



Huron-Superior Catholic

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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.

In Ontario, it is illegal for individuals under 19 to buy, possess, use and grow recreational cannabis.

The Huron Superior Catholic District School Board strictly prohibits smoking, vaping, consuming edible cannabis, or using cannabis extracts for recreational purposes on all Board properties and in enclosed workplaces.

For the purposes of this policy, “illegal drugs” includes but is not limited to any substance that is illegal by virtue of any statute or regulation of Ontario or, Canada, including prescription drugs for which a valid prescription has not been issued to a person possessing / using it. This policy does not prohibit the possession or use of drugs, including cannabis, when prescribed by a physician and used in accordance with the physician’s directions. It also does not prohibit over-the-counter medications that are used appropriately (and with the permission of a parent or legal guardian in case of students under the age of 18).

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

- I. Principals are responsible for ensuring this policy is followed.
- 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 foster responsible individuals with strong self-esteem and Christian values. An effective prevention program empowers students to make informed decisions about substance use and thereby reducing the incidents of illegal cannabis use and associated problems. The curriculum aims to promote healthy life choices within 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 are experiencing problems related to alcohol, cannabis and other drugs. 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) **Staff Referral:** If a staff member has concerns about a student, they will work with the Principal to determine if further action is needed. If so, the student, the designated staff person and the principal will meet to assess if a problem exists, its nature, and the appropriate next steps.
- b) **Self-Referral:** Students who believe they are developing problems related to their use of recreational cannabis can voluntarily approach the counselling staff for an interview. The counselor will encourage the student to inform their parents or legal guardians and involve them in seeking support.
- c) **Disciplinary Referral:** Students facing disciplinary action for recreational cannabis use may be referred to counseling and/or referral services. In these cases, the student is encouraged to seek assistance.
- d) **External Impact:** Students who are experiencing problems due to recreational cannabis use by 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 discuss with parents and the student how progress will be communicated. Parents or legal guardians will be part of the support 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

These guidelines clearly communicate the Board's expectations regarding illegal use of recreational cannabis 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 aim to protect the health and safety of all students by deterring student use of illegal recreational cannabis.

The *Education Act* and *Safe Schools Act, 2000*, prohibits students from using alcohol or illicit drugs (including cannabis) on Board property or at Board sponsored events, which include out of town activities like field trips, sporting events, and festivals.

VIOLATIONS

First Infraction

- a) The student is informed that their behaviour violates Board policy, and that the infraction will be documented.
- b) The infraction is reported to and documented by the principal or designate.
- c) The student shall be suspended, for a minimum period of one (1) and up to five (5) school days, as determined by the principal.
- d) The student is advised that further infractions lead to more severe disciplinary action and is asked to acknowledge their understanding.
- 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 their safety. If the student refuses supervision, the police are contacted to take them home. Otherwise, the student's parents or legal guardians are called upon to pick up their child. If parents or legal guardians are unavailable, attempts will be made to find other responsible adults who can take the student home or provide care. As a last resort, the student will be taken to a detoxification centre, hospital or police station. Parents will be informed of the infraction as soon as possible.

- h) The student will be encouraged to seek support from a school counselor or an external agency. A list of available agencies will be provided by the school office.

Subsequent Infractions

- a) The student is informed that their behaviour is a repeated violation of the Board policy and will be recorded as such.
- b) The infraction is reported to and documented by the principal or vice-principal.
- c) The parents or legal guardians are informed 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., trips, extra-curricular activities) for a period to be determined by the principal.
- e) The student will be encouraged to seek the support from school counselor or an external agency. A list of available agencies will be provided by the school office.

Further Disciplinary Action and Exceptions

- a) For students with two or more recorded violations, the principal may, 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 deciding on more severe sanctions, the School Superintendent will be consulted, and the following three factors will be considered:
 - i) Evidence suggesting the student will continue to use recreational cannabis in violation of Board policy.
 - ii) The student's apparent lack of concern regarding the consequences of their cannabis use.
 - 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 to an event:** Any student attempting to enter special school events (e.g., extra-curricular activities) who appears impaired or in possession of illegal recreational cannabis as determined by supervising staff, will be denied entry to the event. Parents will be contacted, and police will be notified.
- b) **During the event:** Any student who, in the opinion of the supervising staff, appears 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:** If deemed appropriate by the principal, 'Subsequent Infractions and Further Disciplinary Action and Exceptions' as outlined in this policy will be applicable after the event. 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 be prohibited from further participation in

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

ACCESS TO CANNABIS FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES REGULATIONS (ACMPR)

Medical cannabis is governed by different rules than recreational cannabis. It's production and sale of medical cannabis are federally regulated under the Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations (ACMPR).

Individuals requiring medical cannabis must obtain the authorization from their healthcare practitioner (physician or nurse practitioner). This authorization requires a signed and dated document including the individual's name, date of birth, daily dosage, period of use, and the practitioner's contact information. Whenever possible, the administration of prescribed medical cannabis at home will be requested.

Medical cannabis will be treated similarly to that of other prescribed medications. Therefore, the procedural guidelines for the *Administration or Prescribed Medications* (Policy 7003) must be followed to in addition to this policy, adhering to the principles of Duty to Accommodate. Despite changes in cannabis laws, human rights protections for individuals with disabilities or addictions remain the same. The Ontario Human Rights Code applies to medical cannabis use in the same way it applies to other medications.