. Staff members who are necessarily informed of incidents of drug use will be required to maintain strict confidentiality.

**Sanctions**

The school regards student possession, use and/or distribution of drugs as serious. Students should be aware that particular behaviours have specific consequences and that sanctions for breaching the appropriate code of conduct may include involvement in education or counselling, loss of school leisure time, detention, suspension from school functions, demotion from office, parent notification, suspension from school, police notification, and expulsion. Counselling (as outlined below) will be offered to the student concerned.

**Smoking – All Offences**

Students found smoking, in possession of cigarettes or supplying cigarettes will be liable to a range of sanctions dependent on the circumstances and whether or not it is a repeat offence. Two days suspension is usually implemented.

**Alcohol and solvents**

Students found drinking, in possession of alcohol, under the influence of alcohol or misusing solvents will be liable to a range of sanctions dependent on the circumstances including whether or not it is a repeat offence. An in-school suspension is usually implemented.
Illicit Drugs
The possession and/or sale of illicit drugs are an offence against the law. St Mary's will view either offence as a very serious matter.

Any student found supplying illicit drugs, in possession of illicit drugs or under the influence of illicit drugs will face disciplinary action of the Principal's determination in consultation with appropriate staff. The consequence is expulsion. Counselling will be made available to the student either through school personnel, by referral to the local Community Drug Service Team or to a relevant outside agency.