

Department of **Education**  
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Drug Education and Drug  
Management in Schools

# Policy



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# Drug Education and Drug Management in Schools Policy

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## 1. Scope (audience and applicability)

This policy applies to all people who provide and support learning in schools and senior secondary schools (colleges) and early learning settings including Child and Family Centres, Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) and child care facilities.

## 2. Purpose

A systemic drug education and drug management policy is essential to ensure all educational leaders have a consistent approach to providing drug education and managing drug related incidents including the confiscation of licit and illicit drugs.

Leaders should be aware that there may be legal ramifications if they were to take unilateral action that is inconsistent with the [nationally accepted protocols](#) and departmental policies and procedures for managing drug-related incidents in schools.

## 3. Definitions

**Drug:** A substance which produces a psychoactive effect. Within the context of the [National Drug Strategic Framework](#), the term drug is used generically to include tobacco, alcohol, pharmaceutical drugs and illicit drugs. The [National Drug Strategic Framework](#) also includes strategies to address the harmful use of other substances, including inhalants.

**Drug-related incident:** Any occasion involving alcohol, tobacco and/or other drug use and/or the possession, distribution or supply of a drug or drug-related equipment.

**Drug-related issues:** All issues associated with drugs, including those that arise from personal use and use by another person or persons.

**Illicit drug:** A drug for which the production, sale, possession or use is prohibited. An alternative term is 'illegal drug'.

**Pharmaceutical drug:** Drugs available through pharmacies, supermarkets or stores including over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

**Prescribed person:** Principal, teacher or member of staff of any Tasmanian Government school and early learning settings including Child and Family Centres, ECIS and child care facilities.

**Psychoactive effects:** The effects produced by a drug or substance that alter mental processes including mood, cognition, thinking or behaviour. There are a range of substances that produce a psychoactive effect such as energy drinks, performance enhancing drinks/drugs, sugar and caffeine which impact on learning and behaviour.

**Safe and supportive school environment:** Environments which will provide for the physical, physiological, psychological, social, cultural, aesthetic and intellectual development of students (as defined in the [National Safe Schools Framework](#)).

**School community:** The school community is generally considered to comprise of students, school staff (for example teachers and other professionals, administrators and other support staff) and parents/guardians and other carers.

**Unsanctioned drug:** A drug that's use is restricted by law, school authorities and/or school policies/guidelines. It includes illicit, licit and pharmaceutical drugs, being used illicitly.

#### 4. Policy Statement

Tasmanian Government schools will have in place policies and procedures that outline the provision of drug education and managing drug related incidents.

These will be developed in accordance with:

- The [Memorandum of Understanding between Tasmania Police and Tasmanian Schools and Colleges – Guidelines for managing drug-related incidents in Tasmanian schools.](#)
- The [Drug Education and Drug Management in Schools Procedure](#)
- The Principles of Harm Minimisation.

**Harm minimisation:** The [National Drug Strategy](#) and the [Tasmanian Drug Strategy](#) are based on the philosophy of 'harm minimisation'. It is considered to be the most useful approach to drug-related issues in that it aims to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs for individuals, their families and friends, and the community. Its key concept is that drug use should be minimised and that harm from drug use and psychoactive substances should be limited. Harm minimisation involves a range of approaches to prevent or reduce drug-related harm, including prevention, early intervention, specialist treatment, supply control, safer drug use and abstinence.

- It involves a balance between demand reduction, supply reduction and harm reduction strategies aimed at promoting better health, social and economic outcomes for the community and the individual.
- According to the harm minimisation approach, schools and other educational settings, while acknowledging that it is likely that some students will experiment with drugs, should neither condone nor encourage the misuse of drugs by young people.
- It is an approach most likely to discourage high risk behaviours and encourage safer behaviours.
- In educational settings this means encouraging personal choice and informed decision-making by students as the foundation of effective drug prevention and intervention strategies, and it means the provision of a supportive environment that maximises the factors known to be protective for students in reducing risk-taking behaviours.

#### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

Deputy Secretary Early Years and Schools must:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• provide advice and support for the enactment of this policy.</li><li>• ensure liaison occurs with Department of Police and Emergency Management (DPEM) to ensure the <a href="#"><u>Memorandum of Understanding between Tasmania Police and Tasmanian Schools and Colleges – Guidelines for managing drug-related incidents in Tasmanian</u></a></li></ul>
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	<a href="#">schools</a> is up to date.
General Managers Learning Services must:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote this policy and ensure that schools adhere to the requirements of this policy.</li> <li>• ensure schools and senior secondary schools (colleges) implement this policy and associated procedures that outline the provision of drug education and managing drug related incidents. (Schools can rebadge with their own logo if preferred).</li> </ul>
Principal Network Leaders must:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work collaboratively with schools to ensure the <i>Drug Education and Drug Management in Schools Policy</i> and <a href="#">Procedure</a> are implemented.</li> <li>• ensure the <i>Drug Education and Drug Management in Schools Policy</i> and <a href="#">Procedure</a> are reflected in the school's School Improvement Plan.</li> </ul>
Curriculum Services must:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• liaise with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), related NGOs (e.g. Drug Education Network, DEN) and other stakeholders around policy related issues.</li> <li>• liaise with Strategic Policy and Planning on policy related issues.</li> <li>• provide curriculum support for drug education.</li> </ul>
School principals must:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that the school provides a safe and supportive environment for all students.</li> <li>• implement the <i>Drug Education and Drug Management in Schools Policy</i> and <a href="#">Procedure</a> that outline the provision of drug education and managing drug related incidents.</li> <li>• raise awareness of the <i>Drug Education and Drug Management in Schools Policy</i> and <a href="#">Procedure</a> with staff, students, parents and the wider school community.</li> </ul>
Teachers and other school staff must:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contribute to the provision of a safe and supportive environment in the school.</li> <li>• comply with the <i>Drug Education and Drug Management in Schools Policy</i> and <a href="#">Procedure</a> that outline the provision of drug education and managing drug related incidents.</li> </ul>
Parents/carers are to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adhere to the <i>Drug Education and Drug Management Policy</i> and <a href="#">Procedure</a> that outline the provision of drug education and managing drug related incidents.</li> </ul>
Learners must:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adhere to the <i>Drug Education and Drug Management in Schools Policy</i> and <a href="#">Procedure</a> that outline the provision of drug education and managing drug related incidents.</li> </ul>

## 6. Associated Documents and Materials

The following documents are available from [www.education.tas.gov.au](http://www.education.tas.gov.au) (Search for the Doc ID)

- [Drug Education and Drug Management in Schools Procedure](#) (Doc ID: TASED-4-5662)
- Learner Wellbeing and Behaviour Policy (Doc ID: TASED-4-1734)

- Learner Health Care and Safety Policy (Doc ID: TASED-4-2986)
- Child Protection and Children in Care (Doc ID: TASED-4-1723)
- Work Health and Safety – Smoke-free Workplaces (DocID: TASED-4-2306)
- [Memorandum of Understanding between Tasmania Police and Tasmanian Schools and Colleges – Guidelines for managing drug-related incidents in Tasmanian schools](#)
- [National Drug Strategic Framework](#)
- [Appendix 1: Principles for school drug education](#)
- [Appendix 2: Action Plan: drug-related incident](#)
- [Appendix 3: Managing media in relation to a drug-related incident](#)

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Position of authorising person:	Deputy Secretary, Early Years and Schools
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# Appendix I

## Principles for school drug education

The *Principles for School Drug Education* are based on a set of Principles devised by the University of Canberra in a document called *Drug Education in Schools* in 1994, which were revised by the Commonwealth under the auspices of the *National School Drug Education Strategy, 2004*.

1. Base drug education on sound theory and current research and use evaluation to inform decisions.
2. Embed drug education within a comprehensive whole school approach to promoting health and wellbeing.
3. Establish drug education outcomes that are appropriate to the school context and contribute to the overall goal of minimising drug-related harm.
4. Promote a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment as part of seeking to prevent or reduce drug-related harm.
5. Promote collaborative relationships between students, staff, families and the broader community in the planning and implementation of school drug education.
6. Provide culturally appropriate, targeted and responsive drug education that addresses local needs, values and priorities.
7. Acknowledge that a range of risk and protective factors impact on health and education outcomes, and influence choices about drug use.
8. Use consistent policy and practice to inform and manage responses to drug-related incidents and risks.
9. Locate programs within a curriculum framework, thus providing timely, developmentally appropriate and ongoing drug education.
10. Ensure that teachers are resourced and supported in their central role in delivering drug education programs.
11. Use student-centred, interactive strategies to develop students' knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

Provide accurate information and meaningful learning activities that dispel myths about drug use and focus on real life contexts and challenges.

## Appendix 2

### Action Plan: drug-related incident

When an illicit or unsanctioned drug is found with a student or a student is found apparently affected by drug use, or there is evidence of this, the following steps are to be followed. Schools may choose to add intermediate steps and specific names to the chart.

1. Attend to the immediate health and safety needs of the student/s or situation
2. Send for assistance: first-aid officer and/or senior staff person.

**Do not leave student/s unattended** or, if there is no apparent health and safety risk involved, escort student/s to the principal, senior staff person or principal's nominee.

3. Call ambulance or provide first-aid with trained staff if required.
4. Report to principal or senior staff person or principal's nominee.
5. Record all details of the incident, including actions taken, and seek witnesses to the incident

**From this point responsibility for action lies with the principal or his/her delegate.**

6. Inform parents/guardians of student/s of the circumstances, if the student is under the age of 18. Seek legal advice from the department regarding the school's duty of care.
7. Take steps in accordance with the [Memorandum of Understanding between Tasmania Police and Tasmanian Schools and Colleges – Guidelines for managing drug-related incidents in Tasmanian schools](#).
8. Implement the school's counselling and disciplinary procedures, with appropriate support in place for student/s and staff involved. Note: if drugs are illicit, police may initiate intervention procedures.
9. Inform school staff, students, families, school associations on a need-to-know basis, as necessary, having regard to issues of confidentiality. This may include reference to the support services available to the student/parents in the wider community.
10. Refer any media to the department's Communications and Media Unit, in collaboration with your General Manager Learning Service.

## Appendix 3

# Managing media in relation to a drug-related incident

When a drug-related incident occurs in a school, whether possession, use or distribution of an unsanctioned or illicit substance, the media may hear of it and approach members of the school community for comment. Should this occur the following procedure is advised:

1. Advise the media representative that you will ring them back, or ask them to ring back at a designated time. **Do not** respond off the cuff.
2. Ring your General Manager Learning Service to brief them about the drug-related incident (if this has not already been done) and to inform them of the media contact. Decide which one of you will take the next step.
3. Ring the *Department's Communications and Media Unit* on **6165 5724** and talk to the Manager or to one of the Communications Consultants. On their advice, decide on a strategy for responding to the media considering Confidentiality and Media Management on page 12 in the *Memorandum of Understanding between Tasmania Police and Tasmanian Schools and Colleges – Guidelines for managing drug-related incidents in Tasmanian schools*.
4. Nominate one media spokesperson for the school, usually the principal or the General Manager Learning Service (or nominee), in collaboration with the Communications and Media Unit.
5. In collaboration with the Communications and Media Unit and General Manager Learning Service, prepare a written press release to provide to the media who seek information. Fax or email media release when requested. Name the media spokesperson with whom the media representatives may follow up if they wish. **Names of students and teachers involved in the incident should not be used.**
6. Direct any follow-up phone calls or other form of contact to the media spokesperson nominated. **No-one else should speak to the media.** The principal must ensure that all parties are aware of this.
7. Media spokesperson should record times and dates and broad content of all conversations with the media for future reference.
8. A similar consultation process should determine who within the wider school community (staff, students, families, and other interested parties like school associations) should be informed of the incident and in what detail.