

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES
STUDENT USE OF MEDICAL AND RECREATIONAL CANNABIS

PURPOSE

The following guidelines have been developed to assist in the implementation of the board policy and provide the school principals with effective measures on how to address situations related to the illegal use of recreational cannabis, and the legal use of cannabis as prescribed for medical purposes.

It is illegal for people under age 19 in Ontario to buy, possess, use and grow recreational cannabis. Smoking, vaping, consumable edible cannabis or using cannabis extracts for recreational purposes at the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board and on all of its properties is strictly prohibited. Smoking, or vaping cannabis for recreational purposes in an enclosed workplace is also prohibited.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

- I. It is the responsibility of principals to implement this policy.
- II. At the beginning of each school year all students and their parents or legal guardians may be informed about this school policy, key aspects of this policy and its procedural guidelines.
- III. A copy of the policy will be posted on the board's website so that students and staff may review the policy when needed.
- IV. All staff will be oriented to the content of the policy and procedural guidelines, and the procedures and steps they must take in any related situation.

ESSENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION COMPONENTS

A. **PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM**

The goal of preventative curriculum is to promote the development of responsible individuals whose self-esteem and sense of Christian values are firmly established. An effective prevention program helps students make wise decisions about substance use, and thereby reduces the incidents of illegal cannabis use and related problems. The curriculum is intended to promote healthy life choices in a positive school environment.

Expectations

- a) The curriculum will extend from the primary to senior grades, integrated in a variety of subjects and linked to students' developmental stages.
- b) Curriculum expectations will be derived from the Health and Physical Education curriculum documents, Canadian and World Studies curriculum documents, and Religion/Family Life Programs.
- c) Consultation with the Catholic School Council, the parish community, community organizations and agencies is encouraged.
- d) The curriculum component of this program will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure relevancy and effectiveness.

- e) Schools are encouraged to enhance this program by offering a variety of informal activities such as awareness weeks, student activity organizations, special assemblies, field trips and theatrical performances.

B. INTERVENTION COMPONENT

Consistent with the board's concern for the physical, intellectual, spiritual, social and personal well-being of its students, the goal of intervention is to reduce and eliminate the use of cannabis, and to provide assistance for students who have drug-related problems. This intervention program will assist in identifying and assessing these problems, and provide appropriate counselling and referral services.

Identification

Access to school-based intervention and referral services can occur in four ways:

- a) If a concern is brought forward about a particular student, the staff member, in conjunction with the Principal, will determine whether further action is warranted. If so, an interview will be arranged with the student, the designated staff person and the principal to establish whether a problem exists, and if so, the nature of the problem, and if there is to be an appropriate course of action.
- b) Students who believe they are developing problems associated with their use of recreational cannabis can voluntarily approach the counselling staff for an interview. The counselor will encourage students to inform their parents or legal guardians and to seek their involvement and support.
- c) If disciplinary action is necessary, students may be referred to counselling and/or referral service for the use of recreational cannabis. Such infractions will result in students being encouraged to seek assistance.
- d) Students who are encountering problems arising from recreational cannabis use by their parents, other family members, or friends may be encouraged to consult a counselling and referral service.

Counselling

The first step in early intervention is an informal interview with a counselor to explore the nature and extent of any recreational cannabis use and associated problems. The counselor will recommend the most appropriate type of assistance. The counselor may suggest one or more of the following types of intervention:

- a) Individual/group counseling
- b) Educational workshops
- c) Peer counseling

Confidentiality

Students who receive assistance through self-referral, or in response to a request from a school counselor, will be assured confidentiality. Unless legally compelled to do so, the counselor will not divulge the fact that assistance is being provided without prior permission from the student. The counselor will encourage the student to inform his or her parents or legal guardians and to seek their involvement and support.

When assistance results from disciplinary procedure, the parents will already be involved. In such cases the counselors will negotiate with the parents and the student

the way in which progress will be communicated. Parents or legal guardians will be involved in the assistance process.

Communication

The availability of assistance for students will be communicated to students and their parents or legal guardians every year. Counselors will be provided with the necessary training for assessment and intervention and will develop referral links with community agencies.

C. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The goal of these guidelines is to clearly communicate the board's expectations regarding illegal recreational cannabis use on board property or at board-sponsored events. Compliance with these guidelines is seen as a condition of student attendance at school and participation in school activities. The guidelines are also designed to protect the health and safety of all students by deterring student use of illegal recreational cannabis.

The *Education Act*, as well as the *Safe Schools Act, 2000*, prohibits the use of alcohol or illicit drugs (including cannabis) by students while on board property or at events sponsored by the board and its constituent schools.

Board-sponsored events include out-of-town activities such as field trips, sporting events and festivals.

VIOLATIONS

First Infraction

- a) The student is informed that his or her behaviour is an infraction of board policy and that the infraction will be recorded.
- b) The infraction is reported to the principal or designate and documented.
- c) The student shall be suspended, for a minimum period of one (1) school day and up to five (5) days, at the discretion of the principal.
- d) The student is advised that a subsequent infraction will result in further disciplinary action and is asked to acknowledge that he or she understands.
- e) Parents or legal guardians are informed of the infraction.
- f) Any illegal substances in schools are confiscated and surrendered to the local police services.
- g) In the event of impairment, the student is detained at the school (or event) under the supervision of a board employee in order to ensure his or her safety. If the student refuses to stay under supervision, the police are called to retrieve and return the student home. Otherwise, the student's parents or legal guardians are called upon to retrieve their child. Should parents or legal guardians not be available, attempts will be made to find other responsible adults who can take the student home or provide care. If no other option is available, the student will be taken to a detoxification centre, hospital or, if necessary, to a police station. Parents will be advised of the infraction as soon as possible.
- h) The student will be encouraged to see an appropriate counselor or external agency for assistance. A list of agencies able to provide assistance will be available from the school office.

Subsequent Infractions

- a) The student is informed that his or her behaviour is a second or subsequent infraction of the board policy, and that the infraction will be recorded as such.
- b) The infraction is reported to the principal or vice-principal and documented.
- c) The parents or legal guardians are advised that the student has repeated a violation of board policy.
- d) Any illegal substances, including cannabis, are confiscated and surrendered to the local police services. The student is suspended for a period of five (5) days to be served, at the principal's discretion. The principal may also deny participation in any board sponsored events (e.g., dances, trips, extra-curricular activities) for a period to be determined by the principal.
- f) The student will be encouraged to see the appropriate counselor or external agency for assistance. A list of agencies able to provide assistance will be available from the school office.

Further Disciplinary Action and Exceptions

- a) Should a student have two or more violations on record, the principal may, at his or her discretion, impose more severe sanctions, such as expulsion.
- b) If a first infraction of the policy is deemed to be of a serious nature, the provisions for the First Infraction (section 1) and Subsequent Infractions (section 2) may be superseded and more severe sanctions imposed.
- c) In making a decision regarding the above, the School Superintendent will be consulted, and three considerations will be taken into account:
 - i) Indications that the student will continue using recreational cannabis in violation of board policy;
 - ii) Lack of serious concern on the part of the student about the consequences of his/her cannabis use, and;
 - iii) The level of disruption imposed on other students, staff and the educational process

The imposition of more severe sanctions would be justified by an unfavourable assessment in any of these areas of consideration.

Board-Sanctioned Events and Special Events on Board Property

- a) **Entry into an event:** Upon attempting to gain entry at special school events (e.g., dances, extra-curricular activities), any student who, in the opinion of the supervising staff, appears to be impaired, or in possession of illegal recreational cannabis, will be denied entry to the event, and the parents will be contacted. Police shall be notified.
- b) **During the event:** Any student who, in the opinion of the supervising staff, appears to be impaired, or in possession of illegal recreational cannabis, will be considered in violation of board policy and provisions outlined under First Infraction would apply immediately.
- c) **After the event:** Should it be deemed appropriate, Subsequent Infractions and Further Disciplinary Action and Exceptions as outlined in this policy will be applicable after the event, at the discretion of the principal. If, in addition to the above infraction, the student causes harm to students, staff or property, or is otherwise disruptive, in accordance to board policy and the Safe Schools Act, the student will not be permitted to participate further in any board-sponsored events

(e.g., dances, trips, extra-curricular activities) for a period to be determined by the principal.

ACCESS TO CANNABIS FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES REGULATIONS (ACMPR)

Medical cannabis is subject to different rules than recreational cannabis, and the production and sale of medical cannabis is regulated exclusively by the federal government using Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations (ACMPR).

Individuals with a medical need must obtain the authorization of their healthcare practitioner (physician or nurse practitioner) to acquire and use cannabis for medical purposes. This authorization requires a document that is signed and dated by the healthcare practitioner, and must include specific information including the individual's name and date of birth, daily prescribed dosage, period of use, and healthcare practitioner's contact information. Whenever possible, it will be requested that the prescribed cannabis be administered at home.

Medical cannabis will be treated similarly to that of other prescribed medications, and for this reason, procedural guidelines for the *Administration or Prescribed Medications* (Policy 7003) must be adhered to in addition to this policy on cannabis, following the principles of Duty to Accommodate. Although cannabis laws have changed, the human rights protections for people with disabilities or addictions remain the same. The Ontario Human Rights Code will apply to cannabis use for medical purposes in the same way they do for other drugs.