

# DRUG POLICY

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Mater Dei College is committed to enhancing the health and well-being of its students and staff and providing a safe learning environment.

Drug abuse inhibits health and the learning process. Thus, this is a major area of focus for prevention and a high priority for the entire College community.

Drug use is a complex issue which stems from a combination of many contributing factors. This policy and subsequent procedures have been developed in consultation with staff, students and parents. It provides a framework to address tobacco, alcohol and other drug related problems in a comprehensive, caring and consistent manner.

The Mater Dei College community does not tolerate drug misuse. Being under the influence of drugs, and/or the possession, sale and/or trading of drugs at school or at/on school related activities is an indication that the student involved no longer wishes to be a member of the Mater Dei Community. Any such involvement will be treated in this light.

This policy and the College Health Education programme are consistent with the State Government's policy framework which emphasises two principles:

- First and foremost, **opposition to drug abuse** and
- Second, **harm reduction**.

## AIMS

- To promote and maintain health awareness within the school environment.
- To identify the role of Mater Dei College community in the prevention of drug related problems.
- To document the College community's agreed position on, and acceptance of, procedures for dealing with drug related incidents and problems.

## PREVENTION OF UNSAFE AND UNLAWFUL DRUG USE

The College aims to address the unsafe and unlawful use of drugs through:

- A comprehensive Drug Education Programme within the Health Education Curriculum and through cohesive and coordinated 'cross-curricula' links through Years 7 – 12.

- The Health Education Programme.
- Involvement of students in the Mater Dei College Drug Policy and Drug Education Curriculum.
- Clearly stated school rules that define acceptable behaviour for the school community.
- A well defined, fair and just intervention process, that is clearly understood by all members of the College Community.
- Student Focus Groups which assess the needs of the College Community in this area.
- Regular promotion of drug free messages.
- Keeping the School Community well informed about drugs issues.
- Fostering links between the College and the Community.
- Ensuring that the Mater Dei College Drug Policy and Health Education Programme are reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis.

## **INTERVENTION**

Mater Dei College does not permit any student, regardless of age, while on school grounds or at a school function to:

- Smoke and/or possess tobacco products (Tobacco Control Act).
- Consume and/or possess alcohol (Liquor Licensing Act).
- Inhale solvents (Child Welfare Act).
- Possess/use/sell/supply prohibited drugs (Misuse of Drugs Act).
- Possess and/or use drug related equipment, such as syringes, bongos or pipes (Misuse of Drugs Act).
- Use prescribed or over the counter products and medications inappropriately (Poisons Act).

Incidents will be dealt with in a positive and supportive manner in the best interests of the student, staff and other persons concerned.

## **ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to their children and the College to strive to achieve common goals of education and the Catholic ethos. This includes being informed and about, actively involved in and supporting the College Drug Policy.

The College Community cannot effectively address the issue of student drug use without parental support. The College alone cannot solve or prevent problems. It is essential that the messages for positive health behaviours are consistent at school and at home.

All Parents/Guardians should be encouraged to seek further information about alcohol, tobacco and other drug related issues through drug education programmes, regardless of whether they think their children are using drugs or not.

To this end, College drug education programmes encourage some home activity whereby the student can interact with the Parents/Guardians on the issue of drugs. In the instance of an alcohol, tobacco or other drug related problem on school premises or at a school function the Parents/Guardians will be contacted and involved in the intervention process.

## **GENERAL STATEMENT OF CONSEQUENCES**

1. Wherever possible before sanctions are imposed, the health and welfare of the individual involved will be considered in the context of the College environment and its support services.
2. Consequences and sanctions are to reflect the details of the incident, including the substance involved, the behavioural history of the student identified as having a part in the incident and the impact on other students. Parents will be contacted.
3. Sanctions can be any appropriate action or penalty as determined by the College. This may include exclusion from enrolment at the College in accordance with guidelines established by the Catholic Education Commission of WA.

### **Analgesics, tobacco, alcohol and other substances**

Students found inappropriately using, possessing or supplying analgesics, tobacco, alcohol or other substances, will be liable to a range of sanctions.

### **Illegal drugs**

The possession, use and/or sale of illegal drugs is an offence against the law. The College reserves the right to inform police and involve them in the investigative process.

1. Any student found using or in possession of illegal drugs will be withdrawn/suspended. The student's parents and the police will be informed.
2. Any student found **selling or supplying** illegal drugs will be expelled and the incident reported to police.

### **Duty of care**

Where there is reasonable suspicion of drugs on school property or at any school function, the College reserves the right to conduct a search of the suspected student's property.

**Students should be aware that being in the presence of drugs constitutes involvement in a prohibited activity.**

## **GENERAL SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING**

Drug related problems may include those that arise from personal use and use by another person or persons.

Mater Dei College believes that students with drug related problems need to be supported through both pastoral and professional interventions.