

# DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY AND PROCEDURE<sup>1</sup>

## Definitions

**Drugs:** A wide variety of substances may be considered to be drugs, including tobacco, alcohol, prescribed and over-the-counter-medicines and prohibited substances such as cannabis, LSD, heroin, cocaine and amphetamines. Even solvents, petrol, adhesives and other chemical agents may be misused to alter bodily or mental functions. The context in which the substance is used determines whether a substance should be considered a drug or not.

**Dealing:** Selling, donating, swapping, supplying, distributing, trading or any form of exchange of prescribed medicines and prohibited substances such as cannabis, LSD, heroin, cocaine, amphetamine, MDMA etc. is viewed as dealing.

**Screening:** Blood or urine tests conducted under medical supervision.

## Position Statement:

The School does not condone the inappropriate use of drugs. All members of the school community (pupils, parents, staff and governors) should convey this value by their action and teachings.

In terms of the Code of Conduct, pupils are not permitted:

- the smoking of tobacco and prohibited substances
- the use of drugs
- the consumption of alcohol
- the inappropriate use of medicines
- the inappropriate use of solvents, inhalants and/or other chemical agents,
- to be under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs,
- the possession of drug related paraphernalia such as cigarette papers, pipes etc.

Dealing is likewise not permitted.

According to the Code of Conduct the possession of, use of or dealing in drugs is not permitted while a pupil is in school uniform, participating in an activity sanctioned by the School or when he/she is in any public place where he/she is likely – by reason of any utterance or conduct on his or her part – to be identified by the public as a pupil of the Fish Hoek High School. The consequences for breaching the Code of Conduct are set out in the Code. In addition to the appropriate punishment the consequences may include the drawing up of a contract relating to rehabilitation and corrective action between all the parties. Punishment may include suspension or suspension with a view to expulsion.

## Policy

The School strives to serve the pupils and community in partnership with the parents/guardians. The approach to drug-related issues is supportive and restorative rather than punitive (without denying the provisions of the Code of Conduct). The School recognizes that a wide variety of addictive drugs is available in the community and that our pupils are exposed to these substances through many channels. The pupils are vulnerable to drug abuse and should be equipped to deal with the problem.

The situation is compounded by the fact that the pupils, parents and teachers seldom possess the skills and information required to counsel pupils. The School therefore accepts the challenge of training staff and educating pupils and parents in order to equip the community to deal with the challenge of drug abuse.

Drug dependence is acknowledged to be a primary, chronic and progressive illness. The School will therefore attempt to support pupils who need help in ending their dependence upon drugs and thus protect their school careers. Where the pupils and parents do not wish to accept the help offered to them the School will have no choice but to apply the Code of Conduct and take whatever action is deemed necessary, including suspension with a view to expulsion.

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## **Prevention**

The School undertakes to train teachers and present prevention and information sessions to pupils and parents/guardians. Where necessary, outside resources will be employed.

## **Searches**

Where a staff member in authority reasonably suspects that a pupil has a drug in his or her possession, the pupil's person and locker may be searched by the staff member or an appointed nominee. Such a search should occur in the presence of the pupil concerned, a person of the pupil's choice who is readily available as a support, and a second adult witness.

## **Screening**

Where a staff member in authority reasonably suspects that a pupil is under the influence of a drug the pupil may immediately be sent to an appointed nominee for screening. Pupils guilty of smoking offenses will also be screened. The intention is to identify a young person who may be moving into addiction, not to victimize pupils.

## **Action by the School**

Staff will be selected and trained in handling drug-related cases. Guidelines for investigating such cases are included in the Substance Abuse for Educators (SAFE) manual used by the trained staff, who may call in professional assistance when necessary.

Every case will be dealt with confidentially and in consultation with parents/guardians.

Individual symptoms will not be investigated, but a pattern of indicators will be considered. The indicators may include a decline in schoolwork and achievements, withdrawal from school activities, and changes in attitudes and behaviour. Only rumours that are consistent with other indicators will be investigated.

The School may require a contract to be drawn up between the parties, which could include:

- the treatment options agreed upon by all relevant parties;
- a screening programme;
- an expectation that attitudes, behaviour and achievements will improve;
- that any Counsellor, therapist or outside care-giver involved is authorised by the parents/guardian to furnish the School with progress reports;
- provision for the renegotiation of the contract.

Such a contract would be broken if the pupil and/or parent/guardian take it upon themselves to stop treatment, screening or any other provision of the contract. In the event of breach of contract the normal disciplinary procedures provided for by the Code of Conduct would apply and the pupil might be suspended with a view to expulsion.

A contract might not always be appropriate. The School reserves the right to recommend that a pupil be transferred elsewhere to complete his or her education if it is in the interest of the pupil and/or the School.

## **Costs**

Parents/guardians are responsible for all the costs involved in a drug-related incident, including screening and counselling.

## **Acknowledgements**

Parents/guardians are required to acknowledge by signature that they have read and understood this Policy when enrolling their children

## **Fish Hoek High School Protects**

The above policy has found expression in the "Fish Hoek High School Protects".

As a school we are committed to continuing to provide our pupils with an outstanding education. To do this we have to protect the environment in which this education takes place. This implies a zero tolerance approach to drugs.

**Zero tolerance means decisive first time intervention that protects the school and comes to the assistance of any pupils that may be involved. The approach must both deter and rehabilitate.**

Drugs are a curse. Their use and distribution continues to destroy families and whole communities. We are deeply concerned at the increased availability and the aggressive pedalling in our community. As teenagers assert their growing individuality they are vulnerable to risky behaviour and make easy targets. We must be seen to be protecting them decisively and compassionately. To this end a voluntary drug-testing programme called "Fish Hoek High School Protects" was introduced in 2009.

Then intention is to assist our pupils to say no to drugs with the knowledge that they could be tested at school. It is hoped that this knowledge will both deter and provide an "escape" when tempted amongst peers. It is equally to rehabilitate.

On a first positive test there would be no punitive action, only round table counselling and support together with the family.

Pupils will be selected on a random basis at random times throughout the year. The process would be overseen by both a member of the school's management and pastoral team. The school will be responsible for the first test. Should a pupil test positive, subsequent tests as part of a programme would be at the family's expense. Pupils will be notified of their selection on the day of testing and the school will notify the parents the same day with the results. Pupils' names will not be used in the testing procedure, simply their admission number to ensure confidentiality.

It is our hope that the project will be enthusiastically supported by all our families. There is enormous power in numbers. New families will be asked to sign on to the project early each year.