



## **DRUGS AND ILLICIT SUBSTANCES POLICY**

Revised on: December 2023

Review on: December 2024

### **RATIONALE**

At St Margaret Mary's College the management of behaviour is intrinsically linked to Gospel values. Our mission is to be a Catholic learning community where young women are educated, inspired and inspirited. True to the story of the Good Samaritan, we are people of hope who live compassionately and justly.

This policy reflects the school mission statement and practices fair, equitable, non-discriminatory behaviour and language, and uses safe and legal procedures in compliance with TCEO Policy. The possession or use of illicit and unsanctioned drugs can have detrimental effects on the physical and mental well-being of the users.

"We are creatures of God and therefore have an obligation to live in a way consistent with human well-being. Not to abuse the gift of our bodies through any form of unhealthy behaviour".  
*Fr B Lucas, CEPD, February, 1994, p. 13*

For the protection of students and the safety of the whole student community a process of formation of healthy young people through education and awareness programs is evident. Also the College will address any drug related incidents through the support of a behaviour management process.

In this policy, the term, 'drugs' refers to any substance, legal or illegal, that can alter the way the mind or body works which includes, but is not limited to, alcohol, tobacco products, vaping products and equipment, caffeine, solvents and other volatile substances, over the counter drugs and medicines, prescribed medicines including tranquillisers, painkillers and illegal drugs.

### **POLICY:**

Students may not be in possession of, under the influence of, consume or supply drugs to other students within the College environment. The selling or distribution of prohibited and illegal substances (e.g.: drugs) to others including fellow students on the school premises or while representing the school are serious misdemeanours and that exclusion will be the result of such actions.

The consumption or inhaling of prohibited and illegal substances (e.g.: drugs) on the school premises or while representing the school are serious misdemeanours and will result in lengthy suspensions and prescriptive return to school strategies including drugs testing. It may also result in exclusion.

This policy applies to the activities of students at the College, on the way to and from the College and while away from the College site on College endorsed activities. It can also apply outside the College hours and off College premises where there is a clear and close connection



between the College and the conduct of the students. The protective framework for students is the shared responsibility of students, teachers, administration, parents and the community.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### *Awareness and Education –*

The College strategy is to:

- a. Keep the welfare of the whole College community as the highest priority;
- b. State clear expectations of behavior that do not tolerate abusive and unsafe behavior, and can be consistently interpreted and upheld by College staff;
- c. Implement co-ordinated teaching and learning programs that underpin and complement the College's Christian ethos and to educate students, parents and teachers on abstaining from drug use / substance abuse;
- d. Facilitate appropriate professional development for College staff;
- e. Affirm that students have a responsibility to be positive role models within the College and in representing the College in the wider community;
- f. Provide instruction in a range of problem solving and personal supporting strategies;
- g. Provide mechanisms for the ongoing monitoring and review of the College's approach to prevention, education, risk assessment and incident management;
- h. Develop a set of guidelines which relate to the consequences consistent with the Behaviour Development Policy

### *Consequences –*

St Margaret Mary's College promotes a safe and supportive environment and will endeavour to support students in a Christian and caring way. The consequence for each situation will be determined by the Principal after appropriate investigation and consultation.

- a. All students will be treated with dignity and compassion.
- b. Students will be empowered through consistent education to make informed and responsible decisions. They will be encouraged and supported in making responsible decisions, especially when they are contrary to those of their peers.
- c. Where an incident involving any student occurs, parents will be involved as soon as it is possible.
- d. Consequences of incidents relating to this policy will vary in accordance with the Behaviour Development Policy and Townsville Catholic Education Office Guidelines, and may include exclusion.
- e. Unlawful and/or illegal activities will be reported by the Principal to the appropriate authorities.



**In accordance with the Townsville Catholic Education Office Guidelines for Managing Incidents Relating to Illicit Drugs and Unsanctioned Substances, October 2020.**

## **Drug Intervention Measures**

In response to drug-related incidents at the College, we makes decisions regarding responses and consequences in line with our responsible behaviour plan for students. In developing responses to drug-related incidents, the College will implement a range of responses taking into account the:

- Nature of the incident
- Identification and provision of First Aid and care for affected student/s who may be under the influence of drugs
- Circumstances of the student(s) involved, including relevant age, development, gender, cultural and social considerations
- Needs and safety of others in the school
- Communication to all school staff about the acceptable process to follow if students are found to be in possession of alcohol, tobacco, illicit substances and unsanctioned prescription medication
- Inform local police when an illicit substance is found by school staff and arrange for police to collect the substance as soon as possible
- the role of the parent / guardian / carer in managing action and follow-up in regard to a drug-related incident
- Assess the need for referral to other agencies and establish protocols with relevant professionals and agencies to provide counselling and rehabilitation services for students involved with illicit and other unsanctioned drugs [See Appendix A].
- To ensure confidential records of drug-related incidents at school are maintained to support monitoring and evaluation of detection, management and intervention policies and procedures.

## **Seizure of Suspected Drugs or Drug Paraphernalia by School Staff**

This procedure outlines the conditions under which the Principal or a College staff member has the power to seize property (being property that is or is suspected of being drugs or drug paraphernalia) from a student and outlines the procedures to follow when that property is seized.

- If possession of the property is or may be illegal, 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 notify the police and retain the property for handing to police. If



police state they will come to the school to investigate the Principal's notification, the property should be retained until they do so or until such time as the police seize the property under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 (Qld). The College must follow this process to avoid a staff member committing a drug possession offence under the Drugs Misuse Act 1986.

- If police decide not to seize the property (for example, because the property is not an illicit drug) the property must be made available for collection by the student's parents/guardians/carers as soon as practicable thereafter.
- If the property is an unsanctioned substance that is not an illicit drug (for example: alcohol or prescriptions drugs) the property must not be returned to the student.
- Where staff have made reasonable efforts to notify the student's parents/guardians/carers that the property is available for collection, but the property is not collected, then the property may be destroyed by the Principal and a record (and photograph) of the property kept by the school.
- 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

## Searches

These guidelines apply to searches of a student's property **when the student is or is reasonably suspected to be in possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia.**

- The 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 the 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 / guardians / carers. 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. Emergency circumstances may include where the life or welfare of a student or students is at immediate risk (e.g. to access an EpiPen for an anaphylactic emergency).
- A principal or staff member does not require the student's consent to search school property such as lockers or desks belong to the school and being used by the student.



- If reasonably practicable, any permitted search of a student's property should occur in private and in the presence of at least two staff members one of whom should be the Principal or a member of the school leadership team. The student may be asked to turn out the student's pockets or hold open the student's bag and, if necessary, move the contents in the bag or open internal compartments for clear viewing of the contents.
- During a search, a staff member should not touch the student's clothing or body to avoid the risk of allegations of assault or reportable conduct.
- If the student does not consent to search of the student's property, then the police may be called and police may decide to search the student's property.
- Prior to calling police, the school should call or attempt to call the student's parents/guardians/carers.
- If the student does not wait for police to conduct a search, then that behaviour should be managed in accordance with the school's discipline procedure.

## DEFINITIONS AND REFERENCES

Definition of Drugs for the purpose of this policy includes:

- **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 school rules (e.g. tobacco products, alcohol and certain medicines).

## Appendix A - Support Services

| Organisation                                                                             | Phone                          | Online                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Addiction services - The Salvation Army Australia<br>Townsville Recovery Services Centre | (07) 4772 3607                 | <a href="https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/northqld/our-services/recovery-services-townsville/recovery-services-townsville/">https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/northqld/our-services/recovery-services-townsville/recovery-services-townsville/</a>                                    |
| Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Service - Mater<br>Young Adult Health Service     | (07) 3163 8400                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Alcoholics Anonymous Australia                                                           | 1300 222 222                   | <a href="https://aa.org.au/">https://aa.org.au/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Alcohol and Drug Support                                                                 | 1800 177 833                   | <a href="http://adis.health.qld.gov.au/">http://adis.health.qld.gov.au/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Centacare Townsville                                                                     | 1300 672 273<br>(07) 4772 9000 | <a href="https://www.centacarenq.org.au/">https://www.centacarenq.org.au/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Headspace (Townsville)                                                                   | 4799 1799                      | <a href="https://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/townsville/">https://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/townsville/</a><br><br>ehespace:<br><a href="https://headspace.org.au/ehespace/">https://headspace.org.au/ehespace/</a>                                                  |
| Kids Helpline                                                                            | 1800 55 1800                   | <a href="https://kidshelpline.com.au/">https://kidshelpline.com.au/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Lifeline (North Queensland)                                                              | 13 11 14                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Queensland Aboriginal & Islander Corp Alcohol & Drug Dependence Services                 | (07) 3358 5111                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| ReachOut.com                                                                             |                                | <a href="https://au.reachout.com/everyday-issues/alcohol-and-drugs">https://au.reachout.com/everyday-issues/alcohol-and-drugs</a><br><br><a href="https://au.reachout.com/mental-health-issues/professional-help">https://au.reachout.com/mental-health-issues/professional-help</a> |

# St Margaret Mary's College

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| Quitline 13QUIT                                                                                              | 13 78 48       |                                                                   |
| Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Corp for Health Services – Volatile Substance Misuse Services | 07- 4759 4000  | <a href="https://www.taihs.net.au/">https://www.taihs.net.au/</a> |
| Townsville Hospital and Health Services - Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Service (ATODS)                    | 07 - 4433 9600 | Address: 35 - 36 Gregory Street, North Ward                       |