



# **Springs Girls' High School**

## **ILLEGAL SUBSTANCE POLICY**



### **1. INTRODUCTION**

South Africa has been targeted by international drug syndicates as a new haven for both drug peddling and drug trafficking. While the whole world is in the grip of a vicious drug onslaught, South Africa, for historical reasons, is particularly at risk and this means specifically our children. There needs to be an awareness of this problem as no one in this country is immune to the consequences of drugs and drug abuse.

Key issues in this policy revolve around prevention, confidentiality, consequences, compassion and specialised support. The policy has the objective of incorporating Springs Girls High's values into the principles and procedures of the document, and aims to help the learners strive for excellence in all spheres.

Springs Girls' High School hopes to prepare the learners for success, and to help protect and safeguard them.

This policy is proactive in encouraging healthy choices for adolescents, and ensuring that the school is a drug-free zone.

### **2. SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

The word substance refers to any substance which has the potential of being abused. Ecstasy, heroin, cocaine and marijuana are examples of illegal drugs, but this list is not exhaustive. Alcohol and tobacco products are also "substances". Ordinary household substances such as glue, benzene and methylated spirits are also included.

Alcohol is considered a frequent entry point for further substance abuse. It is illegal for tobacco products to be sold to anyone under the age of 16 years, and it is illegal for alcohol to be sold or served to anyone under the age of 18.

### **3. PRINCIPLES TAKEN FROM THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Taking a cue from the Ministry of Education Guidelines issued under the South African Schools' Act of 1996, one can state that learners have the duty/responsibility to learn and to develop their full potential, to participate in the learning process and to apply themselves with diligence, sincere effort and commitment.

Substances including tobacco products and alcohol may not be used by any Springs Girls' High girl, regardless of age. The policy regarding substance abuse applies to the context of Springs Girls' High School premises, tours, camps, any occasion where learners represent Springs Girls' High School. The following principles have specific relevance to the requirements of education and discipline, in respect of the problems of abuse and dependency.

#### **3.1 Every child is unique and special**

The ethos of the school is that each learner and setting shall be treated with sensitivity. While every learner most certainly is unique and special, and each case regarded on its merits, the Springs Girls' High School community has to act for the good of the whole community and all action will be taken with this view in mind.

#### **3.2 Prevention through education**

Educational programmes which help to raise awareness of the problems of abuse and dependency should involve staff, parents and learners on an ongoing basis. In turn, this awareness builds an informed, alert and caring community.

The aim of the educational programme is to encourage girls to take care of themselves in whatever situations they may find themselves, and to be able to make informed and courageous choices.

In keeping with the Code of Conduct and the ethos of the school, and the principle of being pro-active in dealing with life situations, the school will organise a range of educational events and programmes dealing with the difficulties of substance abuse and dependency. Learners and parents should be aware of what drugs are available, their effects, and should appreciate the consequences of any substance abuse. Parental involvement, which enhances the success of these programmes, is encouraged by the school. It is important to understand the consequences of substance abuse within the family unit and that substance abuse does not affect only the learner herself. Should parents need to be involved in a programme of supporting their daughter; the school will assist with helping the family to find appropriate experts.

### **3.3 Compassion and specialised support**

Education at Springs Girls' High School is as concerned with the individual needs of its learners as it is with their academic progress. Learners need to be given help and support to deal effectively with their perceived difficulties, no matter what these might be.

Learners with difficulties of abuse and dependency may require specialised help, over and above that offered to the general body of learners in terms of education.

The school, in association with and by referral to accredited and appropriate professionals and organisations, will assist learners with abuse and dependency problems in establishing a program of self-help and rehabilitation. The Head of the School Based Support Team is responsible for counselling taking place at school as well as referring learners and their parents to other professionals.

### **3.4 Disciplinary action must be just and fair**

Disciplinary measures can be consistent with holistic education only if they are administered with justice and fairness.

This applies as much to the procedures for investigation as they do for the implementation of punishment. The Springs Girls' High School community will adhere strictly to the requirements of the South African Constitution, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child and the Gauteng Schools Act in the implementation of all disciplinary procedures regarding substance abuse and dependence.

### **3.5 Confidentiality**

The issue of confidentiality in building trust between different parties is essential in order for support to be effective. The confidentiality of the learner

and the family concerned will be considered throughout any procedures contemplated in this policy, so long as it serves the best interests of the school as a whole. The issue of confidentiality will be affected by how flagrant the situation of substance abuse is.

#### **4. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH PROBLEMS OF DRUG ABUSE AND DEPENDENCY**

The following procedures will serve as primary guidelines for dealing with difficulties of drug abuse and dependency at Springs Girls' High School.

##### **4.1 Procedure for reporting**

- Any incident regarding substance abuse should be reported firstly to the Grade Tutor and then to the Principal immediately. Disciplinary action will be at the discretion of the Principal.
- The Principal has the right to order a drug test when a learner is suspected of using drugs. The Principal also has the right to order random drug testing of learners in the school. Parents do not have to be informed of these tests prior to them being administered.
- The Grade Tutor is responsible for the administration of these drug tests as well as the report back to the Principal after the testing. All test results should be treated confidentially.

##### **4.2 Procedures for disciplinary action, counselling and rehabilitation**

*There are different possibilities which affect the way in which the issue of disciplinary action will be addressed:*

- *If a learner comes forward herself* the disciplinary procedure does not apply, as confidentiality will be maintained and the matter will not be made public. The matter remains between the learner and the adult confidante. Confidentiality will be broken if the learner threatens to harm herself or another person.
- Confidentiality may also be breached if no improvement is noted after a reasonable period of rehabilitation, and disciplinary action may then be taken. The matter will firstly be reported to the Tutor and secondly to the Principal. Action taken will be at the discretion of the Principal.
- *If there is reason to believe that a learner is abusing substances* the matter should be referred firstly to the Grade Tutor and then to the Principal. The Grade Tutor will investigate and report back to the principal on the issue. If found necessary, the parents will be informed and appropriate counselling, rehabilitative and disciplinary procedures will be followed. The Head of the School Based Support Team will be responsible for the counselling.

Disciplinary action will be determined according to the norms and procedures of discipline applicable at the school and may involve expulsion, suspension and detention or school service. Careful assessment will take place with regard to every case, taking into account that every learner and situation is unique.

- *Where a learner brings substances to school, or distributes or sells them at school* that learner is liable for immediate suspension which could lead to expulsion. The school will contact the parents and may refer the matter to the police for further action. The school will assist the police in their investigation at the school, and will also initiate disciplinary action of its own. Learners who are required to take medication while at school must notify the school.

**Sources:**

- South African School's Act , 1996

This policy was accepted and signed by the School Governing Body on 8 November 2016.

Signed:

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