



SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY (STUDENT)

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1. Policy and Rationale

The possession, use, or sale of alcohol, marijuana, or any illegal narcotic substance, or any paraphernalia or equipment associated with the use of these substances is not permitted on college grounds at any time, or at off-campus events sponsored by the college.

In addition to the physical and psychological dangers resulting from drug use, a student under the influence of marijuana, illegal drugs, or alcohol is not permitted to attend academic activities, athletics, or extra-curricular clubs.

The use of such substances in the college community would be in clear violation of the Islamic ethos of the College. Islam prohibits the use of intoxicants and mind altering substances, both in small and large quantities, whether it is alcohol, drugs, fermented drinks, or something else. "The first declaration made by the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, concerning this matter was that not only is *Khamr* (wine or alcohol) prohibited but that the definition of *Khamr* extends to any substance that intoxicates, in whatever form or under whatever name it may appear.

Without question there is an absolute incompatibility between the state of mind needed for attention to scholastic activity and that state of mind influenced to any degree by the use of alcohol or drugs. Additionally, students who bring alcohol or drugs have violated the trust of the college community and impaired the ability of the college to carry out its mission.

Australian Islamic College (AIC) also believes that experimenting with marijuana, alcohol, or other illegal drugs on evenings or weekends is dangerous and potentially harmful to children and adolescents. The extended use of these substances will harm the lungs and other organs, impair mental functions, weaken the ability to concentrate and think, and significantly affect motivation and the ability to accomplish school work. The College will view providers/suppliers of illicit drugs as people who endanger the health and future potential of others and consequently may terminate their membership of the School community.

The possession, supply, or use of an illegal drug is an offence against the law and the police may be notified in such circumstances.

2. Purpose and Intent of Disciplinary and Guidance Actions

AIC has developed a series of actions for the college, students, and his/her family to take when a student has possessed, used, or sold alcohol or illegal drugs on school grounds. The purpose of the series of action firstly, is to send a powerful message that the use of illegal substances is not tolerated at any level. Secondly, but certainly equally important, the policy and the disciplinary and guidance actions are intended to generate a school climate that will engage the broader community in comprehensive and thoughtful efforts to stop the use of alcohol and illegal drugs by adolescents.

Many schools state that a student who uses or sells illegal drugs on school grounds will be expelled from school. AIC recognizes that in some cases dismissal from the student body may be necessary. However, for example, there is a significant difference between the selling of illegal drugs on campus by an older adolescent and a single purchase of drugs by a young adolescent experimenting for the first time. Both actions require strong action, but should also be contoured to the individual student's specific conduct and situation.

Furthermore, severe punishment is not a sufficient response to combat comprehensively the use of alcohol and illegal drugs by adolescents. Long-term suspension or expulsions from school are often stated as penalties in order to send a message that the use of alcohol and illegal drugs is not tolerated. The logic implies that, if the consequence is severe enough, and the message unequivocal, then students will not use illegal drugs on school grounds. As sound and just as this policy may be, it has not been a sufficient, nor completely effective response to the use of marijuana and other illegal drugs by adolescents.

Why are these penalties not sufficient to prevent our children and adolescents from experimenting with and using drugs and alcohol? First, some adolescents just do not believe that occasional use and/or just experiment with marijuana or alcohol is really dangerous or habit forming. While there is extensive and valid information to demonstrate the dangers of occasional use and experimentation, especially in early adolescence, some adolescents just don't accept the reality of the dangers. Secondly, when the penalties for use are so severe and the adolescent culture has such a taboo against "ratting" on a friend, adolescents keep silent when their friends become involved with drugs.

The **Non-Disciplinary Assistance Group** is composed of coordinators and religious staff available to talk to students and teachers about concerns related to alcohol and other drugs as a religious and health, not a disciplinary, issue. The group's goal is to assist in the preservation of the health and well-being of the AIC School community by focusing on valuing our physical and spiritual selves and following the commands of our Creator. It deals only with identification, prevention, and intervention, and gives students and teachers a consistent place to take their concerns about student alcohol and other drug use. The advisor of a referred student may be involved upon request of the student, or when the group feels there is strong cause for concern. Likewise, the parents are notified as soon as the group has substantial concerns about a child.

AIC policy and range of disciplinary and guidance actions take a very strong and clear stand against the use of illegal drugs and alcohol. The policy is also intended to provide a climate at AIC that would enable students and adults to discuss more openly the actual or potential use of drugs or alcohol. A policy that allows students to learn from their mistakes and to be reintegrated into the school community, a policy that provides an alternative to the most extreme consequences will enable students to discuss more candidly the actual situation. We intend to develop an open and trusting climate that we hope will encourage adolescents to

work cooperatively with adults, parents, and teachers to combat effectively the use of alcohol and illegal drugs.

3. Disciplinary and Guidance Actions

When a student is found to have possessed, used, or sold alcohol, marijuana, or other illegal narcotic substances, or any paraphernalia or equipment associated with the use of these substances on college grounds or during school-sponsored events off campus, the college management will consider long-term suspension, expulsion from school, or a series of education and guidance actions.

The response of the School will take into account the nature and circumstances of the offence, and the record of the student. The physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health and well-being of students is the priority.

Sanctions available to the School include:

- informing and consulting parents
- providing counselling
- loss of privileges
- suspension from school
- referral to external agencies
- notification of Police
- transfer to another school

Sanctions will be taken as appropriate to the individual case. The Principal retains the right to decide upon appropriate sanctions in all circumstances. The college management retains the absolute right to determine what plan of action may be offered to the student and his/her family.

The plan of disciplinary, educational and guidance actions, as an alternative to long-term suspension or expulsion from school, may be offered if the student and his/her family express a clear willingness to engage in a strenuous regimen of activities designed to understand the meaning and implications of the behaviour, and to change irrevocably the behaviour. The college must be absolutely convinced that the student will never again use alcohol or illegal drugs on school grounds. In some cases evidence that the student is not using illegal drugs off campus will also be required.

Any violation of the policy on the use of alcohol and illegal narcotic substances will result in expulsion from the college.

The plan of action will be developed in consultation with the school management, the student, and his/her family. The plan of action will be appropriate to the age of the student and to the specific behaviour that violated the policy; not all of the components listed below will be used in every case. Students who sell alcohol or illegal drugs on campus, however, will be required to complete all of the components of the Action Plan as described below. The college administration has the absolute right to determine the specific final components of the plan;

the school administration also has the absolute right to determine if the student has satisfactorily completed the requirements of the plan. Re-admission to the college after a violation of the alcohol and illegal drug policy is at the sole discretion of the college.

COMPONENTS OF THE ACTION PLAN

I. Suspension from School

After a determination has been made that the student has violated the policy against the use of alcohol or illegal drugs, he/she will be suspended from school for a time period sufficient to develop the plan, agree to and commit to the plan, and begin the implementation of the plan.

II. Suspension from Athletics and Extra-Curricular Activities

A. Athletics

If the student at the time of suspension is a member of an athletic team, he/she will not be permitted to play in an interscholastic game for the remainder of the athletic season or six weeks, whichever is longer. He/She will be encouraged to continue as a member of the team and participate fully in all practices.

B. Student Activities

If the student at the time of suspension is serving in a leadership position in a major activity (e.g. Yearbook, Postscript), or in an activity that performs in public (e.g. Mock Trial, Any leadership activities, Ambassador program), he/she will be suspended from that leadership position or not permitted to perform in public for that activity for the remainder of the semester or six weeks, whichever is longer. He/She will be encouraged to continue as a member of the activity and participate fully in all practices and rehearsals.

- C. The decision about the length of suspension from school and suspension from public performances is made based on the specific situation, the specific misbehavior, the age of the student and any other considerations the administration considers relevant and important. The decision of the school administration is final and made at the sole discretion and judgment of the college management team.

D.

III. Assessment and Evaluation

- A. The student will voluntarily enter a course of counseling appropriate to the findings of the evaluation. The appropriate course of counselling will be mutually determined by the student, parents, and college management.
- B. The confidential information from the evaluation will not be sent to the college. Only the evaluator's recommendations must be shared.

IV. Counselling

- A. The student will voluntarily enter a course of counseling appropriate to the findings of the evaluation. The appropriate course of counselling will be mutually determined by the student, parents, and school management.

- B. The counselor will send to the college regular confidential reports of the progress of counseling. The school is interested in regular attendance and good faith efforts on the part of the student and his/her family.

V. Research Project

- A. The student will conduct a research project to learn about the effects of illegal drug use or alcohol on an individual, his/her family, and society in general.
- B. The scope of the project will be appropriate to the age of the student.
- C. In addition to academic research concluding with a written research report, the student may be requested to visit and observe jails, courthouses, or other appropriate sites or agencies.
- D. The student will write a biographical essay of a person involved with drugs or alcohol whom he/she has met and interviewed.

VI. Physical and Personal Challenge

- A. The student will voluntarily enter into and complete a physical and personal challenge that results in actual accomplishment at a demanding level. Examples of such a challenge are: relay, marathon, wilderness camping, meditation, karate, construction of a building, artistic performance, or piece of work.
- B. The challenge is intended to provide direct, concrete experience with risk, excitement, joy, companionship, effort, perseverance, accomplishment, and personal fulfillment without the use of illegal drugs and alcohol.

VII. Community Service

- A. The student may be requested to participate in a project or organization to “make-up” for what was done wrong or “restore” what was harmed.
- B. Participation should be voluntary and substantial. It will extend over a period of time. The intent is for the student to experience how a person can be significantly affected by helping others.

VIII. Student Assistance Program or Peer Mediation

- A. The student will participate in a program at the college to help other students examine their potential or actual use of illegal drugs or alcohol in a confidential process.

Implementation and Schedule

The student may be re-admitted to school following consideration by the administration of:

1. Declaration of a good faith effort to develop and complete a plan
2. Development of a specific and detailed plan
3. Completion of phases I and II and the beginning of phase III

Expulsion

Repeated offences will cause expulsion from school.

Reviewed date: [August 2019]
Approved by: [Executive Principal]
Next review: [December 2020]