

INTERVENTION SUPPORT

Situation

- Student drug use issue identified:
- through student disclosure
 - through staff member raising concern
 - as a result of a drug-related incident.

Immediate Actions

1. Inform student/s of concerns
2. Take matters seriously
3. Get the facts
4. Reassure student/s that their health and well-being are the primary concern
5. Inform staff and document details
6. Support student/s through referral process to appropriate staff members

Note: Pages 58 and 59 further describe these suggested immediate actions.

Disciplinary Interventions – Follow-up Actions

1. Implement appropriate disciplinary actions (e.g. loss of privileges, detention)
2. Suspension
3. Suspension resolution
4. Liaise with police
5. Consult with parent/s
6. Involve broader staff team
7. Affirm student/s participation
8. Document, monitor and evaluate

Note: Pages 60 and 61 further describe these suggested follow-up actions.

Student Welfare Interventions – Follow-up Actions

1. Refer to support staff involved
2. Ensure inter-staff communication and feedback
3. Engage broader school support
4. Communicate with parents
5. Refer to external agencies
6. Address illicit drug use if acknowledged
7. Address Volatile Substance Use (VSU) if acknowledged
8. Promote student autonomy
9. Affirm student/s participation
10. Implement student welfare strategies
11. Document, monitor and evaluate

Note: Pages 62 and 63 further describe these suggested follow-up actions.

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The first issue to be considered when a drug use issue is acknowledged or highlighted is to **address the safety and welfare of the student/s.**

The following suggested immediate actions are recommended.

1 Inform student/s of concerns

- Acknowledge the student's disclosure or, if you are raising the issue, advise of your concerns about possible drug use. State the boundary of confidentiality (refer to pages 70 and 71).
- Acknowledge your designated role in providing support to the student/s if in relation to a student drug-use incident. State the boundary of confidentiality.

2 Take matters seriously

- When an issue is disclosed or raised by a student, a peer or a staff member, it must be taken seriously and intervention support procedures actioned.

3 Get the facts

- If responding to a disclosure or raising the issue, ensure privacy. Attempt to clarify the situation and provide the options for follow-up along with reassurance and encouragement.
- Apply a 'protective interrupting' strategy if disclosure is of a nature which requires this according to the jurisdictional requirements of the school. State the boundary of confidentiality. Affirm the student/s and reassure of willingness to provide support as appropriate to role and through referral to other staff.
- If a student is referred to you for intervention support following a drug-use incident, ensure you have the relevant referral information prior to engaging with the student.
- Ensure all engagements are appropriately and accurately documented.

4 Reassure student/s that their health and well-being are the primary concern

- Reassure the student/s by involving them in the process to keep them aware and explain reasons for the actions which evolve.
- Remind the student/s that the focus of any intervention is to promote their health and well-being.

5 Inform staff and document details

- Ensure appropriate staff are involved and informed to broaden the support network and to ensure diverse support options for the student/s. Know the chain of referral within your school.
- Any information shared should be offered with respect for the student/s and in line with the school's confidentiality requirements, with consideration of the roles and requirements of other staff members involved.
- Document involvement and actions taken to fit with the school's reporting and record keeping strategies and the jurisdictional requirements of the school's education system.

6 Support student/s through referral process to appropriate staff members

- If it is beyond your role to continue to address this issue with the student/s following a disclosure or following your initial awareness gained through raising this issue, acknowledge this to the student/s. Ensure appropriate referral within the school for continuing support.
- Being the initial contact person for the student/s around this issue, it is important that you remain a part of any on-going support process.
- If a student is referred to a staff member as a follow-up response to a drug-use incident, initial support should involve explanation and reassurance of what/who will be involved from here and an outline of the process which will follow.

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Having clear procedures to follow where disciplinary action is required, ensures appropriate and necessary action occurs with consistency across the school community, and that the process is authoritative, transparent and regards student health and well-being as a priority. In most cases, Disciplinary Interventions should be complemented and supplemented by Student Welfare Interventions (refer to pages 62 and 63).

The aim of the follow-up actions is to clarify the student's situation, and to identify and action the most appropriate further intervention strategies. This will allow the problems relating to drug use to be highlighted and addressed while keeping the student connected to school. These can be provided either within the school and/or through referral to an external agency. (Refer to *Connect* resource for further details.)

The following suggested follow-up actions are recommended.

1 Implement appropriate disciplinary actions

- Implement discipline strategies appropriate to the circumstances of the student/s. These may involve loss of privileges, detention and where warranted, other deterrent practices associated with inappropriate behaviour. (Where illicit drug use is acknowledged, refer also to pages 54 and 55.)
- Disciplinary Interventions should be actioned with relevant Student Welfare Interventions (refer to pages 62 and 63).

2 Suspension

- Suspending a student in response to a drug-related incident or behaviour, may be a required outcome, depending on the jurisdictional requirements of the school and the educational system or sector. However, it should be noted that suspension can decrease a student's connection with school and may increase the likelihood of the student engaging in further risk-taking behaviour.
- If suspension must occur and is considered necessary as a disciplinary and deterrent response, the school should consider in-school suspension or aim to minimise the length of the suspension period. They should also activate support measures within the school and community, to retain the student's engagement with the school.

3 Suspension resolution

- The Principal should consult with other staff, the parent/s and the student involved to develop a plan to resolve the suspension. This may include agreed statements about short and longer-term goals, performance/attendance agreements, timeline for engagement with the targeted Student Welfare Intervention (refer to pages 62 and 63).
- All students who have been suspended for a drug-related issue should be provided an opportunity to participate in a targeted student welfare intervention program to address their drug-related behaviour/s. This may occur within the school or through referral to an external agency (refer to page 63, Step 5, and to the *Connect* resource).

4 Liaise with police

- Where police action has been involved, liaise with the parties to whom the student is being referred (e.g. diversion program, external counselling program, mental health program) to see where the school can retain a support role in this process.

5 Consult with parent/s

- Principal or a nominated staff member should communicate, discuss and consult with the parent/s while adhering to the school's confidentiality requirements (refer to pages 70 and 71) to develop a shared understanding of the pathways required and available for the student to meet with appropriate disciplinary procedures. Student welfare should remain a priority. Parent support in working with the school is fundamental in dealing with drug-use issues and in working to address student behaviour.
- Where suspension is required, the intention to take this action and the reasons behind this should be communicated to parents through the normal suspension procedure.

6 Involve broader staff team

- Involving staff whom the student/s find approachable and to whom they relate well can encourage ongoing connection and engagement with the school in spite of the disciplinary measures. Staff roles in on-going support may vary from monitoring and awareness, to actioning discipline and support measures as part of the overall support team (refer to pages 62 and 63 for Student Welfare Interventions.) When exchanging information, do so in line with the school's confidentiality requirements (refer to pages 70 and 71).

7 Affirm student/s participation

- Affirm the student/s for their commitment to the process and for appropriate behaviour/ achievements in other school contexts.

8 Document, monitor and evaluate

- Document involvement and actions taken as required to meet the school's reporting and record-keeping strategies, and the jurisdictional requirements of the school's education system or sector.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the disciplinary interventions provided and the procedures followed. Where amendments are required, use the *School Drug Education Action Plan* on pages 33 and 34 to guide this process.

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Student welfare interventions are applicable for any student when a drug-use issue is revealed or even suspected, and can occur alongside disciplinary interventions. This represents an inclusive approach which may foster resilience by encouraging student connection to school and which moves beyond the disciplinary focus emphasising the school's intent to be a protective institution providing support as a priority.

These interventions can be provided either within the school and/or through referral to an external agency. Refer to *Connect* resource for further details.

The following suggested follow-up actions are recommended.

1 Refer to support staff involved

- Specialist school support staff can provide opportunities for students to be involved in exploring the factors contributing to a drug-use issue. These factors may be many and complex or they may be circumstantial.
- A targeted intervention program should be developed to identify and address triggers and potential triggers to drug use and other risk taking behaviour.
- Specialist support staff can include student services teams, school psychologist, school nurse, school chaplain, year leaders and extends to approachable staff through the school. The support role provided clearly varies in intensity (refer to Job Role Tasks page 45) while this approach allows broader school awareness, support and monitoring. A team approach is also inclusive and supportive for the staff who are providing support.

2 Ensure inter-staff communication and feedback

- Use or develop an inter-staff communication process to convey required information between staff involved in supporting a student through an intervention (i.e. upfront information and feedback).
- This allows those who commence the process (e.g. classroom teacher who received an initial disclosure) to remain aware of the student's needs and progress; those receiving a referral to have basic introductory information of the student's situation; and a whole-school approach to intervention support.
- Attention should be made to act with respect to the student's privacy and adhere to the school's confidentiality requirements (refer to pages 70 and 71). All parties do not require all the information so staff should report information according to their role and apply professional discretion. The student should be advised of the boundaries of confidentiality upfront to ensure understanding of the purpose of the information exchange process (i.e. to promote their health and well-being). For exceptions to this refer to pages 70 and 71.

3 Engage broader school support

- Link with other relevant departments and individuals who may contribute to addressing issues underlying the student's drug use (e.g. to engage support for learning difficulties, home/school liaison, school nurse for medical issues).

4 Communicate with parent/s

- Involve the parent/s to support the student and the intervention process, while again respecting privacy and confidentiality.
- Level of parental involvement may be at the discretion of the staff member coordinating the support intervention and depending on the student's wants, needs and circumstances.
- Where parent drug use is acknowledged, refer to page 74.
- Parents should be made aware of support services available to them (e.g. offer details of *Alcohol and Drug Information Service*, *Parent Drug Information Service*). Refer to the *Connect* resource.
- Levels of required parental involvement may vary according to the school's education system and their jurisdictional requirements.

5 Refer to external agencies

- The school's support staff may recommend referral to an external community-based agency (refer to *Connect* resource) for an appropriate level of intervention such as those involving a need for drug counselling or support with mental health, family or neglect issues.
- An appointed specialist school staff member or case manager should maintain contact with the agency and work to agree to appropriate exchange of information between agency and school while adhering to the school's confidentiality requirements. It may be of benefit to use a *Referral form for Intervention Support* (refer to page 79).
- Establishing this relationship through to community-based support agencies allows schools to ensure that they meet with required care for the student/s while they work through this process, either at school or on their return to school should the intervention have led to a period of absence.

6 Address illicit drug use if acknowledged

- Where illicit drug use is acknowledged through intervention processes, refer also to pages 54 and 55, *Illicit Drug – Follow-up Actions*.

7 Address Volatile Substance Use if acknowledged

- If VSU is suspected, staff should seek support from an external drug counselling agency (e.g. *Community Drug Service*). Refer to *Connect* resource. Ongoing intervention support should continue to be provided by the school in consultation with this external agency. For further information on VSU refer to page 68.

8 Promote student autonomy

- As far as possible, inform and involve the student/s in the processes in which they are engaged throughout the intervention period.

9 Affirm student participation

- Affirm the student/s for working with the intervention.

10 Implement student welfare strategies

- To support the intervention, consider using strategies such as peer support, buddy programs and mentoring programs (e.g. *The School Volunteer Program*). Refer to *Connect* resource.

11 Document, monitor and evaluate

- Document involvement and actions taken as required to meet with the school's reporting and record-keeping practices and the jurisdictional requirements of the school's education system and sector.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions. Where amendments are required, use the *School Drug Education Action Plan* on pages 33 and 34 to guide this process.