



POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF DRUG USE AND ABUSE BY LEARNERS AT MOUNTAIN VIEW ACADEMY

INTRODUCTION

Mountain View Academy recognises that a safe and disciplined learning environment is one of the critical elements to the successful delivery of quality education and acknowledges the role played by drugs in undermining this.

Available evidence indicates that school communities are particularly vulnerable, and drug use and abuse by learners is on the increase in schools.

There is a high correlation between drug abuse and other anti-social and high-risk behaviour, including dishonesty, theft, violence, gangsterism and the occult.

Purely punitive approaches to drug abuse can only be part of the solution.

Drug abuse is detrimental to individuals on so many levels, namely social, physical, emotional, academic and psychological.

DRUG SCREENING

All parents are expected to give signed consent for drug screening to take place in accordance with this policy. Drug tests will be carried out randomly, across all grades, during the course of the school year.

However, should a drug test on a particular learner be considered necessary, it will form part of a structured intervention or relapse-prevention programme, and will be carried out as follows:

- A teacher who has reason to believe that a learner is using drugs, will discuss this in confidence with the school principal.
- The school principal/management team will then be responsible for making contact with the learner, and will collect all relevant information and make an assessment of the situation.
- If the principal/management team feels that it is appropriate, he/she/they will ask the learner to consent to a drug-screening test.
- The principal will ensure that the learner's parents have given signed consent for drug screening tests to be conducted. It must be noted, however, that parental permission for drug testing is compulsory and is a provision for acceptance into Mountain View Academy.
- The urine specimen for the drug test will be collected by the principal or representative of this post in such a way that the learner's dignity is maintained and that the integrity of the sample is not compromised.
- The drug screening will be conducted in such a way that the learner's privacy is protected.
- The results of the drug screening will be made known to the principal/management team, the learner and the parents.

- In the case of a positive result on a drug screening, the principal and/or the management team, the learner, and the parents will discuss and agree on an appropriate management plan to ensure that the learner is rehabilitated. The plan should include follow-up drug screenings.
- The learner will be cautioned that if he/she tests positive on a follow-up drug test, then the principal will have the right to determine whether further action needs to be taken.

DRUG SEARCHES

In instances where a member of staff has reason to suspect that a learner has an illegal or controlled substance, including alcohol, in his/her possession, he/she will approach the principal and discuss the situation with her. If the principal believes that there is reasonable suspicion that the learner is in possession of a prohibited substance, she may carry out a search, in accordance with the procedure outlined below:

- The search must be carried out by a person of the same gender.
- The search should take place in the presence of the learner concerned, together with a person of their choice to support them and a second adult witness.
- On admission of the child to Mountain View Academy, parents give their signed consent, allowing for their child to be searched, in accordance with this policy.
- In the case of a learner being found in possession of a prohibited substance, the principal will inform the learner's parents.

DISCIPLINARY METHODS

Should the drug testing or searches prove to be positive, the principal, together with the management team, will decide on the appropriate disciplinary measures. Each case will be considered on its individual merits taking into account:

- The nature of the incident.
- The learner's school and family history.
- The mental health and intellectual development of the learner.
- Any other relevant information.

GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE

1st Offence

- Referral for complete psychological assessment, to be paid for by the parents.
- Suspension from school for a period of up to 1 term.
- Follow-up drug screenings as part of a structured intervention to prevent the continued use/abuse of substances. This will be at the parents' expense.
- A final warning regarding substance abuse.

2nd Offence

- Expulsion
- Learners who have experienced or are experiencing problems as a result of drug misuse will not be denied the opportunity to receive an education, but will receive appropriate assistance paid for by the parents. However, in cases where the learner does not wish to make use of such help and support offered to him/her, Mountain View Academy will have no choice but to take the necessary action, which may include expulsion.

AMNESTY

Mountain View Academy will support any individual who voluntarily comes forward, is honest about his/her substance abuse and who shows a willingness to receive help with this problem.

A learner who approaches any staff member and asks for assistance with a substance abuse problem, will not be subjected to any disciplinary action. The matter will be treated as confidential, provided that the learner agrees to the drug management plan outlined by the principal. This management plan will include:

- Signing a contract agreeing to discontinue his/her substance abuse.
- Psychological counselling to address the underlying issues.
- Consenting to further follow-up drug tests.

In cases where the learner does not comply with the management plan, the principal or management team will have no option but to implement the disciplinary action as stated above.

THE TRAFFICKING, SUPPLYING AND SELLING OF PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES AT SCHOOL

The trafficking of prohibited substances (drugs and alcohol) on the school campus (including the public field used for breaks), the supplying of these substances to other pupils, including the offering of these substances to other learners and/or the sale of such substances to other learners are serious offences.

It must be noted that these offences could lead to the most serious disciplinary action being taken, in the form of immediate expulsion from Mountain View Academy and the involvement of the relevant state authorities.

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Please detach and fill in this slip and return it to the school

I _____ parent/guardian of _____

hereby give permission for any of the above measures to be conducted, should the situation arise.

Signature

Date