



Policy	
Policy no:	
Approval date:	06/2018
Previous review dates:	2024
Next review date:	2029
Author:	Assistant Executive Director – Strategic Governance and Engagement

# Drugs (illicit and unsanctioned substances) in Catholic schools

## Reflection

"But always seek to do good to one another and to all." 1 Thessalonians 5:15

## 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 communicated through schools' Whole School Behaviour Plans and enrolment agreements.

## 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, documented clearly in the School's Whole School Behaviour Support Plan.

## Rationale

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 (e.g. tobacco products, alcohol, vapes and certain medicines). This will also include the misuse of prescription medicines.

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.

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 procedures 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.

## Outcomes

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, CEDC policies and procedures (including the school-based Whole School Behaviour Support Plan) should be in place that support the student and their family to face the issues involved.

Each school in the Cairns Diocese will implement a drug education program aligned to the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, V9). 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 responsive to the diversity of our schools and school community.

In managing a drug related incident school responses should be consistent with the context provided by the Whole School Behaviour Support Plan. In all cases this should involve a priority for the wellbeing of all students, including those implicated in the incident, and will be undertaken in partnership with parents. The Whole School Behaviour Plan should also identify serious consequences for those selling, sharing or promoting illicit drugs in school communities.

Principals will assess the need for referral to other agencies for educational, legal, medical and counselling support. This may involve liaison with the Catholic Education, Diocese of Cairns Engagement and Wellbeing team.

Police should be called to collect illicit substances found on school grounds.

Incidents involving drugs should be documented in the Drugs Register on the Engage database, with photographic evidence when required.

## Enquiries

Director Engagement Wellbeing and Learning

Director School Effectiveness

## Related Directives, Policies and Procedures

### 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](#)

### **CEDC related 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