



DRUG POLICY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A drug may be defined as any substance which affects physical or mental functions. As such, drugs include a range of materials, many of which are legal in our culture although prohibited from use at Staines Memorial College. These include alcohol and tobacco products.

This policy addresses the use of prescription drugs, legal and illegal drugs at Staines Memorial College and gives guidance to teachers, parents, students and administrators on the consequences of a drug incident at the Staines Memorial College.

RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

The Primary objective of this policy is to provide for a Staines Memorial College environment free of drugs, whether the drugs in question are legal or illegal.

The following values underpin all that follows in the policy and may need to be referred to when the policy itself is unclear in its application to one of the many situations which may arise.

- Every student has the right to come to Staines Memorial College to learn in an atmosphere free from the distractions and dangers imposed by drug use.
- Parents have the right to expect that their children will be educated in an atmosphere free from the distractions and dangers imposed by drug use.
- It is the responsibility of the Staines Memorial College to guarantee that the rights of students and parents are respected in this matter.
- The Staines Memorial College acknowledges that it shares responsibility with parents and the wider community to provide students and parents with factual information on drug abuse and advice on the legal questions surrounding the use of drugs.

Principles underpinning the Staines Memorial College's Drugs Policy are:

1. Parents and students have a right to be consulted in the formulation of the policy to contribute to the ongoing application of the policy.
2. The Staines Memorial College acknowledges that it shares with parents responsibility to inform students of the best ways of resisting pressures to become involved in drug use and experiences to build their self esteem to the level where they feel confident to make informed decisions for themselves.
3. The Staines Memorial College commits itself to deal compassionately with students who become involved in situations of illegal drug use but such treatment must always be given within the context of due regard for the needs and rights of the whole Staines Memorial College community.

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4. The Staines Memorial College commits itself to work closely with the police and welfare agencies in this matter and with other secondary Staines Memorial College s which face common problems in this area.
5. Experience suggests that students who divulge information to staff of the Staines Memorial College on drug matters sometimes do so at considerable risk to themselves. The Staines Memorial College commits itself to the protection of students who have the courage to assist the Staines Memorial College community in this way.
6. It is the responsibility of the Principal to advise the Board on the formulation of policy and the responsibility of the Board to support the Staines Memorial College in the difficult decisions it may be called upon to make in these matters.
7. Teachers share with parents the responsibility for modeling appropriate drug usage both in and out of Staines Memorial College. Teachers accept that they are under an obvious professional obligation to set an example to their students in this matter.
8. This policy will apply to all Staines Memorial College activities including Staines Memorial College social events, camps, excursions and sporting events in which the Staines Memorial College may participate. Students traveling away from Staines Memorial College on official Staines Memorial College activities are automatically covered by the policy.
9. Although this policy refers directly to drugs, it will by extension apply to the implements involved in the use of drugs. Such implements indicate an intention to use the prohibited drug and will attract penalties consistent with the use of drugs at Staines Memorial College.

ADMINISTRATION OF DRUGS TO STUDENTS

From time to time parents may request that members of staff administer prescribed medication during Staines Memorial College hours. All such requests MUST be referred to the Principal (or the Principal's nominee). If the Principal agrees that the situation requires supervised administration of medication the following procedures are to be followed:

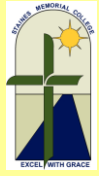
1. The student's parents must make a written request to the Principal including instructions for administration of the drug, and any special needs of the student.
2. The Principal will authorise a staff member to administer the medication.
3. Only the designated member of staff has this authority. Usually it is a staff member staffing student services.
4. The designated member of staff must ensure that all medication is in a container labelled by a health care professional or pharmacist, showing:
 - The name of drug
 - Use by date
 - Name of medical practitioner prescribing the drug
 - Name of student
 - Dosage
 - Frequency of administration

Medication which is not so labelled must not be administered.

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5. Non prescription medication such as analgesics are not to be administered by Staines Memorial College staff unless the designated member of staff is a registered nurse or equivalent.
6. All medication is to be kept in a lockable cupboard.
7. An official register on the Administration of Drugs to students is to be kept by the designated member of staff.
8. Parents are to be notified in writing of the Staines Memorial College's policy including the requirement that the Staines Memorial College takes no responsibility to ensure that medication is not out of date or that sufficient quantities of the medication are provided.
9. The designated member of staff is to return all unused medication to parents when the parents inform the Staines Memorial College in writing that medication is no longer needed or is past the use-by date.
10. If a member of Staines Memorial College staff becomes aware that a student has possession of a medication without written advice from a parent, or the parent's advice is inconsistent with the medical instructions provided, he/she should confiscate the medication, store it securely and notify the Principal. The Principal or designated member of staff will contact the parents.

Related Forms

Student Medical Record Form & Medical Authorization for Legal Drugs

USE OF LEGAL DRUGS – ALCOHOL & TOBACCO

There are clear legal sanctions governing the sale to and use of alcohol and cigarettes by minors. These legal sanctions will apply at Staines Memorial College as in the rest of the community. This policy applies to all members of the Staines Community: students, staff, parents and other helpers.

In formulating the policy the following has been considered:

1. Health and Safety legislation places a duty of care on the employer to provide a safe working environment.
2. It is not unlawful or discriminatory for an employer to ban or restrict smoking or use of alcohol on Staines Memorial College premises or at Staines Memorial College related activities.
3. Smoking is now banned in most states in enclosed public spaces.
4. It is illegal to supply cigarettes or alcohol to children under 18 years of age.
5. It is illegal for persons under the age of 18 to purchase cigarettes and alcohol.
6. An employer may be held liable for illness resulting from passive smoking.

The following applies in relation to the use of alcohol and cigarettes on Staines Memorial College property or at Staines Memorial College functions:

1. Students are prohibited from using alcohol and/or tobacco on school property or at school functions and activities.
2. Students who use alcohol at school or at a school activity will face the following consequences: counselling; involvement of parents; and other penalties depending on the nature of the offence. These penalties could involve withdrawal from school activities; detention; loss of privileges at school. In most cases, a period of suspension from school would be appropriate.

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3. Staff at school camps and excursions will refrain from drinking alcohol or smoking. This observation is in keeping with the legal duty of care incumbent on all school staff and with the acknowledged need to model appropriate behaviour for students.
4. Schools were declared 'smoke free zones' in 1989 and this prohibition on smoking applies to staff, students and members of the public. Students who are found to have brought tobacco, cigarettes, matches or smoking materials to school will face the following penalties: loss of the prohibited product; counselling and participation in a school service activity to prevent recurrence. Where students continually offend, students will lose their rights to participate in school activities (such as sporting trips or school excursions) where a student's compulsive smoking could cause considerable supervision problems. A period of suspension may also be appropriate.
5. In this policy, glue, solvents and other inhalants will be treated in the same way as alcohol. That is, their use at school is prohibited and their use will attract similar penalties.
6. The school undertakes to develop as part of its curriculum, information for students on the responsible use of alcohol and the dangers of tobacco use.

USE OF ILLICIT DRUGS

An essential aspect of dealing with the use of illicit drugs is recognition of the fact that even though students may become involved in unlawful activities, they retain certain rights as citizens. These include the right not to divulge information that may incriminate themselves or others; the right to have a legal guardian present and the right to refuse a search of their possessions or person. Staines Memorial College should consider police involvement on a case by case basis when dealing with matters related to use of illicit drugs, however, the law makes it mandatory for police to be called if a student is found in possession of or using an illicit substance at Staines Memorial College .

It should be noted that students who are 17 years or older are regarded, in the eyes of the law, as adults. An incident involving an adult is very likely to result in court action. Where a student is considered an adult there is no requirement for another adult to be present at the formal interview and parents do not have to be advised, although Staines Memorial College may choose to do so.

RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT OF ILLEGAL DRUG USE

Before the Incident:

1. Include information about drug abuse and decision making as part of the Staines Memorial College's Health and Physical Education programs and the Senior School life skills curriculum.
2. Teachers on playground duty need to be vigilant and aware of this issue. They should, for example, know how to recognise objects commonly used as bongs. Teachers should be in-serviced in this area.
3. Inform students, parents, teachers and the police of the Staines Memorial College's Drug Policy.
4. Build on trust between students and staff, particularly staff with a welfare responsibility for students such as pastoral care teachers and year level coordinators, chaplain, youth workers

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During the Incident:

1. Once the Staines Memorial College has established that there is a drug incident, inform the parents of the student/s concerned immediately.
2. Where a number of students are involved, isolate students as much as possible from one another during the Staines Memorial College investigation. This will make it easier to arrive at the truth.
3. Staines Memorial College has a limited capacity to search students and their property. Unless given permission by the student, Staines Memorial College authorities cannot search their possessions for suspected illicit drugs. Staines Memorial College authorities do not have the right to do a body search of a young person. Given this caution, it is better to call the police whose responsibility in this area is much clearer.
4. Because of the seriousness of this kind of incident, Heads and senior staff conducting an investigation should ask another member of staff to be present to take notes of the questioning. This also allows the staff member asking the questions to give the matter his or her undivided attention.
5. Accurate record taking is crucial. Writing up clear and direct records of the incident as soon as possible after the matter has passed may be very important in later enquiries.
6. Inform the whole staff as soon as possible after the incident, provided in so doing you are not breaching any aspects of the *Privacy Act*. They will hear bits of the story anyway and it is a sign of trust in your Staines Memorial College community to share the trials as well as the successes of the Staines Memorial College. It may be appropriate to inform parents and students as well through your regular meeting of the P&F or through the Staines Memorial College Newsletter. This last matter is very important if there has been mention of the incident in the media.
7. If police are called to the Staines Memorial College, Staines Memorial College staff must respect the responsibility of the police as they conduct their investigation. Police have considerable discretionary power when dealing with juveniles and have shown themselves to be resourceful and compassionate in handling matters of this kind. Students and the whole Staines Memorial College community benefit when police and the Staines Memorial College work closely, sharing information and openly seeking the same goals. Of course the Staines Memorial College cannot limit or define the role of the police once the matter has been referred to them for consideration.

Note: In implementing the Staines Memorial College's drug policy consideration must be given at all times to protecting the privacy of individual students, and their families.

STRATEGIES FOR MINIMISING ILLEGAL DRUG USE

1. Advertise widely that illicit drug use, possession and supply in the school is unacceptable and, when detected, will result in serious consequences, including police and parental involvement.
2. Reinforce the unacceptability of illicit drugs in schools by consistently carrying through on stated actions.
3. Identify consequences and apply them consistently and fairly to users and suppliers.

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4. Establish an environment in which all school community members have enough care and concern for each other that they will confidentially pass on information about people using, carrying and/or selling drugs.
5. Implement education programs which reinforce consequences of having illicit drugs at school.
6. Ensure that detection and deterrent processes are maintained and sustained.
7. Inform the whole community about the processes, possible consequences and potential outcomes of being found with drugs at school.
8. Review and evaluate strategies and procedures regularly and revise them as required.

RELATED POLICIES

First Aid Policy