

# DRUG EDUCATION POLICY

## PURPOSE:

- Drug Education involves applying harm minimisation strategies in order for students to provide a balanced evaluation of the risks and potential harmful effects of drugs, as well their many benefits and general uses in society.

## GOALS:

- Drug Education aims to explore student attitudes and values towards drugs and guide them towards an understanding of high-risk and low-risk practices and situations.
- Drug Education aims to impart up to date, relevant and age-appropriate knowledge about drugs and their uses including both long and short term effects.
- Drug Education aims to develop informed decision making skills about drug use in our society.
- We acknowledge that Colleges cannot control all the influences on a child's life, some of which will be pro-drug. Nor can we enforce abstinence from restricted drugs upon all students in the time they are away from Baden Powell College P – 9. We can, however, aim to inform students about:
  - drugs and their effects
  - safe and responsible use of medications and prescription drugs
  - strategies used by advertisers and other community members to convince others to try certain types of drugs
  - how they might develop and articulate informative and reasoned views
  - how to identify strategies to reduce drug use or drug related harm

## GUIDELINES:

- The Drug Education program is a part of the Health curriculum but also involves attitudes and skills developed in many other curriculum areas.
- A major part of the program involves understanding how our bodies work and our basic health needs as well as encouraging responsible behaviour and informed decision making.

## IMPLEMENTATION:

- Drug Education will be taught within the curriculum using college based programmes and external resources e.g. Life Education Van.

- Drug Education will be taught from Prep to Year 9 with introductory activities that promote cooperation and negotiation among students concerning the concept of health, well being, and care of the body, before focusing on drugs.
- In the Early Years (P-4), Drug Education will involve a study of the body and safety issues such as accidents, drugs and poisons in the home.
- In the Middle Years (5-6), Drug Education will involve a study of the body and safety using medicinal drugs and possible alternatives and legal drugs such as caffeine, nicotine and alcohol.
- In the Middle Years (7-9), Drug Education will involve a study of the body and how medicines have improved the health of many people over the past fifty years as well as information and debate involving the effects of drugs on society, the use of legal and illegal drugs and possible side effects as well as related issues such as peer pressure.
- Drug Education will assist students to gain accurate and up to date information about drugs and drug use, while at the same time recognising the need for using a protective nature of existing attitudes towards volatile solvents as evidence is emerging to suggest that new knowledge may promote experimentation.
- Direct reference to volatile solvents as drugs should be avoided except in circumstances where a group of students is particularly at risk from volatile solvent use or if it is widespread in the community. In such cases intervention and restoring wellbeing will be planned with College welfare staff and administration and the support of personnel with appropriate training and expertise.
- Teachers will need to consider personal disclosures and confidentiality when discussing Drug Education issues and encourage talking about personal experiences in the third person. They will practise personal interrupting that stops the student if a student starts to make a personal disclosure.
- Where students do disclose personal information, either confidentially or to a group, teachers cannot offer complete confidentiality because they have a duty of care to the child and are subject to mandatory reporting.
- Mandatory reporting states that all teachers are obliged to notify Protective Services if they form a belief, based on reasonable grounds, that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the child's parents or caregivers have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type. (Reference "Reporting Child Abuse," Human Services Victoria, 1999).
- Teachers have a positive duty of care to prevent foreseeable injury to students. If they are aware that illegal drug use is occurring on or outside the College grounds, they have a responsibility to inform the principal. The principal is responsible for decisions about notifying parents, regional authorities, police, arranging counselling etc. Teachers cannot promise students confidentiality, but they can protect the students' privacy.
- When responding to incidents involving illegal drug use at college by students, teachers will follow, "The Stages for Responding to Inappropriate Drug Use at Baden Powell College (BPC)," and be aware of

the slight possibility of a death as a result of sniffing volatile solvents, "sudden sniffing death", and ensure that students are kept calm and avoid sudden or strenuous activity.

## **EVALUATION:**

A drug education program can be evaluated in a variety of ways. It is important, however, that the methods used and the delivery of the program is reflected upon, as well as developments in student knowledge, attitudes and skills.

- Continuous assessment of the program will be undertaken from teachers, students and parents.
- Knowledge- students can be assessed on their acquisition of concepts.
- Behaviours- rehearse and act out strategies for minimising harm in real life problem solving situations.
- Meeting the Victorian Curriculum outcomes- checking indicators and outcomes for each child.
- Group skills- assess students' ability and willingness to cooperate, negotiate and participate; this can be done by teachers, peers and individual students.
- Enjoyment and usefulness- students provide written and/or oral feedback on the lessons relating to: enjoyment, new information, new thoughts and ideas, what was not useful and what improvements could be made.
- This policy to be reviewed as part of the College's two year review cycle, individually, in teams and with the community in 2016.

## **The Stages For Responding To Inappropriate Drug Use At Baden Powell College P – 9**

### **Stage 1: The Incident**

#### **Response Considerations:**

Keep calm, ensure safety, seek assistance if necessary (first aid/ambulance), gather information (the drug used, the amount, the manner of administration etc), confiscate & secure evidence, ensure supervision of students & inform college administration/principal.

### **Stage 2: First The Facts**

#### **Response Considerations:**

Ensure there is a witness to any interviews; offer the students to have an advocate present, keep accurate records & ensure parent/s or guardian/s are informed as quickly as possible.

**Further Information:**

Incident Report: An outline of the incident, together with further information obtained, should be fully documented. The college, through the principal, should keep records of information received and action taken to inform parents and police. This information may be called upon as evidence in court proceedings, or as proof that the college honoured its duty of care.

**Interviewing Students:**

It is important that the rights of students are considered during the investigation of an alleged drug incident. Where possible the college will arrange for a parent or guardian to be present when the student is being interviewed. Otherwise a suitable third party should be present to offer support to the student, like a student advocate.

**Student Advocate:**

Students should be encouraged to identify an advocate of their choice, for example parent or guardian, or an older person or teacher who can support them during interviews involving serious allegations. The role of the advocate is to support the student/s and protect their rights.

**Parent Involvement:**

Parents may need support in handling the incident with their child, and the college can provide a positive framework to assist that process. For additional advice and support, the college may help parents contact a relevant community service. It is important that the college takes into account possible differing attitudes to drug issues when communicating with parents from diverse backgrounds.

**Searches:**

College lockers are the property of the college and can be searched if a teacher has reasonable cause for concern. With private property such as bags, pencil cases and clothing, then the student's permission should be sought to empty or inspect the property. If the student refuses and there is reasonable suspicion that drugs are concealed, their parent or guardian can be asked to attend the college, or the police can be called in the presence of the student, teacher and principal. There may be circumstances where the duty of care of teachers and principals requires immediate action to prevent injury to students or staff before the arrival of police. This may include a search of personal property such as bags. Any illegal drugs located should be secured in the presence of a witness and handed to police as soon as possible.

**Stage 3: The Assessment****Response Considerations:**

The student welfare coordinator should conduct the initial assessment and can call on external support if required.

**Further Information:**

The person conducting the assessment is interested in understanding the drug use in the context of the student's life, including college performance and relationship with peers, parents and teachers. An assessment of the nature of the drug use will be based on such factors as how often the student uses the substance, how much they use, and the reasons for the use and whether it interferes with other aspects of their life. Accurate assessment should also identify other problems the student may be facing such as: depression, family conflict, bullying, peer relationships, confusion over sexuality and drug use by siblings and/or parents.

**Stage 4: Police Involvement****Response Considerations:**

Refer incidents to local police. Later contact police to ascertain action they will take and any legal implications. Ensure procedures are in place for police to interview staff and/or students. Advise students and parents of the rights of students to have a parent or student advocate present during police interviews.

**Stage 5: The Action.****Response Considerations:**

The principal and welfare coordinator will instigate disciplinary action and ensure a range of disciplinary sanctions that provide flexibility for responding to individual situations.

**Further Information:**

The principal appoints a case manager who coordinates the collection of information, liaises with stake holders and designs and oversees an appropriate response.

When a student returns to college following suspension or exclusion, their return should be managed carefully with appropriate support and monitoring.

**Stage 6: Assistance****Response Considerations:**

Have working relationships with appropriate health professionals before an incident occurs.

**Further Information:**

Confidentiality is a key issue for any agency and as the student is the client, the agency does not need to inform the college of the content or the outcome of the sessions.

## **Stage 7: The Way Ahead**

### **Response Considerations:**

Provide debriefing opportunities and after an incident, reflect on policy and procedures and enhance them, if necessary.

Further Information:

Following a sensitive issue, staff, the students involved and, in some cases, bystanders, may need to be debriefed by the principal, welfare staff or health professionals. Staff involved should be adequately trained. It is important that students are treated with respect and that their rights and privacy are maintained. The principal may issue a statement to the media and/or college community, to emphasise that the college is dealing with the matter appropriately. The provision of ongoing support for a student's welfare and educational needs is a key issue in the longer term management of the student.