

Drug education – guidelines

Read this document with the Drugs in schools policy, Management of drug related incidents in schools guidelines and External providers engaged for teaching and learning guidelines.

Introduction

The purpose of these guidelines is to outline the responsibilities of schools to adopt a sequential approach to drug education to build student capacity to make informed decisions and thereby reduce the incidence of drug use and the impact of drug-related harm.

Drug education should be guided by a whole school approach, be an integral part of the schools' curriculum program, and include developmentally appropriate teaching and learning opportunities aligned to the Australian Curriculum.

Schools play an important role in supporting the development of knowledge, understanding and skills that require students to make healthy and safe choices. Explicit and developmentally appropriate drug education programs which employ a strengths-based and critical inquiry approach allow students to access, evaluate and synthesise information, and increase their ability to take positive action for themselves and others.

Drug education should:

- be embedded in the schools' curriculum plan across all stages of schooling
- provide sequential, contextually relevant explicit learning
- provide opportunities to practice, apply and evaluate knowledge and skills
- take a strengths-based approach and affirm that all students and their communities have particular strengths and resources that can be nurtured
- take a critical inquiry approach where students are encouraged to ask questions, analyse information and explore the impact drugs can have on individuals, families and communities
- develop students' health literacy in relation to drugs, harm minimisation, issues or drug use in society and support services available
- develop skills and behaviours such as being assertive and resilient, and the ability to make decisions and seek help.

Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum addresses the concepts outlined in the guidelines through the Health and physical education learning area and the General capabilities area. Schools are responsible for identifying priority curriculum areas for their community, and teachers are responsible for developing health programs accordingly.

The Health and physical education curriculum has twelve focus areas that must be addressed through various stages of schooling. One focus area is dedicated to alcohol and other drugs and addresses a range of drugs, including prescription drugs, alternative medicine, caffeine, tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs and performance-enhancing drugs.

The alcohol and other drugs focus area supports students to explore the impact drugs can have on individuals, families and communities. It is expected that all students at appropriate intervals across the continuum of learning from transition to year 10 will learn about the following:

- safe use of medicines
- alternatives to taking medicines
- the effects of drugs on the body, including energy drinks and caffeine
- factors that influence the use of different types of drugs
- the impacts of drug use on individuals and communities
- making informed decisions about drugs – assertive behaviour, peer influence, harm minimisation, awareness of blood-borne viruses.

Roles and responsibilities

Principals

Principals are responsible for:

- ensuring staff are aware of these guidelines
- ensuring the school delivers a health education program that includes sequential and contextually relevant drug education
- ensuring that any externally provided drug education programs are negotiated using the External providers engaged for teaching and learning guidelines and align with the Australian Curriculum.

Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

- ensuring drug education programs align with the Australian Curriculum, department policy and guidelines, and legislative requirements
- ensuring drug education programs are appropriate for developmental age and stage and meet student and community needs.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Critical inquiry approach	A method of teaching that requires students to gather and analyse information, ideas and assumptions from multiple sources and perspectives in order to form an understanding of the subject area and the influence on their own and others health, safety and wellbeing.
Harm minimisation	An approach that recognises drug use is a complex phenomenon that will never be entirely eliminated, and that people who use drugs should be supported to progressively reduce harm to themselves and the wider community.
Strengths based approach	The method of assessing, teaching and designing activities in a way that matches the student's abilities; recognising that when a student's strengths are recognised,

Term	Definition
Standard curriculum program	<p>their engagement with the content is maximised and their skills and knowledge develop in the most effective way possible.</p> <p>The provision of teaching and learning activities, instructional support and instructional materials for delivery of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Early Years Learning Framework • the Australian Curriculum • the senior secondary Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training • Vocational Education and Training. <p>It also includes any materials, administration, services or facilities provided as part of the standard curriculum program.</p> <p>Please note: Northern Territory Police are willing to provide additional information regarding illicit drugs or alcohol issues if requested.</p>

Related policy and resources

- Australian Curriculum – <https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>
- Australian Curriculum – General capabilities – <https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/f-10-curriculum-overview/general-capabilities>
- Australian Curriculum – Health and physical education – https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum.html/learning-areas/health-and-physical-education/foundation-year_year-1_year-2_year-3_year-4_year-5_year-6_year-7_year-8_year-9_year-10?view=quick&detailed-content-descriptions=0&side-by-side=1&strands-start-index=0&subjects-start-index=0&hide-ccp=0&hide-gc=0
- Drugs in schools policy – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/health-safety/drugs-in-schools>
- eLearn – resources available to support teachers – <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/>
- External providers engaged for teaching and learning guidelines – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/curriculum>
- Management of drug related incidents in schools guidelines – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/health-safety/drugs-in-schools>

Document title	Drug education – guidelines
Contact details	Inclusion and Engagement Services, Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Programs and Services, swipolicy.doe@education.nt.gov.au
Approved by	Executive Director Inclusion and Engagement Services
Date approved	10 July 2023
TRM number	50:D22:100759

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1	20 September 2017	Student Wellbeing and Inclusion	FILE2017/1038 EDOC 2017/59234
2		Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Programs and Services	Administrative amendments to align roles and responsibilities to the structural alignment in effect from 1 July 2022, including NTG template and minor formatting