

Responsibility:
Date approved by Advisory Council:
Date of next review:
Related policies:

Deputy Principal – Pastoral Care
May 2020
May 2022



**MOUNT LILYDALE
MERCY COLLEGE**

Mount Lilydale Mercy College Managing Drug Issues Policy

1. RATIONALE

- 1.1. Protecting children and young people from harm is a shared responsibility between the family, Mount Lilydale Mercy College (MLMC), the general community, community agencies, professionals working with children, police and government. Each has a significant role to play in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and in helping prevent harm from occurring.
- 1.2. As a Catholic College and a Ministry of Mercy Education Ltd, MLMC has a mission-driven, moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment for students. Our College works in partnership with the community to ensure that we reduce or remove risks to the personal safety and wellbeing of our students. As such, MLMC prohibits all unsanctioned drug use while a student is:
 - 1.2.1. attending school or is within the school vicinity, and
 - 1.2.2. engaging in any College activity away from the College, including the travel to or from College or a College activity.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. All MLMC staff are expected to understand and adhere to their professional and legal obligations to protect students from harm and to report suspected or known concerns they hold about a student's safety. **This policy applies to all staff employed at MLMC.**
- 2.2. Our Catholic College community conscious of our Catholic vision, mission and values ensures that young people are sensitively attended to during times of difficulty and gives them hope for the future.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. **Drug** - Any substance (with the exception of food and water) which, when taken into the body, alters the body's function either physically or psychologically (State of Western Australia 2018). This includes all licit and illicit substances that produce psychoactive or physiological effects on the person who consumes the drug (Commonwealth of Australia 2010, p. 30).
- 3.2. **Drug-related incident** - An occasion involving illicit or unsanctioned drug use, or the possession, trafficking or distribution of a drug or drug-related equipment, except for legal medical use.
- 3.3. **Drug-related issues** - All issues associated with drugs, including those that arise from personal use and use by another person or persons.



- 3.4. **Harm minimisation** - Policies, approaches and programs aimed at reducing drug-related harm from licit and illicit drugs. Harm minimisation aims to promote better health, social and economic outcomes for the community and the individual, and encompasses a wide range of approaches. Harm minimisation includes the promotion of abstinence of drug use, prevention of anticipated harm and reduction of actual harm.
- 3.5. **Illicit drug** - A drug in which production, sale, possession, trafficking or use is prohibited by law. An alternative term is 'illegal drug'.
- 3.6. **Inhalant** - See '3.18 Volatile Substances'.
- 3.7. **Intervention** - Strategies implemented when responding to drug-related issues.
- 3.8. **Licit drug** - A drug that is legally available by medical prescription or sometimes (depending on age or jurisdiction) a drug legally available without medical prescription (World Health Organization 1994, p. 44). Licit drugs also include pharmaceutical drugs. An alternative term is 'legal drug'.
- 3.9. **Over-the-counter drug** - A drug that can be sold or administered without a prescription.
- 3.10. **Pharmaceutical drug** - A drug available through pharmacies, supermarkets or stores, including over-the-counter and prescription medicines. Caffeine, anti-histamines, codeine and alcohol are the most common psychoactive constituents of over-the counter drugs (World Health Organization 1994, p. 51).
- 3.11. **Prescription drug** - A drug that legally requires a medical prescription for a pharmacist or authorised healthcare professional to dispense it.
- 3.12. **Prevention** - Strategies used to prevent drug use from occurring or to delay the onset of use.
- 3.13. **Possession** - Occupying or holding a substance either with or without rights of ownership. Possession also includes jointly possessing a drug together with another person (Commonwealth of Australia 2014, p. 2).
- 3.14. **Psychoactive effect** - The effects produced by a drug or substance that alter mental processes, including mood, cognition, thinking or behaviour
- 3.15. **School drug education** - A term to encompass all policies, practices, programs, initiatives and events in schools connected with the prevention and reduction of drug-related harm (Commonwealth of Australia 2004, p. 5).
- 3.16. **Trafficking** - Providing or offering to provide an illegal drug to another person. Traditionally, a trafficker is someone who exchanges a drug or drugs for money, property or services. However, if any illegal drug is passed onto others, even friends, this is also considered to be trafficking (Commonwealth of Australia 2014, p. 2).
- 3.17. **Unsanctioned drug** - A drug in which use is restricted by law, school authorities, or school policies and guidelines. It includes illicit, licit and prescription drugs (National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction 2004, p. 292).



- 3.18. **Volatile substances (also known as inhalants or solvents)** - Substances that vaporise at ambient temperatures and are inhaled for psychoactive effects (World Health Organisation 1994, p. 63). The term 'volatile substances' refers to a range of products that produce chemical gases or fumes at room temperature. Although there are minor variations in the classification of volatile substances, they are generally grouped as solvents, aerosols, gases or nitrates. Volatile substance use can cause uninhibited behaviour, decreased heart and breathing rates, suffocation, heart failure, unconsciousness, and death by accident (State of Victoria 2018). Running or engaging in other physical activities after inhaling a volatile substance can cause death due to cardiac sensitisation (Alcohol and Drug Foundation 2018). As solvents make the body more sensitive to adrenaline, do not frighten or chase solvent users (State of Victoria 2018).

4. POLICY STATEMENT

- 4.1. MLMC is committed to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our College. As such this policy demonstrates our commitment and provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep students safe.
- 4.2. When managing drug issues, the College leaders at MLMC work within the requirements of the law. They balance the immediate wellbeing and educational needs of students involved in the issue with the students' ongoing growth and development, as well as the wellbeing and educational interests of the broader school community.
- 4.3. This policy is written in conjunction with relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of Policy 2.13, Managing Drug Issues in Catholic Schools, from Catholic Education Melbourne.
- 4.4. This policy applies to:
- 4.4.1. the possession, supply, distribution, and use of licit and illicit drugs or drug-related equipment by students who are attending the College or within the College vicinity, or are engaging in a College activity away from the College, including the travel to or from College or a College activity
 - 4.4.2. inappropriate use by students of prescribed or over-the-counter drugs
 - 4.4.3. inappropriate use by students of volatile substances or inhalants
 - 4.4.4. the strategies Colleges should undertake to prevent and minimise student uptake of harmful drug use through curriculum-based drug education
 - 4.4.5. the strategies Colleges should take to regulate and respond to drug use, possession, trafficking, distribution, and supply in the school context.

The use of unsanctioned drug use must be seen as a wellbeing issue with associated resources and programs designed to cater for the individual needs of students.



5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

5.1. Below is a list of the College's guiding principles that inform the policies and procedures to plan, manage and respond to drug-related incidents at MLMC. Greater detail of the implementation of these Guiding Principles can be found in the College's Managing Drug Issues Implementation Guidelines.

- 5.1.1. Transparency and accountability
- 5.1.2. Consistency
- 5.1.3. Trust and confidentiality
- 5.1.4. Student wellbeing
- 5.1.5. Safe and supportive school environment
- 5.1.6. Collaboration and shared commitment with community
- 5.1.7. Harm minimisation
- 5.1.8. Whole-school approach
- 5.1.9. Safe and supportive school environments
- 5.1.10. School-based policies and procedures
- 5.1.11. Drug-education approaches
- 5.1.12. Professional learning for staff
- 5.1.13. Community partnerships
- 5.1.14. Engagement and partnership with parents and carers

