

# Policy



**Catholic  
Education**  
Diocese of Cairns

*Learning with Faith and Vision*

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## Drugs (illicit and unsanctioned substances) in Catholic schools

### Purpose

This policy provides guidance to all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Cairns for the promotion of safe drug-free environments and the management of drug related issues. These processes will be expressed through locally developed school policies and procedures.

### Policy

Schools in the Diocese of Cairns will implement appropriate policies and strategies to ensure schools are free from illicit and unsanctioned substances and their influence, consistent with schools' commitment to the health and safety of all members of their school communities.

All schools will implement appropriate curriculum-related drug education programs.

Individual schools will manage prevention and intervention strategies, including their consequences. These actions will be consistent with gospel values and legislative requirements.

School policies and procedures relating to illicit and unsanctioned substances will be developed in consultation with school communities and be widely promoted within those communities such that the school's expectations, and the consequences for non-compliance, are well understood.

School policies will reflect more serious consequences for those selling, sharing or promoting illicit drugs in school communities.

### Rationale

Cairns Catholic schools are guided by Gospel values in addition to operating within legislative requirements. All in our Catholic school communities have the right to have their safety and welfare protected. Catholic schools play significant roles in preparing students for living in society. Catholic schools can contribute to reducing problems relating to the use and possession of illicit and unsanctioned substances by educating staff, by making information available to parents and students, by providing positive role models, by promoting health and by responding to the students' welfare needs.

Parents and caregivers are crucial partners in the overall education process. A key focus of any healthy school environment should be an education process that empowers parents and equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to support their children during their formative years, particularly with regard to drugs.

It is acknowledged school policies will reflect the expectations and context of their host communities but these should always reflect both legal obligations and the expression of the school's Catholic values. For example, consider:

*No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so you can endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)*

*"I have the right to do anything," you say – but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything" – but I will not be mastered by anything. (1 Corinthians 6:12)*

*Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. (Romans 5:3-5)*

For the purpose of this policy **illicit substances** cover any substance or item whose possession is prohibited under the *Drugs Misuse Act 1986*. **Unsanctioned substances** refer to any substance whose possession, while not illegal, is in contravention of school rules (eg tobacco products, alcohol and certain medicines). This will also include the misuse of prescription medicines.

## Consequences

The aim of every school should be the creation of a safe and secure educational environment in which each individual is cherished and respected. Where breaches of this environment occur, policies and procedures should be in place that supports the student and his/her family to face the issues involved.

A drugs education program, covering medical drugs, tobacco and alcohol, as well as illicit drugs, should be a fundamental starting point for every school. Expectations of students, as well as consequences for breaching these expectations, need to be defined very clearly.

1. Each school in the Cairns Diocese will develop a whole school Drugs Education program that includes an integrated, cross-curricular focus as well as drug education for students, parents and staff. Schools should consider the use of the nationally ratified [Principles of School Drug Education](#) to guide their coverage of these issues. According to these principles, drug education is most effective when it:
  - Is located within the curriculum framework and employs interactive strategies to develop student's knowledge, skills, attitudes and values;
  - Provides accurate information and meaningful learning activities that focus on real life contexts and challenges;
  - Is embedded within a whole school approach to health and wellbeing
  - Includes pastoral care for students at risk and involved in drug related incidents
  - Is taught by teachers who are resourced adequately to deliver the program
  - Responds to local needs and is culturally appropriate
2. Each Catholic school in the Diocese of Cairns will develop its own set of school-based policies, principles and procedures, consistent with this policy, for handling issues related to drugs. These documents will be easily accessible by staff, students and parents within the school community and reflect the school's duty of care to all in its community. In managing a drug related incident school responses should be consistent with the context provided by these documents. In all cases this should involve a priority for the wellbeing of students and will be undertaken in partnership with parents. The school policy should also identify serious consequences for those selling, sharing or promoting illicit drugs in school communities.
3. Principals will assess the need for referral to other agencies for educational, legal, medical and counselling support. This may involve liaison with the CES Child Protection Officer and the Police Child Protection and Investigation Unit (CPIU)
4. Police should be called to collect illicit substances found on school grounds
5. Incidents involving drugs should be documented and filed, with photographic evidence when required

## Reflection

### LEGISLATION

*Queensland Government Drug Misuse Act 1986*

*Queensland Government Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011*

### RESOURCES

Recommended websites include:

[Positive Choices Web Portal](#) – a nationally endorsed portal for teachers, parents and students, containing information and education resources on alcohol and drugs.

[Alcohol and Drug Foundation](#) (ADF) – Government funded foundation delivering project funding, information resources and community support. ADF also have resources specifically for [schools and parents](#).  
[The Queensland Government Alcohol and Other Drugs Education Program](#)  
Alcohol and Drug Information Service Help Hotline – 1800 177 833  
[Queensland Health Drug Information portal](#)

## See also (Related Policies and Guidelines)

### **CATHOLIC EDUCATION POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS**

Policy: Work Health and Safety

Codes of Conduct: Staff, and Parents and Volunteers

Cairns Catholic Education Statement of Principles for Employment

Policy: Alcohol in schools