



Ministry of Education, Science & Technology

POLICY IN DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN SCHOOLS

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

This Policy aims to:

- promote and maintain a healthy, safe and drug free environment in our schools in Fiji where the welfare of students is paramount;
- identify the role of the school community in the prevention of drug related problems;
- document the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology (Henceforth called 'the Ministry') agreed position on, and accepted procedures for dealing with drug related incidents.

2. POLICY

2.1 The Ministry does not permit the possession, consumption promotion, distribution, or sale of all drugs including alcohol, tobacco and marijuana. These will not be tolerated on school environment premises or at any school function within or outside the school. These drugs are:

- Marijuana and other illicit drugs
- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Inhalants

2.2 The Ministry recognises the social, cultural and ceremonial significance of yaqona but will not condone alcohol consumption in the school compound.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Introduction

Drug and substance abuse is ranked as one of the worst amongst Fiji's problems as it has detrimental effects on health, our society, the economy and security of the Nation.

The National Substance Abuse Advisory Council NSAAC is a statutory body that was established through the National Substance Abuse Advisory Council Act of 1998 to work under the Ministry. Cabinet has agreed that the primary objective of NSAAC should be, *'the promotion of health and the minimisation of harm associated with the abuse and misuse of alcohol and other substances for students in schools and the community as well'*.

The Ministry through the National Substance Abuse Advisory Council is required to provide policies and advice to government in relation to alcohol and other drug problems in Fiji.

One of NSAAC's key outputs is the provision of high policy and other advice on substance abuse related issues to Government and other relevant organizations.

This policy is written to provide the framework for dealing with drugs and substance abuse in schools before major drug, alcohol, tobacco and other drug use issues or incidents arise in schools.

3.2 Rationale

- The problem of drug and substance abuse is of national concern due to the social and economic costs to the people;
- The number of young people sent out from schools with drug and alcohol related cases as well as those caught by police and those treated at St Giles Hospital are increasing every year and early intervention is needed;
- Drugs and alcohol abuse is directly connected to the prevalence of many sexually transmitted diseases and HIV Aids, young people are the most vulnerable;
- Secondary and primary school students are at risk and we can no longer deny that drug and substance abuse is becoming a problem amongst our young people. Researches conducted in schools in 2004 and 2005 indicate the extent of the problem. The findings reveal that students are experimenting at a very young age;
- The effects of drug and substance abuse will be felt in the increase in social problems such as crime, high school drop out rate, family break ups, accidents and deaths and long term detrimental health effects.

3.3 Definitions

Drugs – “Any substance with the exception of food and water, which, when taken into the body, alters its function physically and psychologically”. Includes all legal and illegal drugs (World Health Organisation).

Drug related incident- occasion involving alcohol, tobacco and/ or other drug use and/ or the possession of a drug or drug – related equipment, including bongs, pipes, and syringes (except for legal medical use)

Drug related problems- comprehensive term that describes all problems associated with drugs, including those that arise from personal use and use by another person or persons.

Illicit drugs – unlawful drugs listed in Schedule 1 of the Illicit Drugs Control Act 2004.

National Substance Abuse Advisory Council Act – The legislation (ACT No 25 of 1998) which established the Substance Abuse Advisory Council, defines its functions and powers and provide for related matters.

Psychoactive drug - any substance that affects the central nervous system and alters mood, perception and consciousness. Psychoactive drugs can be categorised as depressants, stimulants and hallucinogens. Some drugs do not fit neatly into any one of these categories and are grouped as ‘others’.

School drug policy – set of brief statements outlining the school community’s agreed position on, and accepted procedures for dealing with drug related issues.

School drug policy guidelines and/ or procedures – a number of statements that detail the accepted procedures for dealing with drug- related issues. School drug policy guidelines may include appendices or references to other school, Education Department or other sector policies

Solvents/Inhalants – are substances that give off vapour at room temperatures, Example are glue, benzene, correction fluid thinner, polish remover, paint remover

Substances –

- Any liquor, psychoactive pharmaceutical or illicit drug
- Any volatile substance such as petrol certain fluorocarbons and anabolic steroid
- Any other chemical that changes the mental state and may be abused by a person to achieve that effect.

Talatala – an ordained minister of the church

Yaqona / Kava – is a general term to describe the drink prepared from the different parts of the pepper plant *piper methysticum*.

4. RELAVANT LEGISLATION AND OTHER LINKS

Relevant Legislation or Authority

- Education Act 1978
- Pharmacy and Poisons Act of 1985
- Fiji Constitution 1997
- Substance Abuse Advisory Council Act 1998
- Tobacco Control Act 1998
- Illicit Drug Control Act 2004
- Ministry of Education, Science & Technology School Code of Ethics 2005
- Liquor Act 2006
- Article 33 - UN Convention on the Rights of Children
- Outcome 4 Ministry of Education, Science & Technology Strategic Plan 2006 – 2008
- Behaviour Management Policy in Schools – School Code of **Ethics**

LINKAGES TO OTHER POLICIES/PLANS

- Linked to Outcome 4 of the Strategic Plan 2006 – 2008 of the Ministry, “Students will be safe and cared for”.
- Linked to Objective 14 of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Recommendations of the Education Commission/ Panel Report 2000 “Developing Students as Responsible Informed and Involved Citizens of Fiji and the world” through the development and support of curriculum initiatives that contribute to civic pride and values such as Family Life, STD and Substance Abuse Education.
- Also linked to Objective 24 (1) “Promoting A Healthy Life style” of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Education Commission/ Panel Report 2000.
- Linked to the Ministry Policy on the Management of Behaviour and Code of Conduct for students 2005.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 PREVENTION

One of the key priorities of the Ministry is the Protection and Care of Children from unsafe and unlawful drug use. The Ministry will implement the following preventative measures:

- a well resourced and relevant health promoting school, family life and drug education programmes to be incorporated in the New Curriculum Framework;
- a regular needs assessment to plan and update the Health Promoting School, Family Life and Drug Education Programme;
- regular professional development for staff teaching Health, Family Life and Drug Education;
- involvement of parents and community members in health and drug education programmes;
- regular awareness programmes for students, teachers, parents and the community through lectures, presentations, workshop, dissemination of drug information in the media and through the publication and distribution of drug education materials;
- regular review of the Drugs and Substance Abuse Policy.

This policy, procedures and the health promoting school education programmes are consistent with the Fiji Government policy framework in relation to drug use as outlined in the National Substance Abuse Advisory Act and the National Substance Abuse Master Plan. Both of the above documents stress the need for a comprehensive approach and emphasise two principles; first and foremost, *opposition to drug abuse and the second harm reduction.*

5.2 INTERVENTION

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

- 5.2.1 In case of suspected drug or substance abuse, respond to the student's immediate safety. Apply or organise to apply first aid where necessary (follow normal school emergency procedures for medical issues);
- 5.2.2 Accompany the student and take the substance involved immediately to the school Head Teacher or Principal;
- 5.2.3 If in a compromised environment, send a responsible student to seek immediate assistance from school administration;
- 5.2.4 Refer the incident to the Principal, Vice Principal, Head Teacher or Assistant Head Teacher. This person contacts local police who will be responsible for the testing of the drugs by the government analyst;

- 5.2.5 The school head/ principal writes to the PSE to inform that drugs have been taken for testing;
- 5.2.6 No disciplinary outcomes to be determined until after the analysis and a report back by the government analyst. For the safety and welfare of other students, the principal may temporarily discharge a student who is under investigation for possession or use of drugs;
- 5.2.7 The school administration will nominate a person (Vice Principal or Assistant Head Teacher) or a group of persons (Discipline Committee) to be responsible for managing the incident;
- 5.2.8 The line of actions to be taken by the person or persons responsible for managing the incident should be in accordance with that outlined in the Ministry's Managing Student Behaviour Policy. This policy is currently being developed under the guidance of the Acting Deputy Secretary for Primary and Secondary.

6. EFFECTIVE DATE January, 2008

7. REVIEW DATE January, 2009

8. KEY SEARCH WORDS

Drugs, alcohol, behaviour management, substance abuse, drugs, liquor, tobacco, inhalants, marijuana.

9. APPROVED BY PSE

SIGNATURE

DATE

APPENDICES – Solvents and their Potential Health Effects on Humans

SOLVENTS	CHEMICAL CONTENTS	MAJOR USES	EFFECTS ON HUMANS
1) PAINT THINNER	Methanol	❖ Paint Remover ❖ Embalming Fluids ❖ Inks ❖ Duplicating Fluids	❖ Headaches ❖ Dizziness ❖ nausea and blurred vision
2) CORRECTION FLUIDS BENZENE	TRI CHLOROETHANE	❖ used as a solvent for chlorinated rubbers, fats, oils waxes and resins	❖ Stinging and burning sensations and whitening of skin in human ❖ acute short term exposure to very high level of trichloromethane can cause death through cardiac arrhythmias and in one case massive liver damage. ❖ sleeping, confusion and feeling euphoria ❖ headache, dizziness blurred vision ❖ drowsiness, dizziness, headaches and unconsciousness in human ❖ Death may result from exposure to very high levels of benzene ❖ ingestion of large amount of benzene may result in vomiting, dizziness, convulsion and death in human ❖ long term inhalation of benzene causes disorders in the blood in humans. ❖ benzene specifically affects bone marrow (the tissue that produce blood cells) ❖ Excessive bleeding and damage to the immune system (by changes in blood levels of antibodies and loss of white blood cells) may develop ❖ menstrual disorders and a decrease size of ovaries have been observed in women occupationally exposed to high levels of benzene ❖ Increased, incidence of leukaemia cancer of the tissues that form white blood cells, has been observed in humans occupationally exposed to benzene.
3) DUNLOP GLUE	Polyurethane contains TDI Toluene DI-Isocyanate		❖ irritate all living tissues especially the mucous membranes of the eyes and the respiratory tracts ❖ it will cause severe irritation and bring tears if liquid isocyanate is splashed in the eyes. ❖ Vomiting, nausea and abdominal pain as well as breathing problems ❖ if you breath too much TD, within minutes your throat will begin to burn and deep coughing fits and choking sensations may follow ❖ a severe allergic reaction that can lead to a full blown asthmatic attack involving

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			<p>wheezing, great difficulty in breathing and a feeling of constriction to the chest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ at least 4 people are reported to have died from reaction to inhaling TDI
4) PVC GLUE	Ethyl Acetate		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the substance is toxic to mucous membranes, upper respiratory tract. ❖ the substance may be toxic to blood, kidneys, liver and central nervous system (CNS) ❖ repeated or prolonged exposure to the substance can produce target organs damage ❖ causes irritation to the skin and eyes ❖ talkativeness ❖ boastfulness ❖ slurred speech ❖ slowed reaction time ❖ dizziness ❖ sightedness ❖ reduced memory and concentration ❖ rapid pulse ❖ prolonged inhalation may affect behaviour the central nervous system and cause liver, kidney, lung and heart damage.
5) POLISH REMOVER	ACETONE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Inhalation of vapours irritates the respiratory tract. ❖ May cause coughing, dizziness, dullness and headaches ❖ higher concentrations can produce central nervous system, depression narcosis and unconsciousness <p><u>Ingestion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ swallowing small amounts is not likely to produce harmful effects. Ingestion of large amounts may produce abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting ❖ Aspiration into lungs can produce severe lung damage <p><u>Skin Contact</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Cause skin irritation, redness, pain, drying and cracking of the skin <p><u>Eye Contact</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ vapours are irritating to the eyes.