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Illicit Drugs and Unsanctioned Substances Policy

Policy Number	Date of Development	Implementation Date	Review Date	Reviewed by
GSCC - 004	01/04/2017	01/11/17	01/04/18	AP Pastoral

Policy Statement

Good Shepherd Catholic College is committed to safe and supportive learning environments in which the health and well-being of students and staff are of paramount importance. Good Shepherd Catholic College is guided by a mission which sees students, staff and parents journeying together in faith with Christ our Light.

There is a focus on holistic education which is welcoming and caring as we Experience the Community, Live the Values and Achieve the Success. Key values and principles within our community include:

1. The dignity of the individual is a fundamental value underpinning all aspects of College life.
2. Principles of natural justice and procedural fairness always apply.
3. Support for students and their families affected by the misuse of illicit drugs and unsanctioned substances will be provided.

This policy operates within legislative requirements, and the policies and procedures mandated by the Townsville Catholic Education Office and Diocesan Education Council.

With parents, Good Shepherd Catholic College has a responsibility to provide students with skills and knowledge to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. As a College, we have zero tolerance for student involvement with illicit drugs and unsanctioned substances. This policy aims to prevent the possession, use, sale and distribution of alcohol, smoking products, illicit drugs and related implements by students whilst attending College related activities. Any student suspected of the aforementioned actions will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

Policy Procedures

Where misuse of illicit drugs and unsanctioned substances occur, the procedures will be implemented by the College Principal or his/her delegate.

1. When College personnel suspect, or are advised that a student has used or possesses a drug while at the College or at a College event, **secure the area and report to a member of the College Administration Team.** It is necessary to establish and respond to the student's health and safety status first. If there are immediate concerns for a student's health and safety, a first aid officer should be notified, and emergency services contacted immediately.
2. Where there is no concern for the immediate health and safety of the student in question, the student will be withdrawn from class until the investigation has concluded.
The incident must be referred immediately to the College administration team.
3. The principal (or his/her delegate) will contact the police.
4. The principal will identify an administrator (who can be the principal) to be responsible for managing the incident. At this point, the administrator managing the incident should establish and validate facts by interviewing relevant staff and students. The only aim of the questioning is to establish that an incident involving the use or possession of a substance at the College or College event may have



occurred, and to identify who might have been involved in the incident. A support person should be present for any interview.

Investigations must now cease and the police must be contacted

Please note: when evidence shows that a student is in possession of an illicit substance, administrators need only establish who was involved. Additional information obtained by the College administrator at this stage could be detrimental to a police investigation, should this occur.

5. Temporary Removal of Student Property by School Staff (sources from: TCEOs Guidelines for managing drug related incidents in catholic schools).

This procedure outlines the conditions under which a principal or staff member of a catholic school has the power to temporarily remove property from a student and outlines the procedures to follow when property is temporarily removed.

If the property is illegal to possess, likely to threaten the safety or wellbeing of students or staff, or is reasonably suspected to have been used to commit a crime, the principal should retain the property for handing to police.

A principal or staff member does not have the authority to open, examine or otherwise deal with the property without the consent of the student or a parent of the student. For example, a principal or staff member who removes a mobile phone from a student is not authorised to unlock the phone or to read, copy or delete messages stored on the phone.

Under normal circumstances a principal or staff member is not permitted to search student property (e.g. a student's school bag) unless they have the student's consent or the consent of their parents. There may, however, be emergency circumstances where it is necessary to search a student's property without the student's consent or the consent of the student's parents (eg. to access an EpiPen for an anaphylactic emergency). Emergency circumstances may include where the life or welfare of a student or students is at immediate risk.

A principal or staff member does not require the student's consent to search school property such as lockers or desks being used by the student.

If the property is illegal to possess, threatens the safety or wellbeing of students or staff or is reasonably suspected to have been used to commit a crime:

- Notify police
- If police state that they will come to the school to investigate matters relating to the property, the property need not be made available for collection until they do so or
- If the police seize the property under the [Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#)
- If police decide not to seize the property, it must be made available for collection as soon as practicable thereafter.



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- Where staff have made reasonable efforts to notify the student or the student's parents that the property is available for collection but has not been able to make contact need not make the property available for collection.
- Where staff reasonably suspect that the student is not the lawful owner of the property, staff need not make the property available for collection. In this case, staff must make reasonable efforts to ascertain the ownership of the property.

If further action is required, a Townsville Catholic Education Consultant must be contacted.

6. Where it is suspected that the student has used **and** possesses an illicit substance, the administrator managing the incident should:
 - **Refer the matter to the police.**
 - Withdraw the student from class (if this has not already occurred).
 - Ensure the student is supervised at all times.
 - Inform the principal (if the principal is not the administrator managing the case)
 - Inform the student's parents/guardians of the incident and advise them of the nominated support person.
 - Inform the TCEO Education Consultant.
7. If a substance is **not** found, but there is evidence, such as a reliable witness or specific student behaviour to suggest that the student has used, or possessed a substance, the College may take one of the following actions:
 - i. **Suspected substance is licit**, such as alcohol
Contact the student's parents/guardians and take action according to the College procedures for drug related interventions (Breaches of College Expectations).
 - ii. **Suspected substance is illicit**, such as cannabis
Inform the police of relevant details, contact the student's parents/guardians and take action according to the College procedures for drug related interventions (Breaches of College Expectations).
8. The administrator managing the incident will ensure that a written record of the incident is maintained, including the names of all students, College personnel, parents, police and other individuals involved in the incident.

Expected Outcomes

Any breaches of the College Expectations regarding illicit drugs and unsanctioned substances will result in a temporary, or permanent withdrawal from the College. If a temporary withdrawal from the College is appropriate, the length of the withdrawal is determined by the principal or a member of the College Administration Team. This decision will be made in conjunction with the Education Consultant and/or the Director. Any temporary or permanent withdrawal from the College will be made in accordance with the Suspension and Expulsion guidelines stated in the Townsville Catholic Education Administrative Handbook (Code 211.4) and the College Behaviour Management and Responsible Thinking Process Policies (GSCC 001 & 002).



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After the period of temporary withdrawal, the student and parent/guardian will meet with their parent/s, College Principal and Pastoral Coordinator to discuss the re-entry into the College. This meeting will focus on the health and well-being of the student. Recommendations will be provided for referrals to external community agencies for further illicit drug and unsanctioned substances rehabilitation.

Following the incident, there may be a need to monitor the progress of the student, provide support to other students, review the appropriateness of College actions and maintain contact with other agency personnel. In some situations, where exclusion has been decided upon or a student chooses to transfer, contact could be made with the College enrolling the student and information and support provided.

Where there is not sufficient information to take action:

- The administrator managing the incident should note the incident on the College data capture system.
- The student's parents should be contacted to advise them of the general concerns related to the student's behaviour.
- A behaviour monitoring process should be implemented.

Definitions

- Illicit Substances – This term should be taken to cover any substance or item whose possession is prohibited under the Drugs Misuse Act 1986
- Unsanctioned Substances – This term should be taken to cover any substance whose possession, while not illegal is in contravention of College rules (e.g. tobacco products, alcohol and certain medicines).
- Alcohol – liquor as defined in the Liquor Act 1992 (Qld)
- Parent – means a parent, guardian, carer or other person having legal custody of a student. Reference to a parent includes reference to a guardian or carer for the student.

Roles and Responsibilities

As a College we take a whole College approach to the well-being of our students, and it is important that this is supported by all stakeholders. To ensure we are supporting students through the many challenges they may face during secondary schooling, students, teachers and parents must work together.

The College will:

- Clearly explain the Illicit Drugs and Unsanctioned Substances Policy, including the procedures that occur for breaches of this policy.
- Uphold the policy for Illicit Drugs and Unsanctioned Substances.
- Follow the procedures stated in the policy if any breaches, or suspicion of breaches occur.
- Inform parents/guardians of concerns relating to student welfare.
- Report concerns relating to the misuse of drugs or unsanctioned substances to the Principal (who will forward the concerns to the police).
- Keep detailed records relating to any suspicion or report of illicit drug and unsanctioned substances possession, use or distribution.



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- Implement a Drug Education Program to be delivered through the Health and Physical Education Curriculum and Pastoral Care lessons. (This program was developed, taking into account the Townsville Catholic Education Personal Development Education in a Catholic Context Policy.)

Students will:

- Always exhibit safe and responsible behaviour. This behaviour prohibits students from possessing, consuming or providing illicit or unsanctioned substances.
- Engage in the Drug Education Program as directed by the College.
- Report any breaches of the illicit drugs and unsanctioned substances policy to a staff member at the College immediately.
- Promote healthy and safe choices to members of the College Community.

Parents can help by:

- Reading and understanding, and ensuring their child reads and understands this Policy.
- Ensuring that their child does not use, possess or provide illicit drugs and unsanctioned substances.
- Engaging in Drug Education Programs should they feel appropriate.
- Attending meetings at the College if requested.
- Working with the College to observe expectations, policies and procedures.

References

Drugs Misuse Act 1986

Education (General Provisions) Act 1989

Education (General Provisions) Act 1996

Freedom of Information Act 1992

Judicial Review Act 1991

Juvenile Review Act 1991

Queensland Government Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011

Diocesan Education Council Illicit Drugs and Unsanctioned Substances Policy 2015

Townsville Catholic Education Administrative Handbook (guidelines for managing drug related incidents in catholic schools - Issued April 2017)