



BRIDGE HOUSE

PRE-PRIMARY · PREPARATORY · COLLEGE

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

Created: R Malcolm
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1. PREAMBLE:

In all of our policies:

Any contravention of South African Law is a contravention of the school rules. Any reference to any one gender includes the other genders (where applicable). The reference to any word in the singular shall include a reference to the plural (where applicable); and a reference to the plural shall include a reference to the singular.

This policy has been drawn up in order to confront the reality of substance abuse in a responsible and constructive manner. Where substance abuse occurs, the underlying aim is to change behaviour before enacting any punitive measures, and in so doing develop and maintain healthy levels of self-confidence and self-worth. While it will always be the school's aim to help in situations of abuse, it must be stressed that the school will always view the possession, exchange and use of tobacco, vaping paraphernalia, alcohol, and illegal drugs or related equipment and the abuse of legal drugs, in a very serious light. This will apply at school, at school events or when a student is associated with the school. Any such behaviour could result in the matter being handed over to the South African Police Services for investigation.

This policy has been drawn up in the course of a thorough process of discussion and consultation involving students, teachers, parents, and the Board of Directors. It needs to be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Conduct, the Disciplinary Procedures Guidelines, the Acceptance of Place contract, and other policy documents. The school will endeavour to review and adapt this policy, when necessary, in conjunction with its stakeholders.

2. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES:

- 2.1. The school acknowledges that we are part of a greater community and are in partnership with parents to ensure the best for their children.
- 2.2. The school will always endeavour to ensure a safe environment, free of all substance abuse, in which students will not be exposed to harmful substances.
- 2.3. The school realises that a wide variety of substances is available to our students. We believe that substance abuse is harmful to an individual's normal development, and we encourage a healthy,

drug-free life. In order to do this, we seek to empower students to say 'no' to drugs and other addictive substances.

- 2.4. It is our policy to support those of our students who need help in this area and who can benefit from help.
- 2.5. The school does not condone the inappropriate use of alcohol, tobacco or any other potentially harmful substance by any member of its community (e.g. use or possess cigarette rollers, lighter and paper, e-cigarettes, vaping paraphernalia, hubbly bubbly pipes and similar products and materials.)
- 2.6. The school will not tolerate the possession and use of prohibited substances and it opposes the abuse and misuse of legal drugs.

3. THIS POLICY APPLIES:

- 3.1. on Bridge House School premises, including the boarding house;
- 3.2. at any activity organised by Bridge House (eg: sports tours, Grade camps, cultural outings, etc.);
- 3.3. when a student represents the school or is identified as belonging to the school.

4. UNDERTAKING:

The School will endeavour to:

- 4.1. present age-appropriate prevention and information sessions to all students so as to actively empower them to deal with the many aspects of the issue;
- 4.2. present education and prevention sessions to parents, and to supply information about internal and external support structures when needed;
- 4.3. make information and training available to teachers;
- 4.4. recommend relevant counselling services;
- 4.5. involve outside organisations (e.g. Cape Town Drug Counselling Centre) on a consultative basis where appropriate;
- 4.6. support the idea of a healthy life, free of substance abuse;
- 4.7. implement a student-support structure - if this is deemed necessary.

5. SUBSTANCE ABUSE:

The use of mood-altering or habit-forming substances by students (without a doctor's guidance) will not be tolerated.

Students may not :

- 5.1. use or possess prohibited substances e.g. dagga/marijuana/cannabis (and related by-products), ecstasy, cocaine, etc.
- 5.2. use or possess prescribed/non-prescribed medicines inappropriately (e.g. Ritalin, Panado, etc.)
- 5.3. use or possess solvents, inhalants, or other chemical agents inappropriately (e.g. thinners)
- 5.4. use or possess tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs;
- 5.5. use or possess e-cigarettes or vaping devices (inter alia: PVs, e-Go, Twisp, Juuls, etc.)

- 5.6. use or possess drug-related equipment (e.g. cigarette rollers, lighters and paper and Hookah pipes of various descriptions);
- 5.7. use or possess performance enhancing substances particularly, but not exclusively, those that are outlawed by the various sporting controlling bodies;
- 5.8. be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs;
- 5.9. consume alcoholic beverages;
- 5.10. be involved in procuring, or in transacting in, such substances.

The School recognises its responsibility to intervene if, in the school's opinion, a student's substance abuse outside school influences his health, achievement, behaviour or attendance; or if it is likely to influence other students negatively. This intervention will be in accordance with the Action Guidelines.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY:

This Policy recognises the following:

- 6.1. A student may use the services of the school counsellor who will explain the conditions of confidentiality as prescribed by the Health Professional's Council, before giving counselling. As a result of the ethics of the counselling professions, there may well be circumstances in which the school counsellor will not pass on information to parents or teachers disclosed in the course of counselling.
- 6.2. In the event of a student informing a teacher about substance abuse by him/herself or another person, teachers are not able to maintain absolute confidentiality as the school has a legal and professional responsibility to inform parents.
- 6.3. The school reserves the right, where it is deemed necessary, to inform the student body and broader school community of any situation involving transgressions of the Code of Conduct. However, the school will strive to protect the privacy and dignity of students in all circumstances.

7. ACTION GUIDELINES:

Considering the breadth of this problem in our society, the school encourages open communication in the best interests of the school community. Where a student appeals for help, the appropriate response by the school will be to refer the student for counselling, skills training and self-image support. The school's intention will always be to educate and rehabilitate first, before enforcing disciplinary action. In the event of suspected, confirmed or self-acknowledged substance abuse the school reserves the right to act in terms of these guidelines and its disciplinary procedures as it deems appropriate:

- 7.1. Each case will be considered individually.
- 7.2. Each case will be dealt with confidentiality (as described in paragraph 6), and parents will be informed and involved. In the event of suspicion of drug abuse, parents may be asked to arrange for an appropriate drug test (to be undertaken at the parents' expense) and

to inform the school of the results.

- 7.3. In the case of a positive drug test result, an agreement will be drawn up between the student, the parents, and the School. This agreement will specify, inter alia:
- o what treatment programme the student should undergo;
 - o whether a report should be supplied to the school detailing the student's progress in treatment;
 - o what further testing will be carried out where this is deemed necessary;
 - o the parents' responsibility to pay for the costs incurred where ongoing testing is deemed necessary;
 - o standards of work and levels of behaviour that the school will require from the student;
 - o consequences for any breach of this agreement.
- 7.4. Failure to comply with the request for testing (paragraph 7.2) or with the need to draw up an agreement (paragraph 7.3) may result in parents being required to remove the student from the school.
- 7.5. Consequences: Bearing in mind that each case will be dealt with individually, where disciplinary procedures are seen to be necessary by the school, the consequences that may result include (but are not limited to) the following and must be considered in conjunction with the Code of Conduct:
- 7.5.1. Using or possessing tobacco or alcohol or inappropriately using other legal drugs:
- o Detentions/Community Service
 - o Withdrawal of rights and privileges, including sport, cultural and social activities which form part of the Bridge House offering
 - o Suspension from school and / or boarding
 - o Expulsion from school and / or boarding
- 7.5.2. Using or possessing illegal drugs:
- o Suspension from school and / or boarding – while awaiting the outcome of a disciplinary hearing. This suspension removes the student from the school environment and into the care of his/her parents while allowing time for structures to be put in place to facilitate a fair assessment of the facts and the circumstances unique to each particular case.
 - o The disciplinary hearing is the process where the school would first determine innocence or guilt – and, in the event of a guilty verdict, then factor in all mitigating and/or aggravating circumstances before arriving at an appropriate sanction.

- o Withdrawal of rights and privileges, including attendance of sport, cultural and social activities which form part of the Bridge House offering
 - o Expulsion from school and / or boarding
- 7.5.3. Procuring and/or transacting in and/or distributing legal or illegal drugs or alcohol:
- o Expulsion from school

Where the offence is governed by any South African law or statute, the school may require the South African Police Service to investigate the matter and to institute legal proceedings.

8. FURTHER OPTIONS:

Should the school consider it necessary, drug testing may be instituted. The cost of any such drug testing will be for the parents' account.