Purpose

Our Lady Star of the School acknowledges the importance of promoting healthy behaviours in relation to the use of alcohol and other drugs. This policy confirms our commitment to:

• providing a safe, inclusive and empowering school environment.
• developing knowledge, resilience and help-seeking skills of students.
• implementing strategies to prevent and minimise harm.
• dealing with drug use (licit and illicit) as a health and safety issue.
• establishing supportive procedures to respond to drug-related incidents.

As a health promoting school, we will promote positive behaviours in relation to the use of alcohol and other drugs for students, staff and families through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment, and developing community links and partnerships.

Policy statement

Background

Effective drug education is important because young people are faced with many influences to use both licit and illicit drugs. Education can play a counterbalancing role in shaping a normative culture of safety, moderation, and informed decision-making. Effective drug education including responsible decision making should be delivered as part of a whole-school approach to student health and wellbeing.

There are a range of risk and protective factors related to the environment, knowledge, attributes and skills of students that influence the likelihood of them experimenting with alcohol and other drugs.\textsuperscript{1} Research suggests that young people who have a number of protective factors in their lives are less likely to engage in long-term risky behaviour, including alcohol and drug experimentation.\textsuperscript{2} Developing protective factors such as resilience and social and emotional competencies will enhance the potential for children and young people to resist risky behaviours.

Whole school engagement

It is recognised that every adult member of Our Lady, Star of the Sea Primary School has an impact on students’ health and can contribute to creating an environment that promotes healthy behaviours in relation to the use of alcohol and other drugs. All members of our school community including staff, students, families and volunteers will be supported to meet this policy.

Definitions

Drug: The term ‘drug’ refers to any substance taken to change the way the body or mind functions.\textsuperscript{3}

Alcohol: A depressant drug that slows down activity in the central nervous system.\textsuperscript{4}

Resilience: The ability to bounce back from adversity in order to lead a healthy and fulfilling life.\textsuperscript{5}

Social and emotional competence: The ability to recognise and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships and handle challenging situations capably.\textsuperscript{6}

Procedures

Healthy policies

• Staff, families and students are involved in guiding the development and implementation of the whole school alcohol and other drug policy and practices and are provided with information about policy requirements.
• If an alcohol or drug related incident occurs; the Principal or Deputy Principal will escort a member of staff, under the influence, home, make arrangements so a school parent or staff member can be safely returned home, apply the necessary first aid - staff have Level 2 First Aid qualification, or call the necessary authorities if required (police, ambulance, 000),

Healthy physical environment

• The school provides a safe environment that promotes healthy behaviours in relation to the use of alcohol and other drugs.
• Health information, including material relating to alcohol and other drugs is readily accessible in the school as required.
• Caffeinated beverages, including energy drinks, should not be supplied in our canteen.
• School principal approval is obtained before alcohol is provided on school premises or at any school-organised function. Children’s exposure to alcohol at school functions is minimised and events should be alcohol-free.

• The school endeavours to seek alternatives to alcohol as a fundraising tool.

Healthy social environment
• A sense of belonging and connectedness is created through inclusive and participatory practices such as family barbecue, dad’s night
• The school encourages and values the contribution of students, families and staff to a positive school environment and all members promote a culture of respect, fairness and equality.
• The school implements strategies to promote positive and responsible behaviour, and to prevent and respond to bullying, discrimination and harassment.

Learning and skills
• A minimum of 10 hours annually of alcohol and other drug education is delivered across curriculum areas, including SEL competency of Responsible Decision Making.
• Drug education is evidence-based, age appropriate and relevant to student experiences, interests and individual learning needs.
• Staff are supported to access resources, tools and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to deliver drug education and prevention initiatives.

Engaging children, young people, staff and families
• Families, students and staff are key partners in developing and supporting preventive approaches to alcohol and other drug use, and are provided information, ideas and practical strategies to promote and support preventive approaches to alcohol and other drugs at school and at home. Life Ed Van every 2 years.
• Families and students from diverse cultural backgrounds are engaged to ensure cultural values and expectations about alcohol and other drugs are respected.

Community partnerships
• The school will work with local health professionals, services and organisations to increase capacity to deliver and promote drug education and prevention initiatives.
• Referral policies, procedures and pathways to local health and support services are developed collaboratively with local providers.

Relevant accountability documents
DET Drug Education Policy
DET School Policy and Advisory Guide – Health Education Approaches
DET School Policy and Advisory Guide – Alcohol
DET School Policy and Advisory Guide – Drug Use

Related school policies
• Alcohol Policy
• Staff Health and Wellbeing Policy (2015)
• Student Wellbeing Handbook.
• Pastoral Care Policy.

Monitoring and review
The Alcohol and other Drugs Policy will be monitored and reviewed by the staff, School Education Board and the Student Wellbeing Core Team at least once every three years.

Ratified by the School Education Board Wednesday 9 March 2016

Next Review: 2019
