



DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Intent

With the health, safety and welfare of our students of paramount importance, Health and Drug Education Programs have been designed to assist students make responsible and informed decisions about drug and alcohol use.

Summary

With the full support of the School Council, the P & C Association and the staff, a **no tolerance** stance has been taken on the use of illegal drugs and alcohol. Illegal drugs are those substances whose possession and/or use is punishable by law under the current Queensland Criminal Code.

By enrolling at Merrimac State High School, all parents/guardians and students accept this no tolerance policy on illegal drugs. . Full details of the Policy can be found on the school's website: www.merrimacshs.eq.edu.au

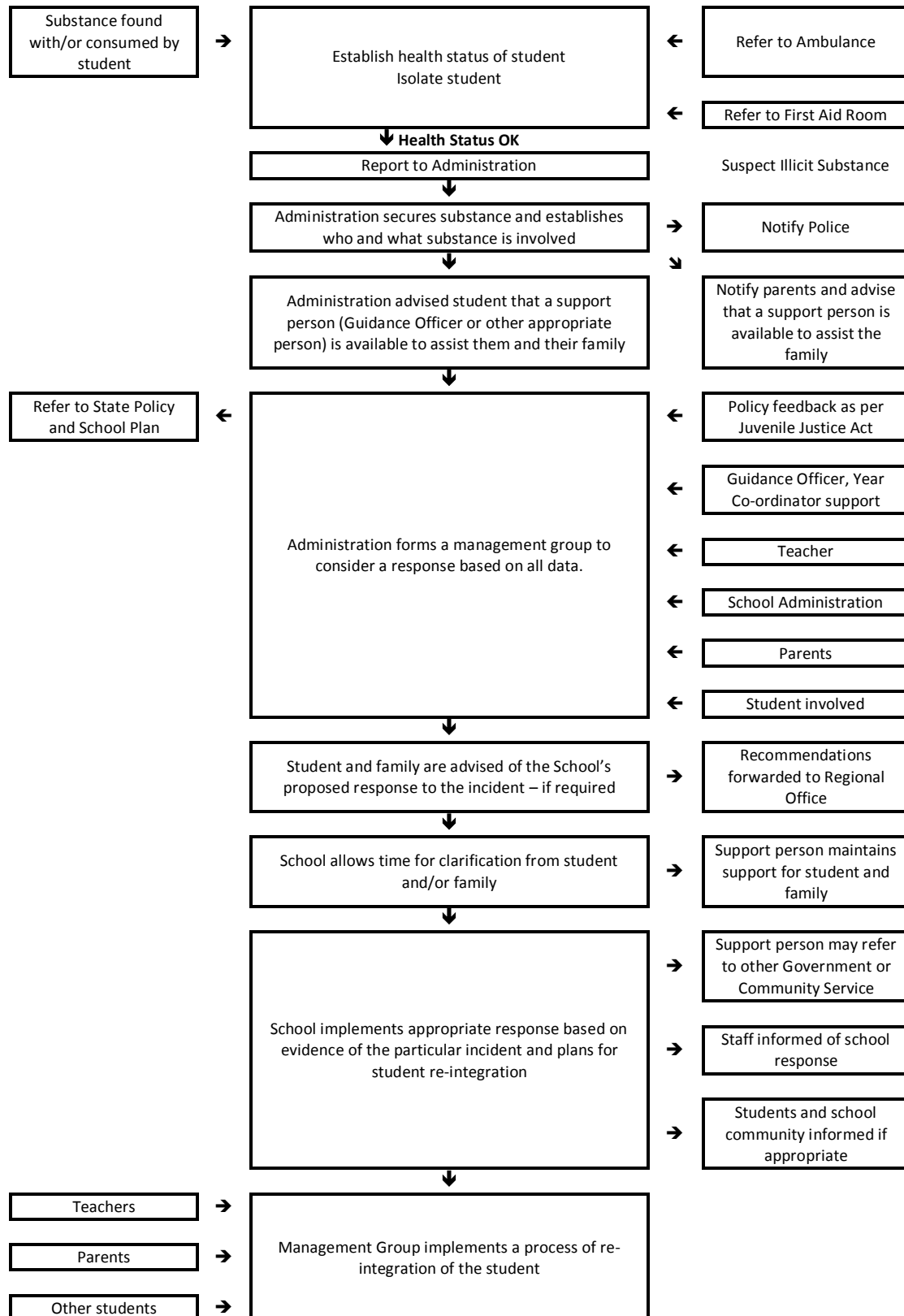
Policy

Our Drug Education Program is embedded in both our Curriculum and Life Pathways. The goal is to prevent or delay the onset of any drug use by concentrating on the safe use of medicines, smoking prevention and the dangers associated with illegal drug and alcohol use. These topics are targeted prior to and during the period of greatest susceptibility, to counter the environmental factors that influence drug related behaviour or intent. Clearly articulated school rules define acceptable behaviour.

Students may take prescribed medicine under supervision of the office staff where written consent has been provided by parents and is supported by medical advice.

Procedures

If any student enrolled in the school **possesses, uses, or deals** any of the drugs on the Queensland Criminal Code listing whilst at school, attending a school related function, on school excursion or in school uniform, the student will be in breach of our policy. Appropriate disciplinary action, including exclusion will be instigated. The same policy applies to the possession or use of alcohol.





INTERVENTION - SHORT TERM, 0-24 HOURS

This stage refers to the reporting of a school incident involving drugs.

The following are key issues to be considered:

- availability of the principal and the police
- location of the incident
- physical wellbeing of the student
- emotional state of students, parents and school staff
- procedures for questioning and searching and the rights of those involved

Circumstances, location and resources will determine whether procedures 5-11 occur in this stage or at the following stage of intervention.

Objective

To develop a plan to address the immediate consequences of a school incident involving drugs by the effective co-ordination of school and other relevant personnel.

Legal and Professional Responsibilities of School Personnel

All school personnel have legal and professional responsibilities to respond to information about, and incidents involving student use or possession of licit and illicit drugs at school or during school activities. These responsibilities should be understood by school personnel, students and the broader school community.

PROCEDURE

- 1 When school personnel suspect or are advised that a student has used or possesses a drug, it is necessary to establish and respond to the student's health and safety status.

The incident, students and substance involved must then be referred **immediately to the school administration.**

- 2 The school administration will identify a person to be responsible for managing the incident. The guidance officer, or other appropriate person, should be advised that an incident has occurred and that their involvement as a student and family support person may be required. The person managing the incident should form a management group, consisting of student support person, relevant year level coordinator and, if required, other school personnel.

Note: The principal may be required by the regional executive director to conduct a formal investigation which may influence the role of the principal in the initial stages of an incident.



- 3 The person managing the incident should establish and validate facts by interviewing relevant staff and students. The only aim of the questioning is to **establish that an incident involving the unlawful use or possession of a substance may have occurred and to identify who may have been involved.**

Interviewing Students

When it is suspected that a student has unlawfully used or is in possession of a substance, **administrators need only to establish who was involved.** Additional information obtained by the administrator at this stage may be detrimental to subsequent police investigations. Department of Education Manual Legal and Legislation (LL-09) *Police Investigations At State Educational Institutions.*

- 4 Obtain and secure substance and implements for substance use utilising appropriate procedures for searching and securing student property.

Searching and Securing Student Property

Where school personnel have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student may have an item that contravenes school rules, they may **request** the student to hand over the item or cooperate in the search of the student's property.

An independent witness must present during a search.

A student can decline to hand over property they claim to be their own or to co-operate in the search of their property. School personnel should advise the student of concerns regarding the property and inform the student that their parents or guardian, (where the item is not permitted at school), and the police (where the item is illicit or it is unlawful to possess or use the item), will be informed of the situation.

Only if there are reasonable grounds for believing from the student's behaviour or statements that they may cause immediate physical harm to themselves or others, can school personnel seize the property of a student.

Excessive force must be avoided.

Administrators and teachers should exercise care with confiscated property and must store it carefully and securely. **(Bag and tag into the school safe)**

If a student declines a request for their property to be searched, school personnel could take one of the following actions, depending on the circumstances of the specific incident:



- If it is suspected that the student's property contains a substance or item which is **not illicit** such as alcohol and cigarettes but its possession contravenes school rules, the school administrator should contact the student's parents or guardians for consent and request their assistance with the search of the student's property.
- If it is suspected that the student's property contains a substance or item, which is illicit (such as cannabis and bongs), the principal should inform the Juvenile Aid Bureau or other police and request a police search of the student's property. The school administrator should contact the student's parent or guardian and request that they be **present** during the search of the student's property.
- If it is suspected that the student's property contains a substance or item which is **illicit** (such as cannabis and bongs) and it is understood that **an adult including the student's parent or guardian may be involved in the incident**, the school administrator should contact the Juvenile Aid Bureau or police for **advice** prior to informing the student's parent or guardian.

Refer to: Department Of Education Manual Legal and Legislation (LL-09) *Police Investigations at State Educational Institutions*.

Securing Suspected Illicit Substances

School personnel who find or are given a substance suspected of being illicit should secure the substance in a place restricted from general access, such as a school safe or lockable filing cabinet. (It must be bagged & tagged.)

The substance should be labelled with the date, time and location where the substance was obtained and school personnel who have had contact with it. Where possible, a school administrator should confirm the labelling of the substance and accept responsibility for its containment prior to handing it over to police.

Under the law, any suspected illicit substance must be reported to the Police.

- 5 Where it is suspected that a student has used or possesses an illicit substance, the administrator managing the incident should notify and provide facts to the Juvenile Aid bureau or other police.

In the Absence of a Substance

If a substance is not found, but there is sufficient information, such as confirmed reliable witnesses and evidence such as the student's behaviour to suggest that the student has used or possessed a substance, the school administration may take one of the following actions:

- Suspected substance is licit such as alcohol: contact the student's parents or guardians and take action according to the school procedures for drug related interventions.



- Suspected substance is illicit such as cannabis: inform the Juvenile Aid Bureau or police of relevant details, contact the student's parent or guardian and take action according to the school procedures for drug related interventions.

Note: It is critical that the school administration takes action based on the specific details of the incident only after consideration of the validity of the information and evidence.

- Where it is suspected that the student has used or possesses an illicit substance, the person managing the incident should inform the student's parent or guardian that an incident has occurred; the guidance officer or other appropriate person is available to support the students involved and their families; and refer the matter to the police. The parent or guardian may be required to accompany the student during police questioning.
 - **The person managing the incident will ensure that a written record** of the incident is maintained, including the names of all students, school personnel, parents, police and other individuals involved in the incident. Follow up contact with police may provide additional information such as identification of the substance. *The Juvenile Justice Act 1992* prescribes restrictions on information police officers can provide to school personnel.
- 6 The student support person can plan to contact the student, their parents or guardian, year level co-ordinator and, where necessary, community health agencies. The student support person should focus on and support the *health* and *education* needs of the student.
 - 7 Where there is sufficient information and evidence to confirm that a student has contravened a school rule, and having met with student support person and other relevant people to consider the welfare and educational issues relevant to the incident, the school administration will notify the student, parent or guardian and when relevant, regional office, of the school action in response to the incident. The date, timelines for action and the avenue and time available for clarification should be recorded as outlined in Department of Education Manual (LL-03) *Judicial Review*.
 - 8 When there is **not** sufficient information and evidence to take action, the school administrator should **note the incident**, contact the student's parents/guardians to advise them of the general concerns related to the student's behaviour and implement processes to monitor the student's behaviour at school.
 - 9 The person managing the incident should arrange for **debriefing** of all students and staff involved through the guidance officer or other appropriate person. Another guidance officer may be requested to do this if the school guidance officer has been the student support person.



- 10 Ensure that records are **completed detailing** the nature of the incident, personnel and agencies involved, meetings held with parents and students and the action taken.

INTERVENTION: SHORT TERM (1-6 DAYS)

This stage can involve further investigation, disciplinary action, liaison with other agencies, media contact, rumour development and also can represent a period of tension, emotion, conflict and anger. Decisions impacting on the future of the student may be made during this stage. Steps 5-11 stated in *Section 2: Intervention - Short Term* may occur in this stage, if they were not completed previously.

Objective

To implement fair and just actions, consistent with department policy and legislation, that address issues relevant to the education and welfare needs of the student involved in an incident along with other school community members.

PROCEDURE

- 1 Repeat Section 2 procedures 5-11 if not completed in the previous stage.
- 2 The person managing the incident, after consultation with the student support person, may prepare and disseminate a written statement to staff, the student and parents clarifying the Drug Prevention and Intervention Plan which acknowledges only that an incident has occurred and appropriate action has been taken. Refer to *Appendix 1 - Sample Statement to Staff, Students and Parents*.
- 3 **The incident manager, if required, may prepare a statement and procedure for managing media contact. Refer to *Appendix 2: Suggested Processes for Managing Media Contact and Sample Media Statement*.**
- 4 The student support person can provide ongoing support to the student and family through liaison with health, police and community agencies. This support may include monitoring of the student's welfare and progress at school and school or community based counselling for the student and family.
- 5 It may occur that, after all other approaches have been exhausted or rejected and consideration of the education and welfare needs of the student, the principal suspends the student. In this event, the following issues need to be addressed by the incident manager in consultation with the management group:
 - Maintaining liaison with the student, family and community agencies; and
 - Providing work units for the student.
- 6 The person managing the incident should advise staff of the outcome of the incident and, where appropriate, after discussion with the consent of the student and their parents/guardians, provide a clarifying statement to other students and parents.



- 7 The incident manager may co-ordinate with the school guidance officer, or other appropriate person, a follow-up **debriefing** for all students and staff involved. Another guidance officer, or other appropriate person, may be required if the school's guidance officer has been the student support person.

INTERVENTION - LONG TERM, 7-90 DAYS

Following an incident, there may be cause to monitor the progress of the student, provide support to other students, review the appropriateness of school actions and maintain contact with other agency personnel. In some situations, where an exclusion has been decided or a student chooses to transfer, contact will be made and information and support provided to the school enrolling the student.

Objective

To facilitate reintegration of the student into the current school or integration into the new school.

PROCEDURE

- 1 The student support person can monitor the student's welfare and progress at school through liaison with the year level co-ordinator, teachers, administration and parent and provide ongoing support to the student and family in co-operation with health and community agencies.
- 2 If a recommendation for exclusion is approved, or if the student chooses to transfer, the student support person can co-ordinate transition arrangements. This would include:
 - Providing student information to the new school in accordance with departmental policy concerning the provision of student information; and
 - Contacting the new school's administrators, guidance officer or identified student support person to co-ordinate the integration of and support for the student.
- 3 The student support person should contact the identified student support person at the new school after four and twelve weeks to ascertain the effectiveness of the student's integration into the new school. Where appropriate, the student or the parents of the student may also be contacted to obtain information on the student's progress at the new school. This action not only will indicate to the student, their family and the new school that the school has maintained interest in that student, but will serve also as an evaluation of the intervention process.
- 4 **All previous actions and subsequent contacts are to be noted on the Incident Record and filed for reference.**



The Effects of Drugs and Immediate First Aid – Appendix 1

Drug	Immediate Effects	Use With Pregnancy	Long Term Effects	Immediate Response
NICOTINE/ TOBACCO	Lasts 15 min - 2 hrs. Relaxation, headache, loss of appetite and nausea	Harmful	Heart & lung disease, cancer, high blood pressure, bronchitis & breathing difficulties	APPLY STANDARD FIRST AID PROCEDURES
CAFFEINE	Lasts 2-4 hrs. Causes increased alertness. Large doses may cause an inability to sleep	Unknown	Restlessness. Caffeine is harmful to people with heart damage	D - Remove potential danger
AMPHETAMINE	Lasts 4-8 hrs. Highly stimulating - excited state, increased activity, decreased appetite. Large doses may cause inability to sleep	Dangerous	Inability to sleep, high degree of excitation, skin complaints, malnutrition, psychiatric disturbances, paranoia and hallucinations	R - Seek a patient response
COCAINE	Lasts 4 hrs. Causes feeling of self-confidence and power, decreased fatigue & loss of hunger	Dangerous	Damage to mucous membrane and nose. Sleeplessness & psychiatric problems	A - Maintain an airway
ALCOHOL	Depresses central nervous system. Causes relaxation, feelings of happiness & wellbeing or depression. Large doses may cause unconsciousness & hangover	Harmful - especially in first 3 months	Continued heavy use results in brain & other nervous system damage, heart, pancreas, stomach, liver damage & sometimes death. Withdrawal may produce sweating, tremor, convulsions & delirium. Family, social, work problems common	B - Check breathing, apply resuscitation if required
PRESCRIBED SEDATIVES Minor Tranquillisers	Lasts 12-24 hrs. Relief of anxiety & tension. Large doses may cause drowsiness (possibly sleep), muscular incoordination, blurred vision, in some cases excitability.	Use only under medical supervision	Continued heavy use may cause depression, also possible excitability. Withdrawal may produce anxiety, insomnia, tremor & convulsions. Convulsions & delirium when withdrawing severe enough to cause death.	B - Check breathing, apply resuscitation if required
Barbiturates	Lasts 4-8 hrs. Relaxation, happy feeling, drowsiness, lack of attention and sleep. Large doses fatal.	Dangerous	Overdose is the cause of many accidents & suicides	



OPIOIDS Heroin, Morphine, Codeine, Pethidine, Methadone, Opium	Lasts up to 24 hrs. Relief of pain & anxiety, feelings of wellbeing, decreased awareness of outside world. Vomiting, drowsiness & sleep in some individuals. High doses can cause unconsciousness & death	Dangerous Use only under medical supervision	Physical & psychological dependence. Withdrawal symptoms are anxiety, sweating, cramps, runny nose, vomiting, insomnia, pain. Self-injection with dirty syringe may cause hepatitis abscesses & blood poisoning. High risk of contracting HIV & hepatitis C & of death by overdose.	C – Check circulation, apply CAR if required
NON-NARCOTIC ANALGESICS	Lasts 1-4 hrs Relief of pain, if preparation contains caffeine, it may cause stimulant effect	Harmful	Regular daily use can result in kidney disease, stomach bleeding & anaemia	Call for an ambulance or medical assistance if required

Drug	Immediate Effects	Use With Pregnancy	Long Term Effects
MARIJUANA	Hallucinogen - intoxicant. Effects last 2-4 hrs. Causes relaxation, laughter, increased appetite, slowing down of time. Dry mouth, dizziness, blood shot eyes & decreased co-ordination may occur. A panic reaction may occur in some users	Harmful The active constituents of cannabis products readily cross the placenta	High tar intake of heavy users may cause respiratory complications. The active ingredient (THC) is stored in the body. It is not known whether it may become active at some later stage. Heavy use by those with personality difficulties can cause problems
INHALANTS & SOLVENTS	Lasts 1-3 hrs. Feelings of happiness relaxation & drowsiness. Large amounts may cause illness & possibly sudden death	Unknown	Liver, kidney & brain damage result
HALLUCINOGENS, LSD, Mescaline, Psilocybin, STP, DMT	Last 6-12 hrs. Causes hallucinations i.e. the user sees lights, colours, designs & feels very aware of things happening inside & outside the body. Anxious feelings & panic due to loss of control may be experienced	Dangerous	May cause attempted suicide, depression, "flashback" experience & in some people psychiatric complications



NOTE: The concurrent use of certain drugs can sharply increase the effects of either agent. For example, driving ability can be markedly impaired by mixing alcohol with sedatives.

Media/Telephone Enquiries - Appendix 2

Good morning, **Merrimac State High School**, speaking.

On (Date) there was an incident involving drugs that was brought to the attention of the school administration. This matter is being dealt with in accordance with school procedures for managing drug related incidents which considers relevant, legal, educational and health issues. At Merrimac we recognise that students require effective health and drug education programs to assist them in making responsible and informed decisions about Drug use. Families also provide a major impact on a child's attitude and understanding of drugs and their use & misuse. At this stage this is all the information we are able to provide.

Communications

Parents are reminded that the possession or use of any drug by students at school, except where parental consent for medication is provided, is not permitted and will be dealt with in accordance with school procedures for managing drug related incidents. These procedures focus on the relevant legal, educational and health issues.

Further information on these procedures can be obtained by reading the Department of Education Policy, CS-10 Drug Education in Schools and the **Merrimac State High School Policy**.

One person should be designated media contact e.g. Principal