



Drug Education Policy

Rationale

Drug Education is a joint responsibility between school, home and the broader community. Corinda State High School (CSHS) aims to promote healthy lifestyles and the Drug Education Policy aims to minimize harm by informing students of the hazards of drug use as part of a comprehensive health education program.

The policy is designed to encourage students to view the abuse of drugs as a health issue. The policy promotes the social responsibility of individuals towards the community and emphasizes the legal ramifications of illegal drug use. The [Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion](#) should guide the ongoing development of drug policy and strategy. The charter principles emphasize the need for a structural approach that involves all elements of the community and the social infrastructure to enable people to improve and increase control over their well-being. It incorporates the harm-minimization philosophy involving investment in supply control, demand reduction and harm reduction.

Corinda State High School Drug Education Policy and management practices aims to focus on addressing the cause, not just the symptoms, of drug related incidents.

This policy describes the school's management and intervention practices when dealing with the health, social and community issues related to:

- Smoking
- Alcohol
- Illicit Drugs.

Aims

- To create an environment that will not tolerate illicit drugs and recognizes alcohol and tobacco as potentially harmful drugs.
- The school will address issues of binge drinking, listed as a major problem with adolescents.
- This environment will be enhanced by drug education strategically implemented throughout the curriculum to address all relevant issues.
- Educational support strategies will be readily available.

Implementation

Corinda State High School's drug strategy is based upon the principle of [harm minimization](#).



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. (*Beyond a Quick Fix – Queensland Drug Strategic Framework 1999 – 2004*).

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'. (*CS-10 Drug Education in Schools, Department of Education Manual, 2001*).

Objectives of strategy

Developing a Health School Policy and Guidelines

- To provide guidelines on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the school community in relation to drugs.
- To demonstrate the school's commitment to promoting the health of its staff, pupils and the community it serves.
- To provide a safe environment through the promotion of a drug free and smoke free environment.
- To eliminate drug possession.
- Developing personal skills
- To develop the notion of 'total control' or '100% in control' in students. Students can determine their health and the health of the community.
- To promote the concept of 'prevention is better than cure'. Students will develop decision making skills to apply when confronted with drug related issues.
- To promote harm minimization as a process of decision making with the purpose of reducing risk.
- To increase individual skills through knowledge and awareness of information providers and support services and resources within the school and the community.
- To instil awareness of the law and legal consequences for being in possession / selling illicit drugs.
- To explore health issues related to teenage behaviour such as binge drinking.
- To 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

- To be vigilant in the monitoring of students within the school in relation to drug use.
- To identify students with drug related problems and encourage them to seek help.
- Set up support services within the school - school based nurse, year level coordinators, form teachers, chaplain.
- To apply the consequences consistently and fairly to students identified as users or suppliers.
- To 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

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

Prevention is vital

- Prevent the uptake of illegal drugs.
- Delay the uptake of drug use.
- Increase the positive alternatives to drug use.
- Foster a community that is supportive.
- Provide educational environments that are supportive and inclusive for young people.
- Increase community understanding of drugs.

Staff responsibilities

- Inform students of health consequences.
- Advise students of policy.
- Provide students with information regarding where they can access information and support structures in the school.
- Be vigilant of student behaviour.
- Act as a role model.



CSHS can implement the policy in the following ways

School Role/Responsibility	School accountability – example of policy implementation
Implement drug education programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided by Principles for Drug Education in Schools (Appendix A) • Informed by a situational analysis of school community needs and review of resources • Addressing drugs young people are likely to encounter now and in the future
Incorporate statement on education and intervention in school planning processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the context of the health curriculum • Including processes to identify and assist students with drug-related problems • Outlining intervention procedures for staff and students, including consequences for actions • Requirements for disclosure of drug information
Inform/engage the school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By disseminating information about drug use • Of school programs and procedures for managing drug-related incidents at school • In planning and delivery of plans and programs
Report on policy implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By providing a framework for program planning and student assessment • Including achievement of long and short-term program goals in the School Annual Report • The achievement of education outcomes related to minimizing drug related harm
Provide access to professional development	<p>Through workshops, seminars, conferences. Good practice models and networks</p> <p>To reassure teachers of their central role as facilitator of drug Education Queensland on basic counselling skills for teachers</p>

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four year review process.