



Drugs

Drugs Policy

Blackall Range Independent School

Drugs Policy

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to address the use of prescription, legal and illicit drugs at Blackall Range Independent School and to give guidance to teachers, parents, students and administrators on the consequences of a drug incident at the school, either on campus or at school functions.

Scope

This policy applies to employees, volunteers, parents/carers and students and to all school activities, including school social events, camps, excursions and sporting events in which the school may participate. Students travelling away from school on official school activities are automatically covered by the policy. The policy outlines the rationale, the responsibilities of all stakeholders and the procedures for dealing with drugs, prescription, legal and illegal, at Blackall Range Independent School (B.R.I.S.).

Responsibility

Principal

Point of Contact

Principal

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, a drug is defined as 'any substance which affects physical or mental functions'. As such, drugs include a range of materials, many of which are legal in our culture although prohibited from use at school. These include alcohol and tobacco products.

POLICY

Rationale and Objectives

The Primary objective of this policy is to provide for a school environment free of non medicinal drugs whether the drugs in question are legal or illegal.

The following values underpin all that follows in the policy and may need to be referred to when the policy itself is unclear in its application to one of the many situations which may arise.

Every student has the right to come to school to learn in an atmosphere free from the distractions and dangers imposed by drug use.

Parents have the right to expect that their children will be educated in an atmosphere free from the distractions and dangers imposed by drug use.

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the rights of students and parents are respected in this matter.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this policy is to the best of our knowledge and belief correct at the date of publication. However, no warranty or guarantee is or can be given by Blackall Range Independent School or any member of their staff, and no liability is or can be accepted for any loss or damage resulting from any person relying on or using the information contained in this policy.



Drugs

Drugs Policy

The school acknowledges that it shares responsibility with parents and the wider community to provide students and parents with factual information on drug misuse and advice on the legal questions surrounding the use of drugs. Principles underpinning the school's Drugs Policy are:

1. Parents and students have a right to be consulted in the formulation of the policy and to contribute to the ongoing application of the policy.
2. The school acknowledges that it shares with parents, responsibility to inform students of the best ways of resisting pressures to become involved in drug use and experiences to build their self esteem to the level where they feel confident to make informed decisions for themselves.
3. The school commits itself to deal compassionately with students who become involved in situations of illicit drug use but such treatment must always be given within the context of due regard for the needs and rights of the whole school community.
4. The school commits itself to work closely with the police and welfare agencies in this matter and with other schools which face common problems in this area.
5. Experience suggests that students who divulge information to staff of the school on drug matters sometimes do so at considerable risk to themselves. The school commits itself to the protection of students who have the courage to assist the school community in this way.
6. It is the responsibility of the Principal to advise the Executive on the formulation of policy and the responsibility of the Executive to support the school in the difficult decisions it may be called upon to make in these matters.
7. Teachers share with parents the responsibility for modeling appropriate drug usage both in and out of school. Teachers accept that they are under an obvious professional obligation to set an example to their students in this matter.
8. Although this policy refers directly to drugs, it also, by extension, applies to the implements involved in the use of drugs. Such implements indicate an intention to use the prohibited drug and will attract penalties consistent with the use of drugs at school.

Policy - Prescription Drugs

From time to time parents and/or Doctors may request that members of staff administer prescription and non prescription medications and natural therapies during school hours. All such requests **must** be referred to the Principal (or the Principal's nominee). If the Principal agrees that the situation requires supervised administration of medication the following procedures are to be followed:

1. The student's parents/guardians must make a written request to the Principal including instructions for the administration of the drug or natural remedies, and any special needs of the student.
2. The Principal will authorise a staff member to administer the medication.
3. Only the designated member of staff has this authority.
4. The designated member of staff must ensure that all medication is in a container labeled by a health care professional or pharmacist, showing:
 - The name of drug/natural therapy
 - Use by date
 - Name of medical practitioner / natural therapist
 - Name of student
 - Dosage
 - Frequency of administration

Substances that are not so labeled must not be administered.



Drugs

Drugs Policy

5. Non prescription medications such as analgesics are not to be administered by school staff unless the designated member of staff is a registered nurse or equivalent.
6. All medication is to be kept in a lockable cupboard.
7. An official register on the Administration of Drugs to students is to be kept by the designated member of staff.
8. Parents are to be notified in writing or via email of the school's policy including the requirement that the school takes no responsibility to ensure that medication/natural therapies is not out of date or that sufficient quantities of the medication are provided.
9. All unused medication is to be returned to parents when the parents inform the school in writing that medication/natural therapies are no longer needed or it is past the use-by date.
10. If a member of school staff becomes aware that a student has possession of a medication without written advice from a parent, or the parent's advice is inconsistent with the medical instructions provided, he/she should confiscate the medication, store it securely and notify the Principal. The Principal or designated member of staff will contact the parents.
11. The designated member of staff for the 2010 school year is (Russell Walker).

Policy - Legal drugs

There are clear legal sanctions governing the sale to and use of alcohol and cigarettes by minors. These legal sanctions apply at B.R.I.S. as in the rest of the community. It is, therefore, the schools policy that use of cigarettes and alcohol is banned on all school property and at school functions, activities or excursions where students are involved.

In formulating the policy the following has been considered:

1. Health and Safety legislation places a duty of care on the employer to provide a safe working environment.
2. It is not unlawful or discriminatory for an employer to ban or restrict smoking or use of alcohol on school premises or at school related activities.
3. Smoking is now banned in most states in enclosed public spaces.
4. It is illegal to supply cigarettes or alcohol to children less than 18 years of age.
5. It is illegal for persons under the age of 18 to purchase cigarettes and alcohol.
6. An employer may be held liable for illness resulting from passive smoking.
7. Most non-government schools in Queensland have a complete ban on smoking on school premises and at all school functions where students are involved, and most schools restrict the supply of alcohol at school functions.

The following applies in relation to the use of alcohol and cigarettes on school property or at school functions:

1. Students are prohibited from using alcohol and/or tobacco on school property or at school functions and activities.
2. At School functions where alcohol is served, it is the responsibility of accompanying parents and the School to see that the school policy and the law are observed.
3. Students who use alcohol at school or at a school activity will face the following consequences: counselling; involvement of parents; and other penalties depending on the nature of the offence. These penalties could involve withdrawal from school activities; detention; loss of privileges at school. In some cases, a period of suspension from school may be appropriate.
4. Staff at school camps and excursions will refrain from drinking alcohol or smoking. This observation is in keeping with the legal duty of care incumbent on all school staff and with the acknowledged need to model appropriate behaviour for students.
5. Schools were declared 'smoke free zones' in 1989 and this prohibition on smoking applies to staff, students and members of the public. Students who are found to have brought tobacco, cigarettes, matches or smoking materials to school will face the following penalties: loss of the prohibited product; counselling and participation in a school service activity to prevent recurrence. Where students continually offend, students will lose their rights to participate in school activities (such as



Drugs

Drugs Policy

- sporting trips, outings or school excursions) where a student's compulsive smoking could cause considerable supervision problems. A period of suspension may also be appropriate.
6. In this policy, glue, solvents and other inhalants will be treated in the same way as alcohol. That is, their use at school is prohibited.
 7. The school undertakes to develop as part of its curriculum, information for students on the responsible use of alcohol and the dangers of tobacco use.

Policy - Use of Illicit Drugs

All school personnel have legal and professional responsibilities to respond to information about, and incidents involving, student use or possession of illicit drugs at school or during school activities.

An essential aspect of dealing with the use of illicit drugs is recognition of the fact that even though students may become involved in unlawful activities, they retain certain rights as citizens. These include the right not to divulge information that may incriminate themselves or others; the right to have a legal guardian present; and the right to refuse a search of their possessions or person.

However, students and staff should be aware that possession, use and sale of drugs, and possession of implements related to drug use, is illegal and, in most cases, the police will be called if a student is found or (suspected to) be in possession of or using an illicit substance at school.

It should be noted that students who are 17 years or older are regarded, in the eyes of the law, as adults. An incident involving an adult is very likely to result in court action.

Responding to an Incident of Illicit Drug Use

Before the Incident the school will:

1. Include information about drug abuse and decision making as part of the school's Human Relationship/Life Skills/Health and Physical Education programs.
2. Ensure teachers on playground duty are vigilant and aware of this issue. This includes providing in-service training so they are able, for example, to recognise objects commonly used as bongs.
3. Inform students, parents, teachers and the police of the school's drug policy.
4. Build on trust between students and staff, particularly staff with a welfare responsibility for students such as pastoral care teachers and year level coordinators.

During the Incident:

1. Once the school has established that there is a drug incident, the principal or deputy principal will inform the parents of the student/s concerned immediately.
2. Where a number of students are involved, students are to be isolated as much as possible from one another during the school investigation. This will make it easier to arrive at the truth.
3. Schools have a limited capacity to search students and their property. Unless given permission by the student, school authorities cannot search their possessions for suspected illicit drugs. School authorities do not have the right to do a body search of a young person. Given this caution, it is better to call the police whose responsibility in this area is much clearer.
4. Because of the seriousness of this kind of incident, investigation of an incident involving illicit drugs should be conducted by the principal wherever possible, and with another member of staff present to take notes of the questioning.



Drugs

Drugs Policy

5. Accurate record taking is crucial and the writing up of clear and direct records of the incident is to occur as soon as possible after the matter has been investigated.
6. The principal will inform the whole staff as soon as possible after the incident, provided in so doing they are not breaching any aspects of the *Privacy Act*. Consideration of whether or not it is appropriate to inform parents and students, particularly if the incident has been mentioned in the media, is a decision of the Principal, in consultation with the Executive Chairperson.
7. If police are called to the school, school staff are expected to respect the responsibility of the police as they conduct their investigation. Police have considerable discretionary power when dealing with juveniles and have shown themselves to be resourceful and compassionate in handling matters of this kind. Students and the whole school community benefit when police and the school work closely, sharing information and openly seeking the same goals.

Note: in implementing the school's drug policy consideration must be given at all times to protecting the privacy of individual students, and their families.

Minimising Illicit Drug Use

In order to minimise illicit drug use, the school will:

1. Reinforce the unacceptability of illicit drugs in school by consistently carrying through on stated actions.
2. Identify consequences and apply them consistently and fairly to users and suppliers.
3. Establish an environment in which all school community members have enough care and concern for each other that they will confidentially pass on information about people using, carrying and/or selling drugs.
4. Use police cautioning processes where possible and utilise reintegration processes such as Community Accountability Conferencing and community services where appropriate.
5. Implement education programs which reinforce consequences of having illicit drugs at school.
6. Ensure that detection and deterrent processes are maintained and sustained.
7. Inform the whole community about the processes, possible consequences and potential outcomes of being found with drugs at school.
8. Review and evaluate strategies and procedures regularly and revise them as required.

POLICY RELEASE DETAILS

Date of Policy

October 2010

Approved by

Executive

Review Date

Biennially, in consultation with students, staff and parents

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Code of Conduct
Behaviour Management Policy