

Kenridge Primary School – Substance Abuse Policy

(February 2010 - draft)

INTRODUCTION

The School accepts and acknowledges that a wide variety of addictive or habit-forming substances are readily available throughout society, and that our children are, and will continue to be, regularly exposed to such substances through various channels.

The School recognizes that young people, even at primary school level are particularly vulnerable to substance misuse and that substance misuse is directly detrimental to learners at all levels and in all ways (physically, mentally, psychologically, socially, developmentally, emotionally and personally).

This policy has been written in keeping with the current medical and psychological understanding of substance use and abuse by adolescent learners.

2. DEFINITIONS

“**Kenridge Primary School**” is taken to include the learners and staff (teaching, administrative and support) who make up Kenridge Primary School;

“**The School**” is taken to mean Kenridge Primary School;

“**Drug**” is taken to mean a chemical substance that produces a psychoactive effect. This includes herbal cigarettes, cannabis, inhalants, pharmaceutical drugs, illicit drugs as well as image and performance enhancing substances;

“**Substance**” is taken to have the same meaning as drug+outlined above;

“**Abuse**” is taken to mean the use of an illicit drug, or the use of a substance for a purpose other than it was intended for;

“**Staff**” is taken to mean all individuals employed by the school; this includes academic and teaching personnel, administrative personnel and support and maintenance staff.

3. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The School:

- Accepts that it has a part to play, along with parents, in equipping young people with information and knowledge about drugs, and substance misuse generally;
- Acknowledges that society changes and adapts its mores and norms constantly, and that not all of society is necessarily as totally opposed to the possession and use of prohibited substances as the School is;
- Insists that parents participate in a strong partnership with the school to minimize the potential harm to learners which may be caused by addictive substances, and expects that every parent and learner should support a total prohibition on such substances;
- Recognizes a safe and disciplined learning environment is one of the critical elements to the successful delivery of quality education and acknowledges the role played by drugs in undermining this. There is a high correlation between drug abuse and other anti-social and high-risk behaviour, including dishonesty, theft, violence and bullying. Purely punitive approaches to drug abuse can only produce part of the solution.

As the use of illegal substances in the school environment cannot be allowed or condoned, the purpose of this substance abuse policy is to promote substance abuse awareness within the school with the primary focus on the following:

- To minimize the potential and eliminate the abuse and dependence on drugs amongst the schools learners and staff and to assist, where possible, in the rehabilitation of those who have drug problem.
- To clarify the approach and intentions of the school with regards to drugs and drug related issues.
- To commit to a programme that promotes an awareness of the detrimental affects of substance abuse;
- To help and support not only those learners who abuse drugs, but also the majority of learners and staff who do not use drugs, but may be affected by the usage of drugs by others.
- To enhance learner and staff well-being, safety, health and productivity in the school environment.
- Not to condone pupils who use drugs, but to ensure that appropriate support is provided to learners and staff who require help for drug related problems.
- To outline the effective prevention, management and treatment plans for drug use misuse and dependency.
- To ensure a supportive environment while always holding the rights and interests of all learners involved in drug use, abuse or dependence as well as other pupils, teachers and members of the school community as the highest concern.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

In dealing with all incidents involving the use and/or abuse of substances, the school shall endeavour to adhere to the following principles:

- In acting against substance abuse the guiding principles made available from time to time through Regulations and directives will always be considered and applied;
- The possession, use or distribution of illegal drugs, and the inappropriate possession, use or distribution of legal drugs, is not acceptable at Kenridge Primary School and that this message should be clearly and consistently communicated to the school community;
- Any action taken should be consistent with the school's desire to develop a safe and supportive environment that values fairness and human dignity;
- Intervention should primarily be aimed at providing support, restoring health, addressing underlying psychological issues and preventing relapse;
- All information relating to drug use, misuse or dependency by a learner, should be treated sensitively and with confidentiality;
- In cases of drug use and/or abuse, parents/guardians should be informed and involved at the earliest possible opportunity in any attempts to help the learner.

5. THE USE OF DRUGS

The consumption or use of and the possession of any intoxicating substance or drug, excluding prescription medication and then only when prescribed by a registered medical practitioner, are prohibited. This includes alcohol.

No drugs shall be allowed on the premises of the school and should these be discovered, the necessary action will be taken.

6. THE TRAFFICKING, SUPPLYING AND SELLING OF DRUGS

The trafficking of substances on the school campus, supplying substances to other learners, offering substances to other learners and the sale of substances to other learners is prohibited. These are seen as serious offences because of the threat they provide to the safety of other learners and staff in the school. As such, these offences will always lead to a disciplinary hearing as laid out in the schools disciplinary policy. When a learner is found guilty of selling substances, the school will report this to the relevant state authorities.

7. DRUG TESTING

Drug testing may not be the first point of intervention in dealing with issues of substance abuse, but will be considered where there is a reasonable suspicion that the learner may be abusing drugs. The procedure that will be followed will be in the spirit of the child's best interest and be implemented in an environment that is committed to safeguarding personal rights relating to privacy, dignity and bodily integrity. Should testing be considered appropriate the guidelines available through regulations issued by the Education authorities will be applied.

If a learner tests positive on a drug test:

- His/her parents will be informed;
- Together with one of the school's counsellors or other competent person, the learner and his parents will discuss an intervention that aims to address the reasons why he is using substances; the process may involve a referral to an outside specialist for psychological assessment and intervention;
- Measures will be put in place to support the learner, so that he does not continue to use drugs;
- Follow up drug screens will be part of this intervention;
- The learner will be cautioned that if he tests positive on a follow up drug screen, the incident will be reported to the school's Governing Body who may decide to implement disciplinary procedures.

9. DISCIPLINARY INTERVENTION FOR DRUG USE / POSITIVE TESTING

It may be necessary for the Principal to request that a disciplinary enquiry be conducted to investigate instances of substance abuse in the school. In such cases the disciplinary hearing will be conducted in accordance with the school's policy on Disciplinary hearings and may result in punitive sanction.

The following sanctions will serve as guidelines when a learner either tests positive for the use of drugs or is involved with incidents of substance abuse:

1st Positive testing / incident

- Referral to for complete psychological assessment by a substance abuse specialist;
- Implementation of an intervention plan which has been tailored with the parents involvement;
- Follow up drug screens as part of a structured intervention programme;

- Support measures to prevent continued use of substances;
- A final warning for substance abuse.

2nd Positive testing / incident

- This will result in a disciplinary enquiry followed by a disciplinary hearing as laid out in the school's disciplinary policy;
- Punitive sanctions could include a recommendation of suspension and/or expulsion.

All learners will be offered the support necessary to break away from the use of illegal substances. No learner will be turned away should he request assistance. However, in cases where the learner does not wish to make use of the help offered to him, the school will have no choice but to take the necessary action as laid out in the school's disciplinary policy.

Where a learner is found to be in violation of the rules set out above relating to possession and/or use of prohibited substances, that learner should expect, particularly if he has made substances available to any other learner within the school, that the disciplinary committee of the Governing Body will be summoned and will be entitled to recommend any sanction provided for in the Code of Conduct or the SA Schools and related acts, up to and including the expulsion of the learner concerned.

When a learner has disclosed or been found to be affected by, in possession of, or having used prohibited substances, and he fails to comply with any rehabilitation programme to the satisfaction of the School, he should expect to appear before the disciplinary committee of the Governing Body.

10. THE LEARNER COMING FORWARD FOR SUPPORT

Notwithstanding the School's determination to work with parents to eradicate substance abuse, the school acknowledges the reality that not all learners will at all times achieve a healthy, drug-free life. Recognizing, therefore, that there are, and will be from time to time, learners who experiment with, or who have problems with, dependence-producing substances; in any instance where a learner approaches the school for assistance, the school will endeavour to provide such assistance, provided that the approach occurs before the learner is caught in possession of, or is the subject of an investigation concerning, prohibited substances of any nature.

To this end, the school invites any learner with problems of this nature to communicate either with any member of staff whom he trusts.

11. DRUG SEARCHES

In instances where a member of staff has reason to suspect that a learner has in his possession an illegal or controlled substance, he/she should approach a member of the school's executive and discuss the situation. If the member of the executive believes that there is reasonable suspicion that the learner is in possession of a prohibited substance he may carry out a search, but only in accordance with the below:

- The search must be carried out by a person of the same gender;
- The search takes place in the presence of the Learner concerned and a second adult witness of the same gender.

Guidelines issues from time to time for random search and seizure will also be applied.

Should the member of the executive find the learner in possession of a prohibited substance, he should inform the learners parents, a member of the remedial team and the Principal, who will decide on the appropriate action to be taken.

12. PROCEDURE FOR STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF CONFISCATED DRUGS

Should a prohibited substance be confiscated the following shall be followed:

- If the substance is controlled, but not illegal, such as Alcohol or Tobacco, the substance may be disposed of in a manner seen fit by the adult dealing with the incident;
- If the substance is illegal then it should be placed in a sealed bag or envelope in the presence of another adult witness;
- This sealed bag or envelope should then be locked away in a safe / cupboard which can be locked and that no unauthorized person has access to.

The South African Police Service should then be contacted to collect the illegal substance and dispose of according to legal procedure.

13. EDUCATION AND PREVENTION MEASURES

Education of Learners:

The objective of preventative education is to reduce or delay the likelihood of experimentation of drugs by providing information about the dangers of their use and misuse, as well as to reduce the stigma attached to alcohol and drug use, misuse and dependency. It is to encourage those who are experiencing problems to get the help they need.

Drug education should ensure that learners acquire age and context appropriate knowledge and skills, in order for them to adopt and maintain Life Skills and behaviour that will protect them from drug use, misuse and dependency.

Education of Parents / Guardians:

Education and information on drug use, misuse and dependency as well as the schools policy on drug use should be made available to all parents and guardians of learners.

Education of Staff:

Training should be provided for all staff on drug use, misuse and dependency management and support. Staff should also be given the knowledge and tools to recognise the signs and symptoms of drug use. The school should also ensure that all staff are aware of the contents of this policy.

14. REVIEWING OF THE SCHOOLS DRUG POLICY

The school drug policy should be viewed as a living document, to be reviewed and evaluated annually, and updated and amended when necessary. The objective of this is to get a balanced and representative overview of the effectiveness and shortcomings of the drug prevention programme, from all the role players, and use that information to improve the programme.