



POLICIES

Banned Substances in Schools Policy

Classification

Policy Number: HR201501-1.1 | Version/Last Updated: 1.1 December 2015 | Audience: SCS | Commencement: 15 September 2015

Implementation Resources

[Banned Substances in Schools Guidelines Document](#)

1.0 Rationale

This policy covers the possession and use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs or other substances, and the misuse of 'over the counter' and prescribed medications, including the supply of restricted substances on school premises. Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS) is committed to maintaining a safe, secure and supportive environment for all students, and acts to ensure that schools are places that are free of banned substances.

Substance abuse by students in our schools may, in some instances, be associated with underlying school and learning problems, mental health problems, family problems or issues of abuse and neglect.

Pope Francis urges us to "confront the (underlying) problems, promoting greater justice, educating young people in the values that build up life, accompanying them in their difficulties and giving them hope for the future."

The goal of managing any suspected banned substance-related incident, is to ensure that the immediate wellbeing and educational needs of the student(s) involved are balanced with the wellbeing and educational interests of the broader student community.

2.0 Guiding Principles

- 2.1 Our schools value the worth of each child and, as such, responses to individual situations will be made in the light of the Gospel values of justice, compassion and forgiveness.
- 2.2 Our schools always work within the requirements of the law and fully cooperate with law-enforcement agencies in the mandatory reporting, and management of, issues at either State or Federal levels.
- 2.3 All banned-substance related issues will be considered, based on the individual circumstances and the application of relevant student welfare and discipline policies, to ensure an outcome that is commensurate with the seriousness of the issue, the welfare of the student, and broader concerns of the school community.
- 2.4 A banned substance is defined to include: illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco, the misuse of inhalants/solvents, over-the-counter or prescribed medications and/or other restricted substances. It

does not include the legitimate use of substances approved by the curriculum.

- 2.5 The Banned Substances in Schools Policy covers the behaviour of all students, whether as individuals or collectively.
- 2.6 Employees of SCS are bound by the requirements in the Code of Professional Conduct relating to drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

3.0 Policy

- 3.1 Sydney Catholic schools must be places that are free from the possession, use or distribution of banned substances, or supply of restricted substances within their communities and/or on their premises.
- 3.2 Where a school becomes aware of a serious out-of-school hours incident, parents/carers will be notified and the police or other appropriate authority notified as required.
- 3.3 The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this policy and the accompanying guidelines, and for ensuring that the policy is communicated clearly to students, staff and parents through the development and maintenance of a safe and supportive school environment:
 - 3.3.1 Each school will have in place appropriate curriculum and welfare strategies to assist in the education of students and parents in the prevention or misuse of drugs (alcohol, tobacco, prescription drugs and illegal substances)
 - 3.3.2 Schools are to ensure that those teaching drug education have appropriate knowledge and understanding, and are able to incorporate the identification of support services available in the local area, as part of their educational brief
 - 3.3.3 Pastoral care structures, within each school, should support at-risk students in partnership with parents, counsellors and other external agencies
 - 3.3.4 Positive links with external agencies are established and used to strengthen the capacity of the school to educate young people and parents, and to respond to issues. This includes working with police youth liaison officers on a range of intervention and response strategies.
- 3.4 Each school will manage disciplinary matters involving suspected banned substances with reference to the Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy or the Student Management: Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy, as applicable.
- 3.5 **Categories of Banned Substances**

Whilst each issue must be dealt with on its individual merits, the following would generally apply where the factual investigation identifies that there has been an apparent breach of the policy:

3.5.1 **Category A: Use of Alcohol, Tobacco and Prescribed Medications**

The misuse of prescribed medications, over the counter medications, inhalants, solvents, alcohol and tobacco, would be managed primarily as a student health and welfare issue, notwithstanding that individual circumstances may still require action in accordance with the Student Management: Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy. Generally, single instances Category A breaches would not attract a suspension.

3.5.2 **Category B: Supply of Alcohol, Tobacco and Prescribed Medications**

Supply of alcohol, tobacco or prescribed medications would be managed in accordance with the Student Management: Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy. In considering whether a transfer or exclusion is warranted, a Principal will take into account any prior behaviour of the student, the circumstances of the breach, whether the interests of the student are served by remaining within the same school community, and whether there are broader implications for the

school community as a whole.

3.5.3 Category C: Use and Supply of Illegal Substances

The use and supply of illegal substances or restricted substances will be managed under the Student Management: Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy. These matters would also be reported to police. In considering whether a transfer or exclusion is warranted, a Principal will take into account any prior behaviour of the student, the circumstances of the breach, whether the interests of the student are served by remaining within the same school community, and whether there are broader implications for the school community as a whole.

4.0 Procedures

4.1 Responsibility of Principal:

- Implementation of this policy and the guidelines at their school
- Ensuring that the school community is educated with regards to this policy
- Management of outcomes from breaches of the policy, whether in accordance with the Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy or the Student Management: Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy.

4.2 Responsibility of all staff:

- Support the implementation of this policy and guidelines
- Adhere to the Code of Professional Conduct
- Inform the Principal if they have a basis on which to believe that a student has breached this policy.

5.0 Bases of Discretion

- 5.1 Principal determines consequences of student(s) actions in consultation with the Regional Consultant and SCS Policies.

6.0 Explanatory Notes and Definitions

6.1 Possession

Having a banned substance on one's person or in one's personal effects, eg. bag, locker, etc.

6.2 Use

The taking of any banned substance into the body.

6.3 Distribution

The passing on of banned substances by a student/s to other student/s.

6.4 Safe and Supportive School Environment

The immediate priority in any banned substance-related incident, is to ensure the safety and welfare of students and staff. Beyond this, schools play an important role in helping to prevent drug use problems amongst young people through the application of curriculum and welfare strategies which strengthen protective factors and minimise risk factors known to be associated with banned substance abuse.

6.5 Restricted Substance

The Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 (NSW) states that the possession or use of prescribed

restricted substances is illegal unless the person is professionally entitled to possess the substance or has a prescription in their name given by an appropriate person such as a medical practitioner.

7.0 Supporting Documents

7.1 Related policies

- [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#)
- [Student Management: Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy](#)
- [Managing Students With Challenging Behaviours Guidelines](#)
- [Code of Professional Conduct](#)

7.2 Supporting documents

- [Banned Substances in Schools Guidelines Document](#)
- [Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 No 31: Division 2 Poisons List \(appendix to Guidelines Document\)](#)
- [Response to a Drug Incident: Suggested Checklist \(appendix to Guidelines Document\)](#)
- Range of Drug and Alcohol [factsheets](#) available from [Headspace](#)

8.0 Appendices

Nil

9.0 Classification

9.1 **Policy Number:**HR201501-1.1

9.2 **Version:** 1.1

Last modified: December 2015

This policy supersedes all previous policies relating to matters contained therein. In so much as any aspect of this policy may appear to be in conflict with another Archdiocesan system or school-based policy, then precedence is to be given to this policy.

9.3 **Audience:** SCS

9.4 **Review by:** December 2017

9.5 **Approved by Leadership Team:** 30 April 2015

9.6 **Endorsed by SACS Board:** 24 June 2015

9.7 **Approved by Executive Director of Sydney Catholic Schools:** 24 July 2015

9.8 **Commencement Date:** 15 September 2015

Related Policies

- [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#)
- [Student Management: Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy](#)
- [Managing Students With Challenging Behaviours Guidelines](#)