



The Armidale School

Drug Policy

Category	Policy
Intended Audience	Staff/Parents/Students
Embargoes	
Date of Issue	1999
Keywords	
Manager	Headmaster
Last Update	2009
Author	Headmaster
Page(s)	3

Drug Policy

PREAMBLE

The use of recreational drugs such as marijuana and other banned substances is an increasing problem for school-age users across Australia. All educators fear drug taking within their schools and good schools such as TAS take a very strong stance on drug and alcohol use to provide the deterrent which it is hoped will separate them from trends in society generally.

However, despite the drug education programme in place at TAS and other schools and the laws in place prohibiting the use of drugs, there will be occasions when students will unfortunately choose to ignore what is clearly the right path. Fortunately, TAS has had few incidents where boys have been found involved in drugs over the years. For whatever reason; our isolation from the city, the boarding environment or the many activities and opportunities which keep students busy and productive through the week, we compare well to many other good schools on the issue of drug use.

However, no school is immune to the pressures of wider society and the use of drugs will surface from time to time. The long standing dilemma of what to do with students found involved with drugs will thus present itself to all schools. Whilst it may be clear that drug traffickers cannot be a part of schools such as TAS, the issue of what to do with the occasional drug user and particularly the student who may be sound in all other areas is less clear.

Involvement in drugs at school takes place at a number of levels. Principles of fairness would generally dictate that these students be treated differently. The student who supplies drugs and encourage others to use them, whether by sale or otherwise, is a more significant threat to the school community than the student who makes the poor judgement of accepting drugs offered to him.

Whatever the manner of dealing with these individuals, it is important that the school be able to reassure all of its families that it will not allow those involved with drugs to operate in its midst. Any decision to allow a student involved with drugs to re-enter the school must identify means by which the school can guarantee that that individual will not be involved with drugs again whilst at the school.

THE POLICY

The handling and usage of illicit drugs are expellable offences at The Armidale School. Whilst special circumstances will always be taken into account, it is the general policy of the school to expel those who bring drugs onto the campus and supply them to other students. It may also be the case that students who are involved in the use of drugs, even if it can be reasonably believed that they do so for the first time, will be expelled. The same conditions apply to any student coming onto the school grounds affected by a banned substance.

In cases where a student has engaged in an expellable offence, that student will initially be suspended pending proper consultation with parents and an opportunity for the student to be heard on the matter.

From time to time a student who is otherwise held in high regard in the TAS community may take the poor decision to become involved with illicit drugs or other banned substances supplied by another party. In such instances the school wishes neither to soften its stance on drugs nor terminate the schooling of the otherwise good student without due consideration. In such cases the school may reinstate the student, following a suitable period of suspension, on the proviso that he, and his family, agree that the student enrol in the Drug Avoidance Programme and remain in that programme at the discretion of the Headmaster.

The Drug Avoidance Programme combines appropriate counselling with regular urine screening conducted under the guidance of the School Doctor. Pathology for this testing is bulk billed and there will be no charge to parents associated with drug screening.

The principle of screening for drugs within the programme is a simple one. A number of drugs, including cannabis, remain in the system for a sufficient length of time to be detected effectively by weekly screening. Such regular testing can provide a reasonable guarantee to the family and to the school that the student in question is not again taking drugs. At the same time, the otherwise good student is given a second chance at TAS.

It will always be the case that parents will be contacted as soon as is practicable where a student is found to be involved with drugs. The family will then be duly consulted on disciplinary action, including cases where expulsion is deemed necessary and measures for rehabilitation. Some families may find the Drug Avoidance Programme unacceptably intrusive and no student would be entered into testing without parental permission. In these cases, families may opt to leave the school.

Following contact with parents, the school may also contact police during or following investigations into drug use.

This policy applies equally to students who are found to be involved with drugs whilst on school grounds, under the care of the school at other times including boarders on leave and to any student who is convicted in a criminal court for drug abuse.