

# **STUDENT DRUG POLICY**

## **Substance Misuse: Alcohol/Tobacco/Illicit Drugs**



**St Francis Xavier College  
Berwick, Beaconsfield & Officer  
April 2006  
Ratified by College Board April 2006  
Amended September 2009  
Ratified by College Board October 2009  
Amended July 2012  
Ratified by College Board October 2012**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*St. Francis Xavier College is a Catholic community that is educative and supportive. We have a clear purpose: the development of a person of competence, conscience and compassion formed in the Christian tradition; one who is guided by a sense of hope and self-belief and who will be of service in the world. We recognise God's presence in our lives by celebrating and pursuing personal excellence and by living courageously with optimism and respect for all.*

### **1. PREAMBLE**

This policy is based on principles of harm minimisation and emanates from our objective to have students develop a sense of self respect, self discipline and responsibility in all areas of their lives. It aims to achieve a balance between the individual rights of the students and the welfare of the St Francis Xavier College community.

This response is developed in accordance with the foundational Christian principles in our Vision Statement of competence, compassion and conscience and in the general context of the Jesuit Social Services national study examining how Catholic Schools best respond to incidents of drug use (Keeping them connected, Norden, March 2005 2008).

A harm minimisation policy recognises the need for strategies to reduce the risks and harm to those continuing to use drugs and to the wider community, whilst taking care that such strategies do not encourage or normalise drug use (Drug Issues in Catholic Schools, Catholic Education Office Melbourne, 2009). This is the policy context in which the Catholic Education System seeks to develop an effective response to drug misuse by students in Catholic Schools and is consistent with the National School Drug Education Strategy (DETYA, 1999) and Principles for School Drug Education (DEST, 2004).

### **2. POLICY OBJECTIVES**

- To best respond to the interests of the student concerned, while respecting the duty of care to other students and staff;
- To set in place clear guidelines that outline roles and responsibilities for those dealing with issues related to drug/alcohol/tobacco use;
- To develop and document a comprehensive drug policy that addresses both prevention and intervention in order to respond to such incidents in a planned and coordinated manner.

### **3. DEFINITIONS**

#### **3.1 Drug**

The World Health Organisation defines a "drug" as any substance which alters the physical and/or psychological function of the body when taken internally, excepting food and water. Examples include, but are not limited to, analgesics, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, amphetamines, narcotics and solvents.

#### **3.2 The School Setting**

"School setting" includes all situations that occur

- during school hours;
- while students are at a school camp or official College activity outside of normal hours; or
- while students are in school uniform.

### **3.3 The Response Team**

The “Response Team” consists of

- Deputy Principal - Head of Campus;
- House Coordinator;
- School Counsellor; and
- First Aid Officer.

## **4. POLICY STATEMENT**

St Francis Xavier College does not permit students in a school setting to

- smoke or possess tobacco products or be in the company of persons where tobacco is used;
- deliberately inhale volatile substances (solvents);
- possess, use or provide prescribed drugs for non-medical purposes;
- possess, use or provide illicit drugs;
- possess, use or provide drug related equipment (except in the case of lawful medical use); or
- possess, consume or provide alcohol.

## **5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES**

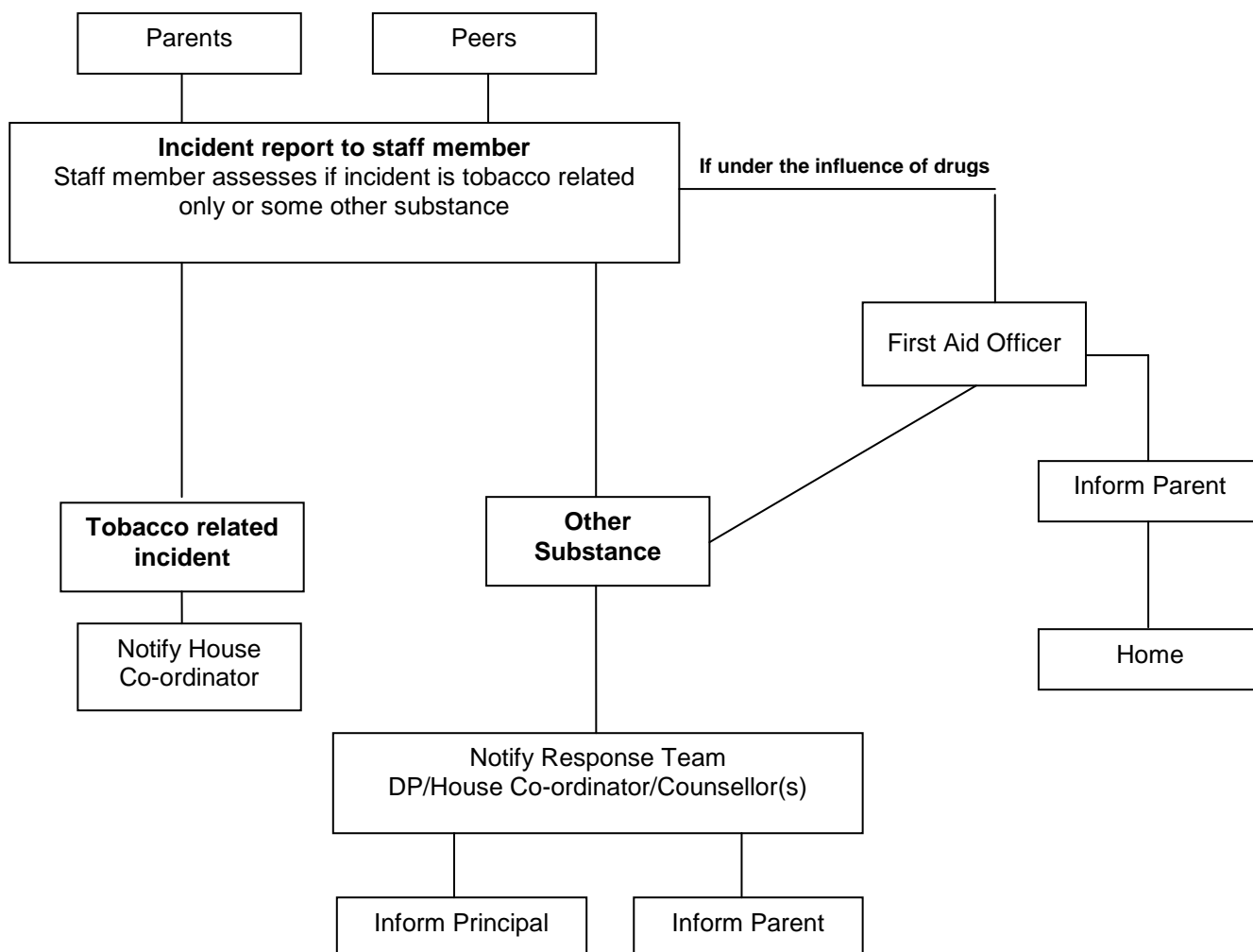
### **5.1 Prevention**

The key elements of a comprehensive and coordinated approach to dealing with student welfare regarding alcohol/tobacco/drug related issues include facilitating a health promoting environment, a supportive school administration, an effective drug and health curriculum and identifying students at risk, monitoring, referring and counselling such students.

### **5.2 Immediate response to incidents of drug misuse**

When an incident of drug misuse by a student within the school setting is alleged, it is important to be able to identify whether the incident represents a single, one-off event, ranging through to being part of compulsive or addictive behaviour.

All such incidents that occur within the school setting are considered serious, but the appropriate response by the school authorities should be influenced by assessment of the particular circumstances. Research into good practice indicates schools should set very clear boundaries of what is expected and encouraged in terms of student behaviour and performance, but must also be able to move with a degree of flexibility and continuing engagement, even when these standards are not met [Jesuit Social Services, “Keeping them connected” (2005), 36].



The staff member first notified of the alleged incident should

- STEP 1: Establish and respond to the student's and others' immediate safety;
- STEP 2: If the student appears under the influence of a drug other than tobacco, immediately escort him/her to the First Aid Officer. The College will attempt to notify the parents before seeking medical advice unless in an emergency, or as soon as possible following referral;
- STEP 3: If the student is not under the influence of a drug but has been involved in an incident of substance misuse, remove him/her from the company of other students immediately;
- STEP 4: Inform a member of the Response Team as soon as possible; and
- STEP 5: Document the incident and file with the Principal.

**The response team will**

- STEP 1: Advise the Principal that an incident has occurred;
- STEP 2: Establish and validate the facts by interviewing relevant staff and students;
- STEP 3: Where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting drug use or possession, the Principal or Deputy Principal - Head of Campus may, in the presence of the student(s) and another teacher, search the student's locker; and
- STEP 4: Ensure parents have been informed that an incident has occurred.

### **5.2.1 Assessing the incident**

Central to a response to an incident of drug misuse within the school setting is an assessment by the Response Team of the significance of the incident in relation to patterns of drug behaviour.

Incidents may include:

Experimental: constituting single or short-term use

Recreational/Social: controlled use in social settings

Situational: Drugs being used for a specific reason

Compulsive: Frequently using, possibly daily with capacity for withdrawal if use stops

Intensive: High doses with capacity for binge taking

### **5.2.2 Key issues relevant to the decision-making**

- context of the drug misuse as defined above;
- balancing between assessment of the health needs of the individual student concerned and the duty of care to other students;
- confidentiality and privacy requirements;
- significant drug misuse by young people is one of the clearest indicators of an underlying mental health disorder (Norden 2001);
- while the predominant goal of the school environment is to provide a setting for educational achievement, it is also perhaps the only nurturing environment which many students will ever experience.

### **5.3 Follow-up procedures to incidents of drug misuse**

When the rules have been contravened action to be taken is enforced at the discretion of the Response Team and the Principal. All incidents will be dealt with on a *strictly individual basis*. The range of responses includes, but is not limited to

- informing and consulting parents;
- community service;
- loss of any leadership position held;
- referral to welfare team and/or external agencies;
- being sent home from camps and excursions;
- suspension from school;
- change in enrolment status, including implementing conditions for on-going attendance, negotiated transfer; or notifying police.

### **5.4 Illegal drugs**

The buying, selling and possession of illegal drugs in school is an offence against the law. St Francis Xavier College will view such conduct as a very serious matter. Such an offence is particularly serious when the motive is financial gain, ie trafficking. The College would of necessity involve Police in such an eventuality and the Principal has the right to terminate the enrolment of any student involved in buying/selling/possession of illicit substances at school.'

## **6. DISCIPLINARY ACTION IN THE EVENT OF STUDENTS SMOKING**

This response is based on the guidelines and suggested policy as contained in the QUIT document "Why can't we smoke at school?" The aim of the intervention is to

provide a positive smoke free environment where support is offered to students who choose not to smoke and also to those attempting not to smoke.

Smoking is not permitted in any building and areas in the broader community. For health and safety reasons, the College community mirrors this position. Staff and visitors must also realise that the College is smoke and alcohol free except for specific functions designated by the Principal.

As a general statement smoking is not permitted

- in any area of the school property;
- at any school related activity or function attended by students; or
- at any other time or place where students are in school uniform.

Students who smell of tobacco or are in company where tobacco is used may also be deemed to have contravened College rules. House Coordinators will administer disciplinary action through the House System.

### **Incident Response**

#### First incident

- House Coordinator informs parents.
- Student receives a Thursday afternoon detention.
- Review agreement and reiterate school smoking policy procedures.
- Inform Head of Campus and welfare team of repeat incident.

#### Second incident

- House Coordinator informs parents.
- Student receives an internal or external suspension based on consultation with Head of Campus and welfare team.
- Interview with House Coordinator or Head of Campus following suspension.

#### Third incident

- When a student continually disregards the school policy regarding smoking, the continued enrolment of the student at St Francis Xavier College will be discussed in an interview between the student, parent(s), House Coordinator or Head of Campus.

## **7. PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH STUDENT MEDICATIONS**

Medications are a necessary part of the healthcare of students with a temporary or permanent condition.

Medications should only be administered if a

- medical practitioner has prescribed them; or
- parent/guardian consent is obtained for “over-counter” medications.

### **Administration procedure**

- All medication needs for students must be supplied by parents/guardians in its original packaging, with the name and dosage of the medication clearly visible.
- All medication must be clearly labelled with the student’s name and year level.
- A completed Medication Form should accompany all medications to be dispensed.

- The First Aid Officer will only dispense the medication with parental/guardian consent and according to safe pharmacological practice.
- Medications should be left in the First Aid Office prior to the start of school and may be collected at the end of the day (3.30p.m.) to be taken home.
- Should medications be required regularly or for an ongoing condition, a small supply can be kept locked away in the First Aid Office for that student's use only.
- A record of all medications taken by students with the date and time taken will be kept in the First Aid Office.

#### **Exception for Asthma Medication**

"Reliever" broncho-dilators are exempt from the above administrative procedure, including Ventolin, Asmol and Bricanyl. Students are encouraged to keep their "puffers" with them to use as necessary to relieve the symptoms of Asthma.

An "Asthma Management Plan" should be completed and signed by the parents/guardians of such students and kept in the First Aid Office.

#### **References**

Keeping them connected: A national study examining how Catholic Schools can best respond to incidents of illicit drug use. Father Peter Norden SJ, 2005.

Keeping them connected – reducing drug-related harm in Australian schools from a Catholic Perspective. Drug and Alcohol Review. Father Peter Norden, 2008

Policy 2.13 Drug Issues in Catholic Schools, Catholic Education Office Melbourne, 2009

National School Drug Education Strategy, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 1999

Principles for School Drug Education, Department of Education, Science and Training, 2004.