

DRUGS

Policy & Procedures

Next review date: January 2023

Last reviewed: January 2021

By: Dean of Students

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. 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, volunteers and other workers while they are on school premises, including the Boarding House, at a school function, or on school camp 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.

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

St Mary's Anglican Girls' School is committed to providing a safe environment for all our students, workers and visitors.

It is our policy that:

- the use, possession and supply of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia (such as pipes or 'bongs') by students is strictly prohibited;
- while on school property, or representing the school in any way, students are not permitted to be under the influence of illicit drugs;
- all students will receive age-appropriate health and drug education to enable and support them to make informed choices, and to minimise the harm associated with drug use; and
- referrals to counselling and support groups will be provided to students with drug-related problems.

Prevention of Unsafe and Unlawful Drug Use

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:

- recognises that the teaching of a comprehensive drug education programme is sensitive and demanding and therefore should be delivered by appropriately trained teachers;
- will ensure that Health Education is adequately resourced, that appropriate time is allocated on the timetable for all 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;
- will involve parents in drug education programmes where appropriate; and
- 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.

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 including e-cigarettes and other personal vapourisers;
- possess and/or consume alcoholic beverages;
- inhale solvents deliberately;
- possess and/or use prohibited drugs;
- possess drug related equipment such as syringes, (except in the case of lawful use), bong, pipes etc;
- 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 Administering Medication Policy guidelines.

RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS OF DRUG USE

Where a student exhibits obvious signs of drug use a staff member shall:

- isolate the student from their peers in a calm and controlled manner (if possible);
- if this is not possible and an impaired student refuses to co-operate and/or becomes agitated, ensure that any other students within the immediate vicinity are removed from harm and attempt to calm the student until such time as other staff members are able to provide assistance;
- ask the student to accompany them to Student Services; and
- contact the Principal or other appropriate senior member of staff to inform them of the situation.

The Principal shall then make an assessment of the student's condition and take appropriate action based on the facts. This will include contacting the student's parents/carers to inform them of the incident and requesting that they remove the student from the school grounds, and/or calling the police in the event the student is acting in an aggressive or threatening manner.

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 cigarettes or supplying cigarettes including e-cigarettes and other personal vapourisers, will be liable to a range of sanctions dependent on the circumstances and whether or not it is a repeat offence.

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. A 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 using illicit drugs, 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, or by referral to relevant outside agencies.