

DRUGS POLICY

Introduction

The influence and effect of drugs on the individual, family and community is evident in our society. We believe Ursula Frayne Catholic College has an obligation to the staff, parents and students to provide comprehensive drug prevention and intervention strategies which reflect our Christian values and are in keeping with community expectations.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, a drug is defined as

"any substance, with the exception of food and water, which when taken into the body alters its function physically and/or psychologically ..."

This definition includes all drugs – analgesics, alcohol, cannabis, amphetamines, solvents and all other psychoactive drugs.

'On our premises or at any College function' includes any time students travel to and/or from the College, any time the student is wearing the College uniform, any College camp, excursion, social, function, any tour intrastate, interstate or overseas.

Ursula Frayne Catholic College will not tolerate any illegal activity, or any behaviour which is likely to place the mental, physical or moral welfare of students in jeopardy. Ursula Frayne Catholic College does not permit students, on our premises or at any College function, to:

- smoke tobacco products, consume alcohol, deliberately inhale solvents or misuse any medication;
- possess drug-related equipment such as syringes or smoking implements (as outlined in the 'Misuse of Drugs Act 1981') except in the case of lawful medical use;
- possess or use any prohibited drugs in accordance with the 'Misuse of Drugs Act 1981';
- distribute or sell any of the above;
- encourage other students to participate in any of the above.

The above regulations reflect current community laws relating to drug use and Health and Safety regulations for a school/work environment.

If there is a belief that a student is concealing contraband on his/her person or in their bag, locker or possessions, in appropriate cases, the matter may be referred to the police.

Staff involved in College activities are expected to adhere to the above conditions twenty four hours a day when acting in a supervisory role, as per Catholic Education Office Guidelines.

Prevention

The drug education programme is concerned with the provision of accurate information within the value system of the College. Its object is to give our young people the knowledge, skills and support to make informed and responsible decisions concerning drug use.

The programme is currently shared from Pre-Primary to Year 12 in Science, Religious Education and Health, at a level appropriate to the various age groups.

The preventative education programme is not limited to illicit drugs, but includes any psychoactive substances that pose a risk to young people in the College's social context. It is part of an overall health programme that provides clear sequence and continuity. Substance abuse is shown to be associated with ill health, suffering, sickness, loss of friends, loss of employment, harm to others, breakdown in relationships, psychological dependency, induced poverty and, in some instances, loss of life.

Intervention and Counselling

The object of this component is to assist our young people who are having substance abuse problems in their private or family lives outside the College. We endeavour to create a supportive atmosphere in which students feel comfortable coming forward to talk, seek advice and, if necessary, accept a referral to an assessment or treatment professional. If the preventive education component is judgmental in tone, there is little chance that students will feel comfortable enough to use the intervention and counselling component.

Intervention and counselling raise a number of complex legal issues, such as confidentiality and reporting obligations. College staff must understand the limitations of promising confidentiality and students must be aware that staff cannot promise confidentiality. Staff may be required to testify in court and their records may be subpoenaed. Furthermore, the College is obliged to report to the police the names of students who have been found to be in possession of or to have used illicit drugs **on or near the school premises**. Students with a substance abuse problem **outside the life of the College** who come forward to seek help are not reported to the police.

Consequences

This component focuses on providing clear and consistent messages to students and parents regarding unacceptable drug-related behaviour on College premises at College functions.

The College wishes to indicate that Ursula Frayne Catholic College is, from a student perspective, tobacco free, alcohol free and drug free.

At enrolment, students undertake to "refrain from the following forms of morally/socially unacceptable behaviour **at the College, at College functions or while travelling to or from school or at College events**:

- (i) possession or use of alcohol, tobacco or illicit drugs ... I am aware that the College policy with regard to the use or possession of illicit drugs or alcohol on school property or at school functions includes a penalty or forfeiture of the right to retain a place at the College ... I understand the Principal may terminate my enrolment" (*Enrolment Agreement*)

Students are made aware that the College staff will counsel and support students with drug-related problems they are having **outside the school**. However, **on no account should a student bring illicit drugs, alcohol or tobacco into the College** and thus endanger the health and welfare of other students. The College will move to protect the other students in the exercise of its duty of care for them.

The College believes that having personal drug-related problems and bringing harmful substances into the College community are two quite different types of behaviour. The College will approach the former with compassion, pastoral concern and the offer of professional assistance, whereas bringing illicit drugs into the school may result in parents being asked to withdraw the student from the school. In such instances the Principal will offer to assist the parents to find a place for the student at another school.

Students who are proven or confessed sellers or users of illicit drugs, even though their breaking of the law takes place **outside the College**, will not be admitted or permitted to remain at Ursula Frayne Catholic College, unless they can produce evidence of a cessation of such activity and a seeking of professional counselling and help.

This position is taken because College students who are known to sell/use illicit drugs outside the College exert a harmful influence on other students for whose welfare the College is responsible.

Conclusion

The procedures outlined have the spiritual, moral, emotional and physical well-being of Ursula Frayne Catholic College students and their families as a priority. Any member of staff who has information or concerns regarding a student's involvement in drugs is duty bound to deal with the matter in accordance with this policy. All staff are required to maintain strict confidentiality at all times.

Ursula Frayne Catholic College will not tolerate **ANY** inappropriate drug related activity and will therefore consider withdrawal or exclusion in every instance.