

# Tamborine Mountain State High School



# Drug Policy & Procedures

## **Harm Minimisation**

The Queensland Government endorses harm minimization as the fundamental principle governing Australia's development of policies and programs to address the negative impact of legal and illicit drugs on our society. Supporting an individual's right to become abstinent, or to not use drugs unlawfully, is a significant component of any approach. Harm minimization approaches aim to maintain open communication about drug use with people currently using them.

Harm minimization accepts that, despite our best efforts, some young people will choose to use drugs, even some illicit drugs. It does not mean that we, as individuals, or as a system condone that use.

Within this context, however, it should be made clear to students that unlawful drug use and possession of drugs at school is not acceptable. Harm minimization does not necessarily mean approval of drug use or support for legislation. It is an approach that 'aims to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of alcohol and other drugs by minimizing or limiting the harms and hazards of drug use for both the community and the individual without necessarily eliminating use'

It is further emphasized that drug use has both residual and acute impacts.

HHS Public Access Service (PMID: 21321675) that acute effects of cannabis on executive functions (0-72hrs) indicates deficits in information processing as well as aspects of planning and decision making particularly with regard to response speed, accuracy and latency. HHS Public Access Service indicates more impulsive and less inhibition of maladaptive responses in this timeframe after cannabis usage.

HHS Public Access Service (PMID: 21321675) states executive functioning may be effected for several weeks after cannabis use (up to 20 days) as the cannabis metabolites from the brain. This is known as residual effect.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **Health School Guidelines**

- provide guidelines on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the school community in relation to drugs
- demonstrate the schools commitment to promoting the health of its staff, students and the community it serves
- provide a safe environment through the promotion of a drug free and smoke free environment
- eliminate drug possession
- develop personal skills
- develop the notion of 'Total Control' or '100% in Control' in students. Students can determine their health and the health of the community
- promote the concept of 'prevention is better than cure'. Students will develop decision making skills to apply when confronted with drug related issues
- promote harm minimization as a process of decision making with the purpose of reducing risk
- increase individual skills through knowledge and awareness of information providers and support services and resources within the school and the community

- instil awareness of the law and legal consequences for being in possession/selling illicit drugs
- explore health issues related to teenage behaviour such as binge drinking
- promote programs and alternatives aimed at stress management, coping with failure, relationships, and developing resilience in the students.

### **Creating a Supportive Environment and Management Practices**

- be vigilant in the monitoring of students within the school in relation to drug use
- identify students with drug related problems and encourage them to seek help
- set up support services within the school:- School Based Health Nurse, Student Support Leaders (SSL), Form Teachers, Chaplain, Clinical Social Worker
- apply the consequences consistently and fairly to students identified as users or suppliers
- develop a supportive environment whereby students show concern about the welfare of their peers and adopt a responsible attitude to sharing information relating to drug use

### **Strengthening Community Action**

- establish working partnerships with community agencies
- involve parents and community in information sharing evening to discuss adolescent issues relating to potential harms such as binge drinking.

### **School Response**

School leadership team work in consultation with Student Support Network to address persistent or ongoing serious problem behaviour. Examples of such behaviour may include: dangerous behaviour, possession of banned items, damage/vandalism, theft, bullying, substance use/ misuse/possession, any unlawful behaviour or serious incidents of misconduct or conduct prejudicial to good order and management of school whether occurring in or outside of school grounds or hours.

School response may include:

- Functional behaviour assessment based individual support plan
- Complex case management and review
- Stakeholder meeting with parents/caregivers and external agencies including regional specialists
- Saturday detention [Saturday Detention](#)
- Community service
- Discipline Improvement Plan
- Temporary removal of student property (e.g. mobile phone)
- Short term suspension (up to 10 school days)
- Long term suspension (up to 20 school days)
- Charge related suspension (student has been charged with a serious criminal offence is suspended from school until the charge has been dealt with by the relevant justice authorities)

- Suspension pending exclusion (student is suspended from school pending a decision by the Director-General or delegate (principal) about their exclusion from school)
- Exclusion (student is excluded from a particular state school site, a group of state schools or all state schools in Queensland for a defined period of time or permanently)
- Students who participate in behaviours involving drugs – use, supply or possession either during or outside school hours are participating in serious illegal behaviours, which are regarded as posing a very high risk to our school environment. Such behaviour is clearly prejudicial to good order and management of our school. At all times students are expected to attend Tamborine Mountain State High School drug and alcohol free. The presence of drugs or alcohol in your system can impair your judgement/functioning and could impact on your safety and the safety of others. In such situations serious consideration will be given to a temporary/permanent exclusion.
- Cancellation of enrolment for students older than compulsory school age who refuse to participate in the educational program provided at the school.

In any drug situation, TMSHS will conduct a behaviour risk assessment tool.

Attendance at school after having used drugs\* e.g. cannabis is not acceptable and compromises safety for staff, students and the good order and management of the school. Cannabis can have acute effects and can have residual effects for up to 20 days.