

AP 356 - USE OF AGE-RESTRICTED AND PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES DURING SCHOOL-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES

Background

The District encourages an age-appropriate harm reduction approach to problematic substance use. Through a trauma informed lens and culture of care, school staff will endeavour to always approach substance use through a supportive and inquiry-based lens.

In the interest of maintaining a healthy and safe learning environment for all students, the District discourages the use of age-restricted and controlled substances by students while on school property or at school-sponsored events. This is inclusive of e-cigarettes, vaping and medicinal marijuana, or any other psychoactive substances, whether legalized or not. The District supports a proactive and comprehensive approach to problematic substance use, which emphasizes these four areas of activity:

- Youth Prevention and Engagement
- Parent Engagement
- Curriculum Development and Implementation
- Educative, Restorative and Preventative measures

Procedures

1. The District has five objectives for this Administrative Procedure:
 - 1.1. To promote healthy lifestyles which includes understanding substances and substance use through the Physical and Health Education curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education and Child Care.
 - 1.2. To align training and practices for educators and support staff at all schools to provide age-appropriate support for students. An emphasis is on making connections with youth through open dialogue and strong trusting relationships.
 - 1.3. To establish and maintain an early-intervention program providing accessible assessment, counselling, and referral services to community or provincial programs.
 - 1.4. To provide targeted and individual interventions that may involve an inter-agency care team approach to ensure students and their parents are connected to community support services and school-based case managers as needed and appropriate.
 - 1.5. To establish Educative, Restorative and Preventative practices which may involve the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, counsellors, and principal or vice-principal.

2. The Principal is responsible for the implementation of the following:
 - 2.1. Ensure that the District's Administration Procedure statement on use of tobacco, vapour products, alcohol, cannabis and other illicit drugs is communicated to students and parents at the beginning of each school year.
 - 2.2. Support school staff in working with parents and caregivers to assist them in fostering and maintaining connections to their child's school. Provide education and support that focuses on ways to develop strong relationships with youth.
 - 2.3. Partner with community groups (i.e., Discovery Counselling, Cowichan Valley Youth Services, Lake Cowichan Community Services, Child and Youth Mental Health), to support current school programs or implement new programs at the school level which will engage at-risk students and connect them to something or someone. Principals are also responsible for vetting materials to be handed out or discussed to ensure that they are age-appropriate, ensuring they align with this AP.
 - 2.4. Ensure relevant curriculum and resources are made accessible to school staff to promote healthy lifestyles which includes problem solving, psychoactive substance education, harm reduction and supportive intervention programs.

Roles and responsibilities

Staff

3. When any staff member has reason to believe a student is in direct or indirect possession or under the influence of a substance as defined above while attending school or involved in an official school function, the staff member shall:
 - 3.1. Observe the student, if possible;
 - 3.2. Only confront the student directly if comfortable with the circumstances;
 - 3.3. If it is an immediate safety concern, immediately inform the school principal or vice-principal of the reasons for their concern; and
 - 3.4. If off school property, and is an immediate safety concern, immediately contact a school principal or vice-principal and seek direction.
4. When any staff member has reason to believe a student is placing themselves or others at risk by habitually abusing a substance as defined above, the staff member must report the concern to a school principal or vice-principal and school-based team.
5. When any staff member feels a student's substance use or other risk factors may put the student at extreme risk for harm, under Child Protection Services, it is their duty to report the concern to the Ministry for Children & Families - Children Protection Branch.
6. Upon receiving a report that a student is placing themselves or others at risk due to habitual or problematic use of a substance as defined above, the School Counsellor collaborates with a

school principal or vice-principal and school based team to develop a support plan, taking into account the age and individual circumstance of the student.

School Principal

7. When a school principal or vice-principal has reason to believe a student is in direct or indirect possession of a substance as defined above while attending school or involved in an official school function, the principal or vice-principal will:
 - 7.1. Interview the student to determine the validity of the information;
 - 7.2. Ask the student to produce any illegal, or prohibited substances in their possession or in their locker;
 - 7.3. Notify the student's parent(s)/guardian;
 - 7.4. When necessary and in the presence of another staff member, and in accordance with the *School Act*, conduct a search of student's person and student's property for illegal or prohibited substances. The school principal or vice-principal shall use the most reasonable, least intrusive method possible in searching the student and any property in the student's possession;
 - 7.5. when necessary, consult with a Director or Associate Superintendent
8. If the school principal or vice-principal determines that a student is in possession of any illegal drugs or recently decriminalized substances, as defined above, and to give time and opportunity for planning to build supports for the student upon their return, the principal or vice-principal:
 - 8.1. May notify the police;
 - 8.2. May suspend the student:
 - 8.2.1. In school suspension;
 - 8.2.2. Out of school suspension – not to exceed 5 days – only after consultation with a Director or an Associate Superintendent;
 - 8.3. May refer the matter to the appropriate district process, when there are repeated offenses or there is intent to traffic illicit psychoactive substances.
9. If the school principal or vice-principal has reason to believe the student is under the influence of a substance as defined above, and to give time and opportunity for planning to build supports for the student upon their return, the principal or vice-principal:
 - 9.1. Shall make every effort to ensure the health and safety of the student and others;
 - 9.2. Shall contact the parent(s)/guardian of the student;
 - 9.3. May suspend the student:

9.3.1. in school suspension;

9.3.2. out of school suspension – not to exceed 5 days – only after consultation with a Director or an Associate Superintendent;

9.4. May refer the matter to the appropriate district process.

10. Having completed the above procedures or upon receiving a report that a student is placing themselves or others at risk by habitually using a substance as defined above, the principal or vice-principal shall collaborate with the school counsellor and School Based Team in the development of a support plan.

Reference:

Sections 6, 7, 8, 17, 20, 22, 26, 65, 79, 85 School Act

Adopted: March 16, 2005

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