



ST MARY'S COLLEGE

Established 1869

ST MARY'S COLLEGE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The use and abuse of alcohol, cigarettes, other substances (such as performance enhancing drugs, prescription drugs when not taken pursuant to an individual's medical practitioner's prescribed regime, inhalants) and illicit drugs are prevalent and accessible in Australia. St Mary's College, in common with other schools, has a responsibility towards addressing the problem of drug or substance abuse, both within the school environment and out of school hours.

The St Mary's College Drugs Policy aims to educate students about informed personal choices that promote personal wellbeing and maximise learning opportunities. The College has developed a policy with regard to drugs and young people that is designed to discourage students from using drugs, and for those who are already doing so, to prevent them from becoming drug dependent. The policy seeks to do this in three ways through:

1. **PREVENTION:** by providing information and strategies that assists in the prevention of drug and substance use and misuse;
2. **EXPECTATIONS:** by clearly outlining the College's expectations in regard to illicit drugs, alcohol and tobacco, and the correct use of prescription medications and other substances;
3. **INTERVENTION:** by identifying the processes that will be followed if a student is found to be in breach of the St Mary's College Drugs Policy.

2. WHAT IS DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE?

Drug and substance abuse involves the use of alcohol or tobacco by students at this College, the use of illicit drugs and the misuse of medications and other substances.

3. PREVENTION

St Mary's College encourages a culture of drug avoidance both at school and at home. This is achieved through several initiatives:

A firm and clear statement on the abuse of drugs and other substances.

The College's expectation is that students will not abuse drugs or other substances at school or school functions and the College will cooperate with parents in discouraging

use at all times. This policy includes smoking, illicit drugs, alcohol, the misuse of prescribed medicines or other substances.

Drug Education.

Education about drug and substance abuse is essential. This must start in primary school and continue throughout their education according to their development stage. Education involves the acquisition of knowledge about the potential harm of drugs, encouragement to make informed choices on drugs, and developing strategies to avoid using them.

For a number of years, St Mary's College has offered an educational program designed to make students aware of the benefits of well being, and thus to give to them the knowledge and confidence to make wise choices about their lifestyles. A significant part of this program is related to issues to do with alcohol, tobacco, pain relievers and illicit drugs.

The Care Education Program.

Closely linked with this educational program is St Mary's College's overall philosophy which emphasizes the development of a sense of values and the promotion of self-esteem in children and adolescents which is designed to help them to develop spiritually, intellectually, physically and emotionally. Supporting this, and also as a deterrent, is the School's intervention processes with regard to drug use.

A school response to the use of drugs.

Consequences in this context are concerned with transparent processes: informing parents and relevant agencies and interventions that assist rehabilitation.

A clear policy for working with parents/caregivers with the common objective of guarding children from harmful drug use or substance abuse.

4. EXPECTATIONS

Within the Catholic tradition, each person is called to realise and live the dignity that comes with being human. Fundamental to living our dignity is caring for our body. Caring for our body is a physical, intellectual, spiritual and moral activity. The College's expectation in regard to drug use is derived from a deep concern for and a holistic approach to, student wellbeing. Drug and substance use and abuse compromises wellbeing and exhibits a failure to recognise our dignity as human beings. Therefore, this policy makes clear the College's expectations of students within College, at College functions and at activities organised by the College.

Alcohol

The College's policy is that students may not consume alcohol at school, at any school function, except the Graduation Dinner (if over 18 years of age), or at any activity organized by the College in any circumstances or in any company.

Tobacco

Students may not smoke at school; transiting to and from school; while wearing the College uniform; while representing the College or attending College functions.

Illicit Drugs

Students may not use any illegal substances at school; transiting to and from school; while wearing the College uniform; at any College functions or at any College organised activity. ***Students who traffic in illegal drugs will be subject to a more formal follow up process involving police and parents/caregivers.***

Prescription Medications

Students who need to take prescribed medications while at school must adhere to their doctor's recommended dosage and must not allow another student access to these drugs. The student's name and dosage requirements for prescription medications must be clearly visible. These will be stored in a locked cabinet. The First Aid Officer will keep a record of the dosage, time and date of administration of medications.

All Students:

- Must have a note in their diary from a parent/caregiver or legal guardian and/or doctor notifying the school of their need to be taking medication
- Must surrender medications to the First Aid Officer at the Student Services Office unless this would inhibit a student's safety and wellbeing
- Must be administered in the Student Services Office, under the supervision of a staff member
- Must notify her Class/Subject Teacher when she is going to take medication.

Off-campus camps/trips/activities

Students who need to take prescribed medications while attending a school activity off campus must adhere to their doctor's recommended dosage and must not allow another student access to these drugs. All medication, including relevant notification or letter from the doctor must be presented to the appropriate Coordinator/Activity Director before the start of the activity, and must be taken under staff supervision.

Inhalants

Students are not permitted to inhale solvents, volatile substances or any other substance that alters their conscious state.

Possession of Drugs

Students are not permitted to possess drugs (except prescribed medications) at school, transiting to and from school; while wearing the College uniform; at any College functions or at any College organised activity.

5. INTERVENTION

Intervention is primarily concerned with supporting students who are known to have used or misused a drug or other substance, or who were in possession of drugs at school or while representing the College. To assist students who use or abuse drugs or other substances to recognise the physically damaging effects and the anti-social behaviour of drug and substance abuse, the College will develop an individualised program of support. Similarly, a student found to be in possession of drugs at school or while representing the College will also undergo an individualised program of support. This is primarily to prevent dependence and is seen by the College as fostering a healthy approach to wellbeing.

Inherent in this approach is the desire to develop positive relationships between students and the College and between the College and parents/caregivers. It aims to work with parents/caregivers to establish and maintain sensible norms within which our students can develop and grow. Only then will we be able to achieve an environment where students can achieve their potential and make the most of their time at the College.

The St Mary's College Development of Personal Responsibility Policy asserts that taking responsibility for one's behaviour or actions is a pre-condition to modifying one's behaviour or actions. In relation to drug and substance abuse, this involves acknowledging the abuse of a substance and recognizing that drug abuse is anti-social behaviour.

A program to prevent further drug and substance abuse, or possession at school or while representing the College will include:

- A student interview with the Deputy Principal: Student Wellbeing or Principal
- Initial phone conversation with parents/caregivers and then a letter home and on file
- Education about the physical, psychological, emotional and social effects of drug and substance abuse
- Medical Assistance
- Counselling
- Monitoring
- Parent interview with Deputy Principal or Principal
- Possible Police notification.

The intervention processes initiated by St Mary's College will be structured and applied according to the circumstances of the infringement of the policy and may be amended at any time.