SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

St Joseph’s School is a place of learning. As such, students have the right to learn and teachers have the right to teach in an environment that is safe and supportive.

In 1996 the Australian School Students’ Alcohol and Drugs (ASSAD) National Survey indicated that the usage of alcohol, tobacco and other illicit substances had increased among Years 7 to 12 students. With this in mind, it is essential to respond to the issue of drugs in our school community and to address the issue in a proactive way.

RATIONALE

MISSION STATEMENT

“St Joseph’s School offers a holistic education within a Catholic Christian environment whilst developing and valuing the uniqueness of the individual as we encourage each student to become a life-long learner.”

The mission statement of St Joseph’s School stresses the idea of “a holistic education”, which suggests there is a part for knowledge and practice of healthy lifestyles. Implicit in becoming a “life long learner” is the practice of a healthy lifestyle in a safe environment free from substances which can potentially cause harm and where respect for human dignity is valued and promoted.

The absence of harmful substances and pressure to use them is therefore critical to the successful fulfilment of our mission.

GOSPEL VALUES

Respect, personal dignity, individual worth, freedom, integrity, trust, justice, understanding, forgiveness, honesty, care, compassion.

DEFINITIONS

Substance Abuse

Substance abuse takes many forms and includes using illegal drugs such as marijuana and speed, using the so-called legal drugs (nicotine and alcohol) as a minor, abuse of prescription medication and over-the-counter medication such as Panadol and abuse of substances used for other purposes such as deodorant and glue.

Illegal Substances

Illegal substances are those that are unlawful and therefore involve criminal activity.
Illicit Substances

Illicit substances are those which are legal, but not allowed in the school environment. These would include tobacco, alcohol, glue, solvents, prescription drugs and are often termed unsanctioned substances.

POLICY STATEMENT

St Joseph’s School forbids students (of whatever age) whilst on school premises, at any school function, excursion or camp to:

- Smoke and/or possess tobacco products;
- Consume and/or possess alcohol or to be under the influence of alcohol;
- Deliberately inhale volatile substances (solvents) or be affected by such substances;
- Possess and/or use pharmaceutical drugs for non-medical purposes or be affected by such use;
- Possess and/or use illegal drugs or be under the influence of such drugs;
- Possess and/or use drug related equipment such as syringes, bongs or pipes (except in the case of lawful medical use);
- Possess materials that promote the gratuitous use of drugs;
- Make inappropriate reference to the use of illegal or unsanctioned substances in casual talk;
- Apply pressure on peers to become involved in circumstances involving illegal or unsanctioned substances.

Depending on individual circumstances, students who do not abide by the above policy must expect to be asked to leave the school community.

CONSEQUENCES

St Joseph’s School has education, prevention and intervention policies and procedures in place. These procedures reflect the school’s determination to be proactive in this area and its ability to react if necessary.

Education

Drugs education is one component of a healthy lifestyle curriculum which begins in Stage 1 and carries through to Year 12. It is a program that is embedded in the total curriculum of the school, not seen in isolation, but a part of the global educational experience of the students. As such, teachers are intimately involved in its delivery, while calling upon the resources of the community when and where appropriate.

Prevention

St Joseph’s School is proactive in this area by:

- communicating openly with the entire community concerning drugs issues;
- provide appropriate professional development for staff;
- continually evaluate education programs;
- communicate policy clearly to students and parents;
- use community resources when appropriate and/or necessary.
**Intervention**

St Joseph’s School will

- identify students at risk;
- supply information to students and parents;
- build links with service providers in the community;
- respond to incidents according to guidelines handed down by Toowoomba CEO, Brisbane CEO and the Queensland School Drug Education Strategy;
- support students involved in incidents.

Bob Knight     Dan Manahan  
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Review 2013