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ST MARY'S Catholic College

E-Cigarette / Smoking Guidelines

RATIONALE

The purpose of this document is to support public health objectives and ensure there is no smoking or use of e-cigarettes (commonly known as 'vaping') on St Mary's Catholic College premises (buildings and grounds) within 5 metres of school entrances or at school-sanctioned events held off-premises. It is a clearly established legal principle that schools owe a duty of care to all students. The large amounts of chemicals with known harmful effects, including nicotine, in many of the brands of e-cigarettes sold, are sufficient to justify St Mary's Catholic College taking control measures in exercising a duty of care towards all students.

OBJECTIVE

The aim is to send a clear message to our community that a healthy lifestyle does not include the use of e-cigarettes or smoking. This guideline aims to deliver a clear and consistent message regarding the dangers of vaping/smoking, and achieve a smoke-free and vape-free environment for students, families, staff, volunteers and visitors.

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 to school expectations (e.g. all smoking products, including tobacco, electronic cigarettes, vaping, alcohol and certain medicines).

E-CIGARETTES

In Queensland, it is illegal for any person aged 18 or under to obtain, possess or use e-cigarettes, or e-cigarette cartridges containing nicotine, or nicotine liquids for use in a vaporiser, without a prescription. It is illegal to sell e-cigarettes to or buy e-cigarettes for any person aged under 18 years whether or not the e-cigarettes contain nicotine.

Under the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 (the Act), electronic cigarettes (regardless of whether they contain nicotine or not) and related products are smoking products and subject to Queensland smoking laws. This includes that electronic cigarettes cannot be:

- used in no-smoking indoor or outdoor venues
- sold to children under the age of 18
- advertised, promoted or displayed at retail outlets
- provided for sale in a vending machine

EDUCATION

Prevention is best, and like all risk-taking behaviours we highlight the dangers to our young people and provide them with information to make informed decisions. We provide students with health information on vaping and other harmful activities through our Health and Physical Education classes, Pastoral Care programs, and Peer Support programs. Counselling is also available to all students in our community.

The use of e-cigarettes and smoking is banned in all Queensland schools (school facilities), and for 5 meters beyond their boundaries. The law applies at all times during and after school hours, on weekends and during school holidays. It includes the use of all smoking products, including [electronic cigarettes](#). Smoking and vaping are not permitted during school events and excursions held off school premises and wearing the College uniform or in public areas is seen to be bringing the College into disrepute.

CONSEQUENCES

E-cigarettes with nicotine are treated as illegal substance such as illicit/illegal drugs. There are very serious consequences for students who are in breach of the College expectations as per the e-cigarette/smoking guidelines.

Guidelines:

- Students are removed from class while staff gather information
- Parent/Carer contacted
- Suspension: Students in the **presence** of an e-cigarette/smoking device, in **possession** of an e-cigarette/smoking device, or **distributing or selling an** e-cigarette/smoking device
- Restorative Practice: Time away from the College provides an opportunity to reflect on the behaviour. Students will engage in education and reflection to prevent future unhealthy behaviours of this nature. The College provides students with reflection resources to be completed prior to re-entry.
- Other consequences deemed appropriate by the College Principal, CES or Queensland Police
- Consequences will escalate for continued offences breaching the e-cigarette/smoking guidelines
- Consultation with the College Principal regarding continuing enrolment for continued breaches of guidelines

Counselling and other supports assist in taking a 'child centric' approach to the use of e-cigarettes/smoking while trying to change behaviours.

References

Colin, Biggers, & Paisley lawyers, 2022, Insights – Vaping in schools, Viewed 27/03/23, <https://www.cbp.com.au/insights/insights/2022/august/vaping-in-schools>

Lung Foundation Australia, 2023, E-Cigarettes and Vaping – unveil what you inhale, Viewed 27/03/23, <https://lungfoundation.com.au/lung-health/protecting-your-lungs/e-cigarettes-and-vaping/>

Queensland Government, QLD Health, 2021, Electronic cigarettes, Viewed 27/03/23 <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/topics/atod/tobacco-laws/electronic-cigarettes>

Queensland Government, QLD Health, 2019, The known harms of E-cigarettes, Viewed 27/03/23 <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/news-events/news/known-harms-of-e-cigarettes-vaping-smoking>

School Governance by Compliance, 2021, E-cigarettes and vaping – the new cigarette, Viewed 27/03/23 <https://www.schoolgovernance.net.au/news/e-cigarettes-and-vaping-the-new-smoking>

Numerous state and non-government Australian school policies were also accessed.