

DRUG POLICY

PURPOSE

- Promote and maintain a health-promoting school environment in which the well-being of all school community members is paramount.
- Identify the role of the school in the prevention of drug related problems
- Document the school community's agreed position on, and accepted procedures for, dealing with drug related incidents.
- Increase the knowledge and understanding of students, school staff, and family/whanau about drug issues.

OBJECTIVES:

- Drug education will be taught as part of a comprehensive health education programme consistent with the Health and P.E. New Zealand Curriculum.
- Staff involvement in the administration of drugs can be requested, but only if written authority including a disclaimer, is received by parents/guardians.
- Adults will not smoke or drink alcohol when in direct contact with school pupils.
- When contacting parents/guardians in a drug related incident staff should make very sure they are speaking to the correct person before disclosing the nature of the incident. Staff are advised against leaving explicit messages on answering machines.
- Where possible parents/caregivers should be invited to come in to the school to be advised of the situation.

Handling Situations Involving Cannabis

Although every situation is unique, the following actions and approaches are recommended. A member of the school's senior management team may take the role of case manager, managing the disciplinary and administrative aspects of the incident. The case manager may also refer the student for more therapeutic interventions.

Situation 1: The suspected use of cannabis by a student is impacting on their school performance and behaviour.

Recommended Approach:

- Monitor the situation and gather all the facts.
- Adopt a sensible reasoned approach.
- If drug use is only suspected, discuss the observable facts and ask the student what conclusions they would draw from these facts.
- Express only concerns that can be substantiated and avoid accusations of drug use where there is no evidence. Focus on the student's behaviour, their attitudes towards their work, and their relationships with their teachers, peers, and parents.

Situation 2: The student is found in possession of cannabis and other illegal drugs on the school premises.

Recommended Approach:

- Secure, label and store the cannabis in the presence of a witness for the legal requirements relating to controlled drugs in schools.
- Appoint a case manager to investigate and document the incident and to deal with the immediate consequences for the student.
- Notify the student's parents or caregivers.
- Interview the student. Ask why the cannabis was brought to school.
- Notify the police.
- Develop an appropriate response in consultation with parents, caregivers, whanau and other staff.

Situation 3: Immediate response when a student is showing signs of being under the influence of cannabis or is found using cannabis at school.

Recommended Approach:

- Check that first-aid procedures and responsibilities are known and available.
- Ascertain what risks the student poses to themselves and others, such as self-injury, class disruption or violence.
- Appoint a case manager.
- Ascertain who needs to be notified – the principal, a case manager, the student's parents or caregivers, a first-aid officer, an ambulance.
- Remain calm and reassuring – don't respond by becoming angry or judgmental but speak calmly and quietly.
- Keep the student in a safe, quiet, and private location until they are taken home by a parent or caregiver.
- Monitor the student at regular intervals.
- Secure, label and store any cannabis in the presence of a witness.
- Notify the police.

Situation 4: Responding to a cannabis-related incident when the student is not under the influence of the drug.

Recommended Approach:

- The case manager should interview the student and use this interview as a basis for further intervention and the development of an appropriate school response. Determine:

- Whether the drug use is an isolated incident
- What the patterns of use are, that is, when and where the cannabis was taken,
- how often it was used, who else was involved, and how it was obtained.
- Contact the parents or caregivers and ask them to a meeting at the school. If they are unavailable immediately, request an urgent appointment.
- Protect the student's privacy by discussing the incident only with those directly involved, for example, the Principal and the student's parents or caregivers.
- Inform the student that they can attend class and that the matter will be dealt with in the presence of parents or caregivers and relevant staff. Inform the student that confidentiality should be maintained and that they should not discuss the matter with other students.

Possible sanctions for cannabis-related incidents:

If the incident is isolated or experimental, sanctions could include:

- Participation in an intervention programme
- Stand-down or suspension with a contract and intervention
- Community service, either within or outside school.

If the incident is a recurrence or of a more serious nature, follow the rules and guidelines for schools in Guidance for Principals and Boards of Trustees on Stand-downs, Suspensions, Exclusions, and Expulsions.

INTOXICATION

From Alcohol:

Signs of alcohol intoxication may include staggering, a strong smell of alcohol and slurred speech.

Note: It is a waste of time attempting to counsel an intoxicated person. When they are sober, they are unlikely to remember much of what they talked about.

From Other Drugs:

The signs and effects of intoxication could vary with different drugs. Students may be quiet, withdrawn, excitable, in a trance-like state, or generally confused. Young people in this situation will probably be in need of specialist help. Seek professional advice.

Immediate Action to Take:

- Sit the young person down.
- Try to find out how much they have had to drink.
- Try to find out whether they have taken any other drugs.
- Check for other medical conditions.
- Check whether they may have hurt themselves or anyone else.
- Find out whether a family member can be contacted or can come to collect the student.

- If it appears that they may become unconscious, ask for an assistant to call an ambulance.
- Lie the person in the recovery position (to prevent the inhalation of vomit):
 - position their head to allow for drainage;
 - place their body in a stable position;
 - ensure that there is no pressure on their chest.
- If in doubt, seek medical advice and support.
- Where possible, confiscate and remove any remaining substances to prevent further intoxication or an overdose.
- Try to establish what substance has been taken (ask friends or peers).
- Consult with other members of staff who are closely associated with the student.

Issues to Consider:

- Identify what post-incident actions should be taken.
- Decide on the appropriate intervention to address the student's drug use.

VIOLENCE OR AGGRESSION

A young person can be physically or verbally violent or aggressive when under the influence of a drug. Signs of aggression may be:

- an inability or reluctance to talk;
- shouting or screaming at no particular person;
- constant repetition of a few words;
- confusion – not knowing where they are;
- hysteria;
- the use of physical violence.

Immediate Action to Take:

Depending on your assessment of the situation, take one or more of the following approaches:

- Stay calm and ensure the safety of everyone in the vicinity.
- If possible, remove any objects that the student could use in a dangerous manner.
- If the person is physically violent, threatening violence, or likely to harm themselves, call the Police.
- If the student is in a very irrational state, it would be prudent to call an ambulance or crisis team.
- If you feel physically safe, you could try talking them down.
- Do not challenge or threaten them by your tone of voice or body language.
- Acknowledge the student's anger, but also make it clear that violence is not acceptable.
- Explain that you may have to call in the Police if they continue to be aggressive.

Issues to Consider:

- Identify post-incident actions to address the student's drug-affected behaviour.
- Inform parents or caregivers.
- Later, hold a debriefing session for those who may have been affected by the incident.

POSSESSION OF ILLEGAL DRUGS***Immediate Action to Take:***

- Notify the school's senior management team.
- Make sure that another staff member is present, preferably a member of the management team.
- Hand the illegal drugs to the Police.

Note: If you keep illegal drugs on your person or on school premises, you may be liable for them and could be charged with possession (see Appendix 2: Legal Requirements Relating to Controlled Drugs in Schools).

Issues to Consider

- Develop a post-incident management plan for the student(s) involved.
- Inform each student's parents or caregivers.

OVERDOSES

Overdoses are potentially life threatening. There is a possibility of loss of consciousness and death due to airway obstruction by the tongue and regurgitation of vomit into the lungs. A drug overdose also has an impact on the brain's ability to function normally, and breathing may be reduced or stopped. Young people in this situation are in need of specialist help.

Immediate Action to Take

- Briefly check the safety at the scene.
- Check whether the student is breathing. You can check by:
 - looking, listening and feeling for breathing;
 - removing any visible objects from the student's mouth.

If the student is breathing, check the airway, tilt the head, lift the chin, and (if it not too difficult) turn the student onto their side. Dial 111 for an ambulance.

If the student is not breathing, give them two effective breaths, making up to five attempts. As soon as possible, have someone dial 111 for an ambulance. Check for circulation - look for signs of circulation (for example, the neck pulse, movement, or breathing, blue lips).

If the student has no circulation, give fifteen chest compressions, then two more breaths. Keep going until emergency services arrive or breathing and pulse return. Stay with the student in any case until emergency services arrive.

Issues to Consider:

- The safety of the student is paramount.
- Ask other people what substance has been taken.
- Support those people who are directly involved, such as close friends and the person who found the overdosed victim.
- Ensure that some school staff and students receive training in resuscitation from an organisation such as the Red Cross or St John Ambulance.

DISCLOSURE OF OWN DRUG USE

A young person who willingly reveals their own drug use is usually seeking help.

While some students will see this as their own issue to deal with, others may want someone else to “fix” the problem for them. They need to know that they can trust you and can feel confident about speaking honestly and openly. Young people are quick to sense negative attitudes towards them or their behaviour. Ultimately, it is the person themselves who needs to make a decision about their drug use.

Most young people do not develop major drug problems when offered a positive opportunity to address their drug use.

Immediate Action to Take:

Before taking action, check:

- Who else in the school might be contacted for help or guidance;
- What the school procedures are for referring a young person in need of help.

Remember:

- Not to force the issue by attempting to extract too much detailed information;
- Not to make assumptions, because they may be wrong or only partly true;
- To get as clear and accurate a picture of the young person’s situation as you can;
- To listen to the young person without imposing your own values and judgments about drug use on them;
- That drug use by a young person does not necessarily indicate addiction.

Issues to consider In deciding on what might be an appropriate intervention to help the young person deal with their drug use, consider the following:

- Is the young person using drugs in a hazardous way?
- How should the family/whanau be informed?
- Are there peers who could be supportive
- What help, within either the school or the community, is available for this young person?

DISCLOSURE OF ANOTHER'S DRUG USE

Revealing the drug use of someone else (a friend, a family member, or some other person) usually indicates that the young person is concerned about the effect that drugs have on another individual or that someone else's drug use is affecting their lives.

They need to know that they are believed and that they can feel confident about speaking openly and honestly.

Immediate Action to Take:

- Assure the student of your confidentiality in discussing drug use by another person.
- Listen to the young person without imposing your own judgments and values about drug use.
- Obtain a clear and accurate picture of the young person's situation.
- Assure the young person that it is not their fault.
- If the problem is that another member of the student's family is using drugs, seek professional advice in helping the student to understand the impact of drug use on individuals within a family.
- If the person thought to be using drugs is a student within the school, make contact with the student concerned and raise the issue.
- If that student is willing, follow the actions for young people who have self-disclosed.

Issues to Consider:

- Explore opportunities for the young person to obtain ongoing support to cope with the issue, such as through counselling, by joining a support group, or from a community agency.
- If the "someone else" is another student in the school, identify ways of dealing with their issues.
- Reassure students that the information will be treated with confidentiality, and make sure that they understand the need for confidentiality if necessary.