

***BOWEN
CLUSTER
OF SCHOOLS
DRUG
POLICY***

INCORPORATING: BOWEN STATE HIGH SCHOOL
BOWEN STATE SCHOOL
ST MARYS PRIMARY SCHOOL
MERINDA STATE PRIMARY SCHOOL
QUEENS BEACH PRIMARY SCHOOL

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1. RATIONALE

The use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs involves complex issues, and often result from a combination of factors. The response of the Bowen Cluster of schools is therefore comprehensive.

This policy and subsequent procedures have been developed in consultation with staff and have been endorsed by each school.

The Bowen Cluster of schools drug policy is binding on all members of the school community while they are on school premises or at a school function or excursion where there are students present. This includes students, parents, staff, volunteer staff, ground staff and other workers. The policy also applies to school visitors and any functions held on school premises, unless otherwise negotiated with the principal.

This policy aims to:

1. Promote and maintain a health promoting school environment in which the welfare of all school community members is paramount.
2. Identify the role of the Bowen Cluster school community in the prevention of drug related problems.
3. Document the school community's agreed position on, and accepted procedures for dealing with drug-related incidents and problems.

2. PREVENTION OF UNSAFE AND UNLAWFUL DRUG USE

The Bowen Cluster school communities will ensure the following preventative measures are implemented :

1. Every two years, a needs assessment is conducted to determine the issues of greatest prevalence within the school community. Data from this needs assessment are used to plan the school community health and drug education program.
2. This policy supports the Bowen Cluster in striving toward the achievement of:
 - A well coordinated drug education curriculum;
 - Fair and just intervention processes and
 - Clearly stated rules that define acceptable behaviour for the total school community.
3. Health and drug education is taught as part of a comprehensive health education program. The program consists of a balance of utility knowledge, attitudes and values clarification and skill development appropriate to the developmental level of the students.

4. Funding is available through Cluster for external expertise and professional development for teachers.
5. Individual schools to decide which publications are appropriate.
6. The Bowen Cluster is involved in parent and community health education programs wherever possible.
7. The drug policy is reviewed every 2 years. The school health committee will assume responsibility for the review process. The maintenance of this policy is the responsibility of the school community.

3. INTERVENTION

It is likely that, at some time, drug-related incidents will occur on school premises or involve members of the school community, and require a response from the school. A school with a comprehensive drug policy that addresses both intervention and prevention will be well placed to respond to such incidents in a planned and co-ordinated manner.

These intervention procedures are designed to address alcohol, tobacco and other drug related problems to ensure the health and well being of all parties concerned are represented. All intervention procedures conform to legal requirements.

The Bowen Cluster does not permit students while on school premises, at any school function, excursion or camp to:

- Smoke and/or possess tobacco products;
- Consume and/or possess alcohol;
- Deliberately inhale volatile substances (solvents);
- Posses and/or use pharmaceutical drugs for non-medical purposes;
- Possess and/or use illegal drugs in accordance with the Misuse of Drugs Act.
- Possess, illegal implements

4. RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS OF DRUG USE

The procedures outlined below have been developed with the health and welfare of students in mind. They should be followed where possible and any variations should be discussed with the Principal and student services personnel.

1. Establish and respond to student's immediate safety. Apply, or organise to apply, first aid where necessary (follow normal school emergency procedures for a medical problem).
2. Accompany the student and take the substances involved immediately to the school administrative block. If in class send a responsible student to administration to seek assistance. Refer the incident to the Principal/Deputy Principal.

3. The school administration should identify a person to be responsible for managing the incident, to be referred to as the “Incident Manager”. The school counsellor (or other appropriate person) should be advised that an incident has occurred and that it may be necessary for the counsellor to become involved as a student or family support person. The selection of a support person should take into account issues including ethnicity, language, culture, background and gender of the student (and family) concerned. The Incident Manager may elect to form a small group of people to assist with the management of the incident.
4. The Incident Manager should establish and validate the facts by interviewing relevant staff and students. Questioning should establish the substances and person involved, and where and when the incident occurred. When questioning, recognise cultural differences, because students from some cultures, such as Australian Aboriginal culture, do not necessarily respond to questioning in the same way as do European Australians.
5. The Principal should advise the outcomes of the interview to the school health committee representative and recommend appropriate courses of action.

Once it has been established that a drug-related incident has occurred, a number of actions can be taken. Actions may vary considerably depending on the details of the incident, including the substance involved, the behavioural history of the student identified as having a part in the incident and the impact of or upon other students.

Some suggested actions include

- **Smoking:** Schools views tobacco smoking as a serious offence for a range of reasons. Many adult smokers begin smoking regularly during adolescence. There is a range of serious health related problems associated with smoking. Students who sell or supply tobacco products to other students are committing an offence. If students are found smoking at school parents/caregivers will be notified by the Deputy Principal/Incident Manager and a letter sent home. Students will be offered counselling and will face disciplinary action in accordance with the school community’s Managing Student Behaviour or Pastoral Care Programs.
- **Alcohol and solvents:** possession and/or consumption of alcohol or deliberate inhalation of solvents will require the Principal/Deputy Principal/Incident Manager to contact parent/caregivers and send a letter home. Students will be offered counselling and will face disciplinary action in accordance with the school community’s Managing Student Behaviour or Pastoral Care Programs.
- **Illicit drugs:** if possession or use of an illicit drug is suspected, the Principal/Deputy Principal/Incident Manager will contact the police and at the same time a member (s) of the family will be contacted to be present. The Principal/Deputy Principal/Incident Manager will ask students to empty the contents of their school bags, pockets, etc. Searches may be undertaken only when a reasonable suspicion exists. It is recommended that, wherever possible, police officers conduct the search.

If possession, use, sale or supply of a prohibited drug such (as defined in the school drug policy) is confirmed, the parent/caregiver will be informed immediately. The Principal will determine if the police will be called. In the absence of a student's parent or caregiver, the student support person or a teacher nominated by the student will always be present at any police interview that takes place on school premises. The student will be offered counselling and will face disciplinary action in accordance with the school community's Managing Students Behaviour and/or Pastoral Care programs. If an illicit drug is confiscated, the Principal will call the police to arrange disposal of the drug.

5. ASSISTANCE AND REFERRAL

Where appropriate, counselling will be made available to students by the student services staff. Students will be referred to relevant agencies after discussion between the student, student services personnel, the principal and the parents/caregivers.

Confidential written records will be maintained by the school nurse, or other relevant person, about incidents of drug use. If no drug use is detected but strong suspicion exists, it should be reported to the school nurse, who will keep confidential written notes. Only staff members who need to know will be informed of any incidents of drug use and kept up-to-date with the case. However, if suspension results, all staff will be notified verbally by the Principal. All staff should be reminded that they are required to maintain strict confidentiality.

6. IDENTIFICATION OF DRUG-RELATED PROBLEMS

The existing welfare/pastoral care system of Bowen School Cluster will be used to assist staff members to identify alcohol, tobacco and other drug-related problems and monitor students where necessary.

When drug use is suspected, the incident should be referred to Principal, Deputy Principal or Incident Manager. The procedures for reporting drug-related incidents (school behaviour management policy) should be applied.