



## Drugs and Alcohol Policy

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### Introduction

As a Child Safe school, Sacred Heart College aims to create an environment where students are safe, educated about drugs and drug issues and where unnecessary drug use is discouraged and where sanctioned drug use takes place in controlled circumstances. The College seeks to empower its students to make informed decisions regarding drug use and, where students decide to use such substances, to seek to reduce the harm associated with such use.

The College discourages all drug use which is detrimental to the health and well-being of students, or which is not sanctioned by parents or medical authorities. Drug use may involve school sanctioned consequences, as well as legal consequences, particularly regarding trafficking in and/or possession of certain drugs.

### Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a balanced, consistent and informed approach to drug use by students is adopted by the College community. It is recognised that, in the process of developing their decision making skills, some students may make errors of judgment. At all times, however, the dignity and safety of students must be preserved, even though their behaviour may not be condoned. All student wellbeing and discipline procedures are underpinned by the principles of justice, mercy and consistency and are to be implemented accordingly.

It is recognised that drug use is a complex issue and that there may be a variety of contributing factors to student drug use. It is intended that the College's student welfare and discipline measures be as comprehensive and flexible as possible. At all times, the College aims to provide care for individual students and protection for all involved in the College community.

### Drug Definition

A drug is any chemical substance which, when taken into the body, affects the natural way a person's mind and body works. (World Health Organisation definition).

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Medications - prescription drugs, asthma puffers.
- Over the counter drugs - painkillers (Panadol etc.), laxatives, diet pills, inhalants.
- Legal Recreational Drugs - tobacco, alcohol, e-cigarettes, vapes
- Illegal Recreational Drugs - Amphetamines, Cannabis, designer drugs (LSD, Ecstasy etc), Heroin.

## **Part 1 : Drug Education**

The College aims to provide students with the necessary education about drug issues. This occurs through Curriculum and the Student Wellbeing Framework. This information intends to:

- inform about drugs and related issues,
- understand the implications of drug use,
- possess the ability to minimise the possibility of harm for themselves, others and the wider community.
- Increase student's knowledge, social and life skills, and refusal skills towards licit and illicit drug use
- Include content relevant to young people's experiences and interests
- engage parents where possible

The way students learn about drug and alcohol use and abuse is cross-curricula. Drug issues are addressed relevant to Learning Areas with different topics at different Year Levels. Topics are designed to include factual information about drugs and to discuss individual and community attitudes to drug use. The school's formal teaching and learning program and pastoral program provides students with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will assist them to develop their problem solving, decision making and help seeking skills. These skills can be applied to all facets of their lives while the content varies according to the perceived level of development and experience of the students.

## **Part 2: Wellbeing**

The College aims to provide a safe environment conducive to individual and/or group education for members of the College community. This is carried out by providing:

- A school structure that emphasises the role of the Homeroom Teacher as the primary source of student contact.
- Information provided through both Curriculum and Student Wellbeing Framework
- Counselling and support for students with the College Wellbeing Staff.
- Information on drug and alcohol issues through the Parent Engagement Program.
- A resource centre for students and parents on the College Website.
- Professional learning for school staff to plan and implement age appropriate preventative drug education programs and keep abreast of current knowledge, trends, resources and practices in drug education.
- Ongoing support for staff dealing with student drug related issues.
- Links with community agencies/partnerships to access support/advice and treatment for student/families.
- Ongoing professional learning for school staff to assist them in promoting the wellbeing for young people.

## **Part 3: Drug Use**

### **Medications**

For use and administration of medication see the Medications Policy

## Other Drugs

Sacred Heart College Kyneton will fully comply with the '[Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 \(Vic\)](#)', the '[Tobacco Act 1987 \(Vic\)](#)', '[Supplement to the Tobacco Reform Act, 2017](#)', the '[Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)' and [Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 \(Vic\)](#)' and the associated guidelines published by the Department of Education and Training.

Students may not possess or consume the following substances on the College premises or while attending College organized extra-curricular activities, e.g. Retreats, Camps, Excursions etc:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco/e-cigarettes/vapes
- Inhalants
- Illegal Drugs
- Any medications taken incorrectly

Alcohol is prohibited at College functions that include student involvement who are under the age of 18 years of age. The usual laws and regulations apply to alcohol served at other school functions.

If a student is found to be smoking and/or vaping, or in possession of a cigarette or e-cigarette, there will be consequences at the school's discretion depending on the circumstances and prior offences. If suspended due to cigarette or e-cigarette/vape use or possession, the student will be required to complete a written reflection on the health concerns associated with Vaping or Smoking. They may also be required to attend a compulsory return to school education session with a nominated school representative, e.g., school nurse or Wellbeing staff member.

Disciplinary action, in conjunction with appropriate wellbeing support, may be taken by the College in the event of inappropriate use of any of these substances at the College or a College sanctioned event.

These sanctions may include any of the following:

- Lunchtime detentions/ reflection exercises
- Education session with School Nurse/Wellbeing staff
- Year Level Leader / Head of School involvement
- Parent meetings
- College Community Service
- Wellbeing support/outside agency involvement
- Internal Suspension
- External Suspension
- Negotiated Transfer
- Expulsion
- Criminal charges

Parents will always be notified if any of these substances are found or consumed at school.

## Part 4: Responding to Drug Related Incidents

**When a student uses a drug or other substance** staff should take the following immediate action:

1. Stay Calm - This is essential in order to find out what has happened and to respond effectively. The first priority is to ensure the safety of the student and others. Always be

mindful of your Child Safe obligations and do not question a student under the influence of drugs or alcohol alone. Where possible, and particularly for serious incidents, this should be done with parents present.

2. Get the Facts - Find out what is happening. You may need to talk to the student concerned or other students to find out:
  - the type of drug taken
  - how it was taken
  - how much was taken
  - whether the person has any past experience with the drug
  - whether more than one type of drug has been taken

If the student appears intoxicated, the teacher should be calm and non-threatening while making it clear that their intent is to ensure the student's well-being and safety.

3. Ensure Safety - Ensuring the safety of the student and others is the teacher's first priority. Take quick, common-sense action to ensure safety. This may be to summon first aid, isolate the student, and confiscate drugs or other sensible action.
4. Seek Assistance - Teachers should always seek help when dealing with a drug matter. Confer with the College Counsellors and/or Family Counsellor to decide the next steps in dealing with the incident.
5. Inform the Principal - Teachers must inform the Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing or a Child Safe Officer and the Principal, of cases involving drug misuse by students. This ensures that they are acting within their role and responsibility. All details of the teacher's involvement should be documented. Parents will be notified. Decisions will then be made about reporting to the Police, arranging counselling, notifying Child Protection etc.

If the Principal believes a criminal offence has been committed, then the Police and parents should be informed.

#### **When a student discloses to a teacher that they have recently used drugs -**

As teachers have a positive duty of care to prevent injury, they should advise the Principal or Child Safe Officers of the knowledge they have been given by the student, even if the drug use did not occur at school. If it is believed a criminal offence has been committed, then the Police and parents must be informed.

#### **When a student discloses to the College Counsellors something "in confidence" -**

The College Counsellors must comply with Mandatory Reporting requirements. If they have a belief that the student is at risk of harm or abuse or neglect as a result of drug taking in their household, they must make a report. This must then be communicated to the Principal and Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing.

#### **Information about drug use or possession -**

Rumours of drug use or possession may have no foundation. It is vital for Teachers to act with caution to avoid any unnecessary fuss or alarm and to protect the rights of any person involved in, or accused of, a drug-related indiscretion.

As the student lockers remain the property of the College they can be searched if a teacher has a cause for concern. Students' bags are their own property and cannot be searched unless a teacher

- has serious concerns about what is contained in the bag. Students should be asked to empty the bag for inspection. They may also be asked to empty their pockets. Failure to do so results in a discipline action
- believes drugs are in the bag. Police should be called to open the bag in front of the student, teacher and Principal
- believes a student is in possession of a knife, gun or other item which may be a danger to any student

**Related Documents**

- Medication Policy

Version	Comments	Date Released	Next Review	Author	Approved
1		1998	June 2022	DP Student Wellbeing	Principal
2		Sept 16	Sept 17	DP Student Wellbeing	Principal
3	Changed from Drug Education & Welfare Policy. General updates and inclusion of possible disciplinary actions included	June 2023	June 2024	DP Student Wellbeing	Principal
4	Changed from Dangerous and Illicit Substances Policy. General updates and separation of sections covered in the College Medication Policy	August 2024	August 2026	DP Student Wellbeing	Principal