

Drug Policy

Sacred Heart College is a Catholic Educational Community of people who live and interact on a daily basis in the real world. We recognise that society tolerates and condones the use of “drugs” in a wide range of circumstances. The College, in acknowledging the prevalence of the use of drugs and their effects in the wider community, seeks to restrict the use of these substances within our school. In attempting to ensure that the College is free of drugs it is accepting the mandate given by parents to educate their children in a safe and healthy environment.

Definition

A drug is defined (for the purposes of this policy) 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 drugs eg: analgesics, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, amphetamines etc. While not classified as drugs, solvents (also called volatile substances) are to be included in the school policy.

Rationale

This drug policy has been established in an attempt to:

- Illustrate clearly to the community the stand Sacred Heart College will take in support of the efforts made by families to rear their children in a well-informed and safe environment
- Address measures of prevention, intervention and sanctions in regard to drug use
- Be consistent with State and Federal laws and the guidelines set down by the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia

Drug use is a complex issue and it is recognised that drug problems result from a combination of many contributing factors. The College’s response, therefore, is as comprehensive as possible.

Prevention

As a means of education and awareness, the College will undertake to provide:

- Ongoing courses for students and parents;
- Appropriate in-servicing of staff on the detection and identification of drug use;
- An opportunity within the Religious Education and Health Learning Areas and Pastoral Programs for students to reflect on, discuss and learn processes that assist in making correct decisions, forming a Christian conscience and living life true to Christian values;
- Access for students, parents and staff to College personnel, the Chaplain and Psychologist to help in areas of communication and counselling;
- A College discipline policy that has well-publicised deterrents;
- A practice of Pastoral Care within the school that allows each child to feel valued and has a sense of self-worth;
- Curriculum initiatives in various subjects
- Promotional displays and activities

Sacred Heart College has been declared a Smoke Free Campus.

Intervention

The intervention procedure is designed to address drug use incidents in a way which is in the best interest of all parties, while also conforming to legal requirements.

Regardless of age when on school premises or at College functions, students are not permitted to:

- Be in possession of or smoke tobacco products;
- Be in possession of or consume alcoholic beverages
- Deliberately inhale solvents
- Possess drug-related equipment such as syringes, pipes, or other smoking implements, etc (Misuse of Drugs Act, 1981) except in cases of lawful medical use; or equipment related to the use of tobacco or alcohol related products;
- Possess or use prohibited drugs in accordance with the 1981 Act;

SACRED HEART COLLEGE – POLICIES

- Arrange for distribution and/or sale of illegal substances or to be involved in situations which may put other students at risk;
- Consume or be under the influence of pharmaceutical drugs not prescribed to the student or person in question

We note that “on school premises or at a College function” includes any time a student is in uniform, or not. It also includes travelling to and from school, or a College arranged event. These include: any camp, retreat, excursion, or other organised function such as a social, school ball etc.

Sanctions

As a Christian community we are always seeking to forgive and be reconciled. There should not, however, be confusion between our calling to forgive and the necessity for sanctions to be applied when they are warranted.

The procedures outlined below have the emotional and physical health and welfare of the individual students involved as a priority. They also seek to protect the interests of the wider College community.

- Each instance will be considered individually and independently according to the given set of circumstances at the time
- In each instance, the administration team (Principal, Deputy Principal and the Dean of Students) will determine which support services are to be called upon, who is to be informed, and any sanctions to be imposed
- With investigations relating to illegal drugs the College will inform the WA Police Service and use them in the investigative process in instances where the truth is unclear
- If a student is suspected to be under the influence the College will contact a parent/guardian and the child will be sent home. Further action may be taken, depending on the circumstances

Cigarettes

Students found smoking, in possession of cigarettes or tobacco, or supplying cigarettes to other students will be liable to a range of sanctions dependent on whether it is a repeated offence. Please note that it is also an offence to sell or supply tobacco products to minors, and students who sell or supply tobacco to other students commit an offence for which substantial fines can apply outside the school environment.

- For a first offence:
 - Inform and consult with parents
 - Interview with parents and student with Dean of Students and Deputy Principal
 - Suspension from school for two days
 - Completion of a 500 word research assignment on the “dangers of smoking”, to be submitted to the Dean of Students on return to school
- For a second offence:
 - Inform and consult with parents
 - Suspension from school for one week
 - Referred to the College Psychologist for counselling
 - Conference with parents and student with the Principal
- For a subsequent offence:
 - The student will be excluded from the College

Minor Analgesics

Analgesics are non-prescription pain suppressants (eg. aspirin and paracetamol) and can have undesirable side effects. Aspirin is never administered to students without a medical practitioner’s written instruction because of the possibility of the development of Reye’s Syndrome (a potentially fatal disease in childhood).

Student complaints such as headaches, which may result in requests for analgesics, may have underlying medical or psychological causes requiring professional assistance. College staff will not administer analgesics such as paracetamol to students without the written authorisation from the student’s parent/guardian. The parent/guardian is responsible for the supply of any medication.

SACRED HEART COLLEGE – POLICIES

The College prefers students to administer their own analgesics, if necessary, but strongly recommends parents to supply one dosage only.

Prescribed Medication

The parents/guardians of students who are required to self-administer prescribed medication (eg. diabetes, ADHD) are to notify the Principal of this requirement and all relevant details, such as what form the medication takes, dosage, possible side effects, symptoms of misuse and the prescribing doctor. Procedures may need to be set up by the Principal so that Sick Bay staff can administer prescribed medications, store emergency medicines etc. The misuse of prescribed medication can place the user in a serious and, in some instances, life-threatening situation. Students who supply any type of medication to other students will be liable to a range of sanctions detailed below.

Alcohol, Solvents and Misuse of Legal Drugs

Students found drinking alcoholic beverages, in possession of alcohol, supplying alcohol to other students, or misusing solvents or legal drugs, in possession of or using pharmaceutical drugs for non-medical purposes or supplying pharmaceutical drugs to other students will be liable to a range of sanctions dependent on whether it is a repeated offence. This would apply to students at the College, or who are attending an official school function (eg. camp, excursion, performance).

- For a first offence:
 - Inform and consult with parents
 - Suspension from school for up to one week at the discretion of the Principal
 - Completion of a 500 word assignment on the effects of alcohol abuse, to be submitted at the parent conference
 - Conference between parents and student with Principal, Deputy and Dean of Students
 - Possible referral to outside agency
- For any subsequent offence:
 - The student will be excluded from the school

Illicit Drugs

The possession, use, sale or supply of illicit drugs is an offence against the law. The College will view all offences involving illegal drugs as a very serious matter.

Any student found using, selling, in possession of or supplying illicit drugs to other students will be immediately excluded from the College. In such cases this action will be taken after consultation with parents and in accordance with guidelines established by the Catholic Education Commission. The student will also be offered counselling.

In certain circumstances some prescribed medications are treated as illicit drugs (eg. dexamphetamine) which are given or taken by a person for whom the drug is not prescribed.

The Principal will determine if the police will be called. In the absence of a student's parent, the Deputy Principal or Educational Psychologist will be present at any police interview that takes place on school premises.

Any student found using, selling, in possession of or supplying illicit drugs to other students when under the control of the College, as described earlier in this policy, should consider they have forfeited their right to a place in the College.

The Principal reserves the right to make exceptions to this where special circumstances prevail. These circumstances however will be exceptionally rare.

Exclusion

The exclusion of students is not to be considered the final step. The College will endeavour to assist in:

- Re-enrolment in a suitable school
- Recommending suitable counselling agencies for the student and his/her family