



Rationale

Some people in society use drugs for both medical and recreational reasons. St Mary's Coptic Orthodox College has a responsibility to provide its students with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about drug use or non-use.

St Mary's Coptic Orthodox College aims to address the drug education needs of our community through an approach of harm minimisation.

What is a Drug

A drug is any substance which alters the function of a body if taken internally (not including food and water). Examples include alcohol, cigarettes, cannabis, speed, ecstasy, glue, or petrol when sniffed.

What is 'harm minimisation'?

Some people may use drugs/alcohol at some stage of their lives, and so the School believes that students must acquire knowledge and skills to help them make informed decisions about drug/alcohol use and so minimise any harmful effects associated with that use. Staff, students and parents have a responsibility to discourage the use of all drugs which are detrimental to health and well-being.

Education

The major objective of St Mary's Coptic Orthodox College on this subject is education. The School's curriculum addresses many issues related to drug/alcohol use as students move through each level. The following are the issues being addressed:

- Keeping the body healthy by being aware of all substances that effect body functioning.
- Facts about drugs which give accurate information and focus on benefits as well as risks
- Personal drug/alcohol use and being able to minimise any harmful effects associated with it.
- Attitudes in which stereotypes and myths are challenged
- Harm minimisation.
- The Law and drugs. The rules and legal rights and coping with conflicts which may arise.
- Giving and receiving help. This area focuses on the skills to help oneself and to help others.
- Community support. Exploring responses to drug/alcohol use in the wider community, and to provide information about initiatives and programs which might be helpful within the community.

Appropriate prescribed drug use needs to be monitored with parental support. St Mary's Coptic Orthodox College should be notified of any prescribed medication to be taken on School premises.

If medication is to be administered during school hours, parents should take responsibility for the administration of the dosage. Parents who require staff to administer the medication should refer the matter to the Head of Primary or the Head of Secondary in accordance to the First Aid Policy.

Intervention

The intervention procedure is designed to address incidents of drug/alcohol use in a way which is in the best interest of all parties while also conforming to legal requirements.

St Mary's Coptic Orthodox College does not permit any persons to:

- Smoke tobacco
- Deliberately inhale solvents
- Possess drug related equipment such as syringes (unless prescribed)
- Be under the influence of drugs except for medical reasons

These provisions include all occasions when a student is travelling to or from school, or on any excursion, or other School organised function. The law relating to the sale or possession of drugs is clear. Penalties are imposed on offenders.

Where there are reasonable grounds for suspension for drug/alcohol use or possession, the Head of Primary or the Head of Secondary, in the presence of the student(s) and another member of Staff, search personal property.

Cigarettes

St Mary's Coptic Orthodox College is a smoke free School. Students found smoking, in possession of cigarettes, or supplying cigarettes to other students, anywhere in the School environment, will be liable to a range of sanctions, dependent on the circumstances, and regardless of whether or not previous conduct has been recorded.

Alcohol and Solvents

Students will be liable to a range of sanctions dependent on the circumstances and regardless of whether previous conduct has been recorded, where:

- They are found under the influence of, in possession of, or supplying alcohol to other students in any School environment
- They are found to be involved in solvent abuse for the purpose of achieving an altered state of awareness.

Illegal Drugs

The possession and/or supply of drugs is committing an offence against the law. St Mary's Coptic Orthodox College will view such conduct as a very serious matter.

Any student found in possession of illegal drugs at St Mary's Coptic Orthodox College will be isolated. The parents will be notified in order to begin a consultation process.

Sanctions

Sanctions are the range of actions that may be taken when any element of the Drug Policy has been infringed. Sanctions will be enforced at the discretion of the Head of Primary or the Head of Secondary.

The range of sanctions may include:

- Informing and consulting parents
- Community Service
- Loss of any office held
- Suspension from School
- Expulsion from School
- Counselling strategies in harm minimisation
- Being sent home from School Excursions
- Referral to an outside agency
- Notifying Police
- Change of enrolment status.

For students

Students should read and be familiar with the guidelines in this policy.

To students:

If you have a concern or feel uncomfortable about any situation, then talk to someone you trust.

Conclusion

St Mary's Coptic Orthodox College aims to minimise the possibilities for harm by creating an environment where students can feel safe, and where students who believe they have a problem, or have any difficulties, are able to get appropriate support.

Review

Review and evaluation will be undertaken according to the policy review process as set out in the School Development Plan.

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