



POLICY NAME:	ALCOHOL CANNABIS AND OTHER DRUGS
POLICY SECTION:	Schools, Students and Learning
DATE APPROVED:	February 15, 1990
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:	2029
DATES OF AMENDMENTS:	December 13, 2002; June 11, 2015; January 21, 2019; June, 2024
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:	Safe Schools

Policy:

This policy outlines the Toronto Catholic District School Board’s (TCDSB) position on the use of alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs on TCDSB property and at TCDSB-related events and/or activities. Creating a safe and positive school climate is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders.

The recreational use, possession, or trafficking of alcohol, cannabis (including cannabinoids), and illegal drugs is not permitted by anyone, regardless of age, on TCDSB property or at TCDSB-related events and/or activities unless prescribed by a physician and used in accordance with the physician’s directions.

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. It also includes any substance that is prohibited by TCDSB policy. 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 the case of students under the age of 18).

The prohibitions in this policy apply to students, school staff, administrators, employees, parish priests, any community partners, third party agents, or permit holders.

Further recognizing that alcohol, cannabis and other drug abuse is a concern in youth culture and is potentially, the TCDSB will address student alcohol, cannabis and other drug use, both proactively and with fair disciplinary action.

The policy is in alignment with the TCDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) and reflects Catholic values rooted in the love of Christ.

Scope and Responsibility:

This policy has implications for anyone on TCDSB property or at Board-related events and/or activities. The Director of Education is responsible for this policy.

Regulations:

1. TCDSB recognizes the role of drug education in reducing alcohol, cannabis, and other drug related problems, and will address student alcohol, cannabis, and other drug use by implementing a comprehensive curriculum designed to prevent alcohol, cannabis, and other drug-related problems.
2. TCDSB drug prevention curriculum will be given priority for development and implementation, will be linked to the developmental stages of the students, and will contain specific objectives for each grade from primary to secondary.
3. Alcohol, cannabis and other drug prevention curriculum will be incorporated into various subject areas, covering a wide range of topics. It will be further supplemented by extra-curricular activities within the school community.
4. Alcohol, cannabis and other drug prevention curriculum is addressed within the Ministry of Education Health and Physical Education (HPE) Curriculum, Grades 1-12. While primary implementation will take place within the HPE curriculum, the monitoring and extra-curricular supports will be supported by a cross-disciplinary team, which includes contributions from the Curriculum department, the TCDSB Mental Health Lead, the Social Work and Psychology departments and the Safe Schools department.
5. The alcohol, cannabis and other drug prevention curriculum shall be evaluated regularly and revised as necessary.
6. Where proactive education and preventative efforts have been unsuccessful, an early intervention program will be employed, offering early assistance to students who are experiencing problems related to alcohol, cannabis and other drugs. This assistance may include supports from community partners with specialization in this area.
7. A process for identification of, and early intervention into, problems among students for whom preventative efforts have been unsuccessful shall include:

- a. Ensuring appropriate staff have been familiarized with the signs and symptoms of alcohol, cannabis and other drug use/ abuse by students.
 - b. Acquainting all staff with the procedures to follow and referral skills required when dealing with alcohol, cannabis and other drug use/abuse by students.
 - b) Informing all students and their parents/guardians of the existence of early intervention programs and how to gain access.
8. Violations of this policy can amount to a violation of the TCDSB Code of Conduct in several ways, including but not limited to:
- a) Use of tobacco or tobacco products, including vaping;
 - b) Use or possession of alcohol;
 - c) Use or possession of cannabis with the exception of cannabis prescribed for medical use by a physician in good standing with the College of Physicians and Surgeons;
 - d) Use of inhalants for the purpose of intoxication;
 - e) Use or possession of illegal drugs;
 - f) Being under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis or other drugs;
 - g) Sale or trafficking of tobacco, alcohol, cannabis or illegal drugs; and
 - h) Giving tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, or illegal drugs to a minor.
9. Responses related to violations of this policy are addressed through a progressive discipline approach that considers mitigating and other factors, and that includes consultation between the principal/site manager and the appropriate supervisory officer.
10. The sale and supply of tobacco or e-cigarettes to anyone under the age of nineteen (19) is prohibited. Anyone who sells or supplies tobacco or an e-cigarette to a student under 19 years of age is guilty of an offence and if convicted may result in a fine under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017.
11. Smoking of tobacco and cannabis and the use of electronic cigarettes (vaping) at schools, on school grounds and all public areas within 20 metres of these grounds is prohibited. Anyone smoking or vaping on school property is guilty of an offence and if convicted may result in a fine under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017.
- a) All school administrators/site managers will ensure that staff, students, parents and members of the public are reminded of this prohibition.
 - b) Signage shall be posted at all entrances, exits, washrooms and other appropriate locations to ensure compliance.
 - c) In secondary schools, the Health and Physical Education Department will work with Toronto Public Health and the tobacco enforcement officials to create a unified procedure for enforcing the *Smoke Free Ontario Act* in the Toronto Catholic District School Board secondary schools.

12. Where a student is found in possession of alcohol, tobacco, electronic cigarette, recreational cannabis, related products and/or illegal drugs on TCDSB property or at a TCDSB-related vent and/or activity the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be notified, and the student must surrender the item(s) to the educator or administrator.
13. Staff will follow the TCDSB Police/School Board Protocol developed in compliance with the Provincial Model regarding mandatory and discretionary notification of incidents to the police.
14. Confiscated property will be appropriately secured until removed from school premises by police or by other arrangement as determined by Principal and Area Superintendent.
15. Consistent with Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Code of Conduct Policy, all TCDSB employees must report to the principal as soon as reasonably possible – and no later than the end of the school day – if they become aware of a student who may have engaged in a serious student incident, such as the possession, use, trafficking or distribution of prohibited substances. Members of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Services Workers and members of the College of Psychologists of Ontario, shall also report, in a manner that is consistent with the code of ethics and the standards of practice of their respective professions, matters that could result in the student doing physical, emotional, or psychological harm to themselves or to others. In all other circumstances, members of these Colleges who are engaged in a clinical relationship with a student shall report such incidents to the principal as soon as it is, in their professional opinion, reasonably possible to do so without having a negative impact on the nature of the clinical relationship.
16. In accordance with sections 306 and 310- of the *Education Act*, a principal shall consider whether to suspend or expel a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the activities identified in *Operational Procedures “Protocol to Suspension and Expulsion”* (S.S. 01 - Appendix A) while at school, at a school related activity, or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have a negative impact on school climate. Principals will consider a harm reduction model, which signifies that the purpose of suspensions should not be punitive but rather supportive to the student and school population.
17. If any school staff, administrator, or employee is found in possession or in use of alcohol, cannabis or other illegal drugs, that individual may be subject to discipline.

Cross References:

Legislation

- *Bill 174, Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017*
- *Cannabis Act, 2017, SO 2017, C26, Sch 1*
- *Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19*
- *Ontario Regulation 268/18*
- *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, SO 2017, C26, Sch 5 Municipal Code, Chapter 709, Smoking*

Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum

- Policy/Program Memorandum 128, 2024, The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct
- Policy/Program Memorandum 145 Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour, 2018
- Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol
- TCDSB Policy /Procedure

TCDSB Policy /Procedure

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Operation Procedures Appendix A Protocol to Suspension
- Operation Procedures Appendix C Protocol to Expulsion
- Operational Procedures Appendix F Statutory Powers Procedure Act
- Progressive Discipline Policy
- Suspension and Expulsion Policy

Definitions

Alcohol:

Refers to an intoxicating liquor, alcoholic drink, strong drink, drink, spirits or intoxicants.

Cannabis:

Cannabis, also known as marijuana among other names, is a psychoactive drug from the Cannabis plant used for medical or recreational purposes. The term “cannabis”, as used in this policy, refers to all forms of cannabis, including but not limited to cannabinoids, edibles, liquid edibles, extracts and topical cannabis.

Cannabinoid:

The word cannabinoid refers to every chemical substance, regardless of structure or origin, that joins the cannabinoid receptors of the body and brain. The two main Cannabinoids are delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). This includes products that are ingested (liquid or solid), inhaled or applied topically.

Drug Use:

"Drug use" refers to drugs other than alcohol and includes cannabis, tobacco, illegal drugs, inhalants, and prescription drugs used without the authority of a physician. It does not include drugs, including cannabis, when prescribed by a physician, or over-the-counter medications used appropriately (and with the permission of a parent or legal guardian in the case of students under the age of 18).

Illegal Drugs:

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 person possessing/using it. It also includes any substance that is prohibited by Board policy. 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 the case of students under the age of 18).

Evaluation and Metrics:

1. The policy will be reviewed every five years.
2. Anonymous Safe School Climate surveys administered to representative groups of TCDSB students and parents.
3. Annual review of suspension/expulsion data.
4. Consultation with the Safe Schools Advisory Committee, the Safe and Accepting Schools Team at a local level, and the Student Leadership Group.
5. Annual review of provincial safe schools data (Ministry Report).