

UNDER REVIEW

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Title	Effective Date	Revision Date	No. of Pages
NO. 747 SUBSTANCE USE SCHOOL POLICY			1 of 12

It is the policy of the Tri-County Regional School Board that the possession, use, and trafficking of alcohol and other drugs¹ will not be tolerated on school property, on school buses, or during school-related activities.

PROCEDURE under Policy No. 747

The Tri-County Regional School Board (TCRSB) is committed to promoting the health and well-being of all students and creating a learning environment where all students feel safe and cared for. The Tri-County Regional School Board prohibits the following:

- Consumption or possession of alcohol
- Use or possession of illicit drugs
- Inhalation of solvents
- Use or possession of pharmaceutical drugs for non-medical purposes
- Use or possession of drug-related equipment (e.g., syringes, bong, pipes) unless intended for legitimate medical purposes
- Being in the presence of other individuals who are in violation of the policy, as outlined in the previous points

If a student violates the School Substance Use Policy, the following actions will be taken:

1. As outlined in Policy No.203 (Sale or Distribution of Alcoholic Beverages or Drugs), if a teacher or other school official has reason to believe that a student has violated these procedures, the teacher or school official shall act toward the student in a firm but fair manner.
 - a. A school staff member will respond to students' immediate safety and medical needs, if necessary
 - b. The teacher or official will fully inform the i) Principal, ii) designate (Vice Principal or Teacher-in-Charge) AND, as soon as possible, the student's parent or guardian will be informed. If it is believed that a student is under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug, the student shall be turned over to the custody of the parent or guardian or, if that is not possible, to some other responsible adult who has agreed to take charge of the student.

1. For the purpose of this policy, drugs include alcohol, cannabis, inhalants, illicit drugs, and prescription drugs used without the authority of a physician. Drugs do not include medication prescribed by a physician or over-the-counter medications used for their intended purpose.

2. The school principal or designate will document and validate the facts of the incident by interviewing relevant staff and students. Any drugs involved will be confiscated and properly managed until they can be turned over to the police
3. The school principal or designate will respond using this policy as a guide (please refer to **Appendix A** for an outline of actions and consequences based on the behavioral incident).
4. The principal or designate will provide the student instruction regarding school expectations, rationale, and appropriate behaviour.
5. Parents or guardians will be contacted and informed of the situation. If appropriate, parents or guardians will be asked to pick their child up from the school. If a parent or guardian is unavailable, a school staff member will phone an emergency contact, local law enforcement, or Children's Services
6. When a student is suspended or expelled, reintegration needs to be a primary consideration. Reintegration includes establishing a process for re-introducing a student back to the school, such as a meeting with guidance, school principal or designate, or Addiction Services staff

Please refer to the following TCRSB policies for further guidance on the consequences of drug use for students:

- Policy #203: Sale or Distribution of Alcoholic Beverages or Drugs
- Policy #205: Smoking
- Policy #707: Suspension of Students

Every effort should be made to promote the development of healthy chemical free lifestyles, to respond to problems and situations, and where necessary, to recommend constructive referrals to appropriate resources. The Prevention and Intervention section (**Appendix B**) is to provide administrators, teachers, and parents supporting information to best assist students and provide the most conducive learning environment for all. This section will help guide professional development and trainings that will help promote and support the policy as it applies to students while attending school or any school related function.

Actions and Consequences of Behaviour Incidents for Students

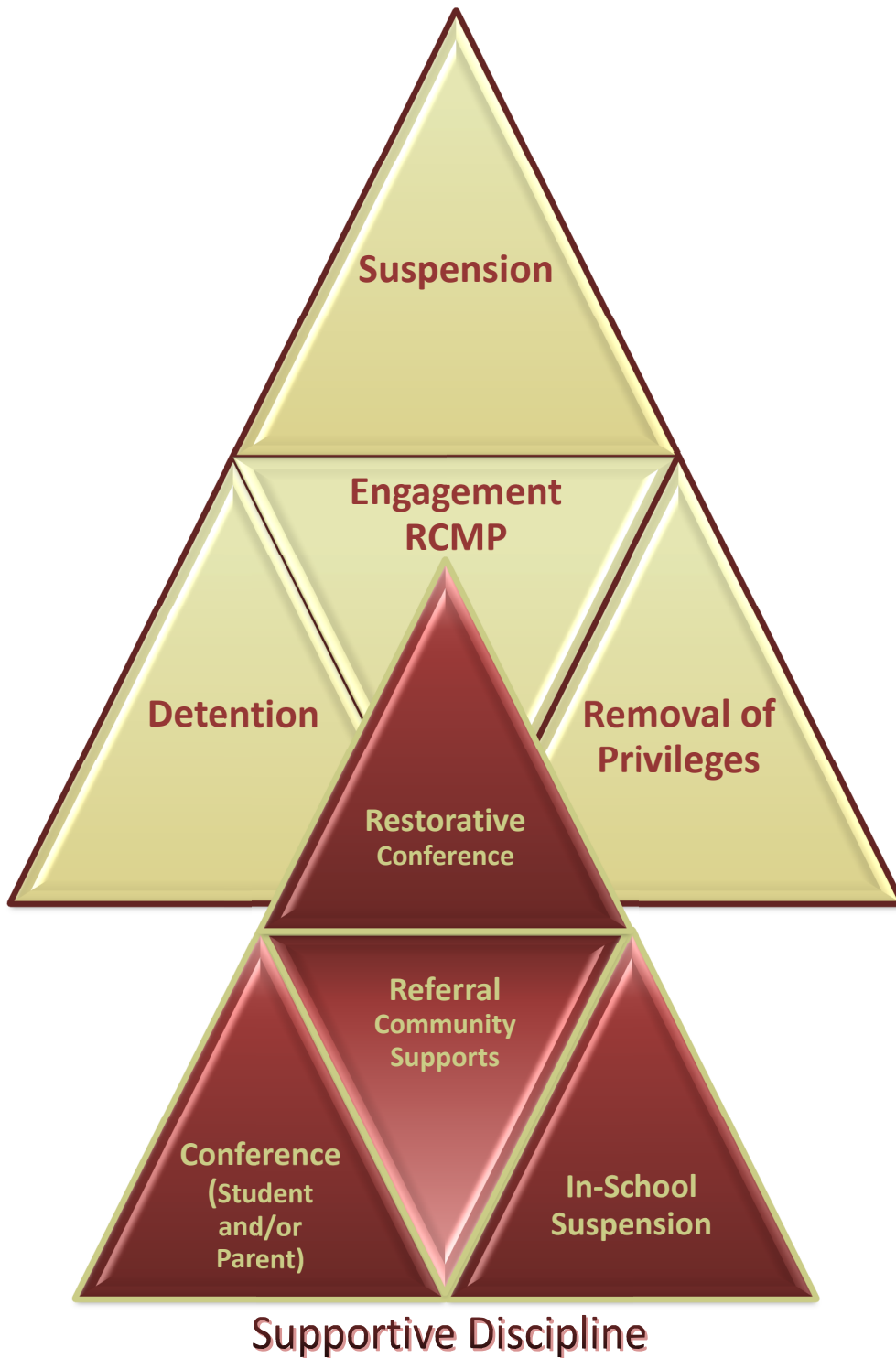
The table below outlines the actions and consequences based on the behaviour incident. These consequences are consistent with those established by the Provincial Code of Conduct. All incidents dealing with illegal substances are classified as “Severely Disruptive Behaviour Incident”.

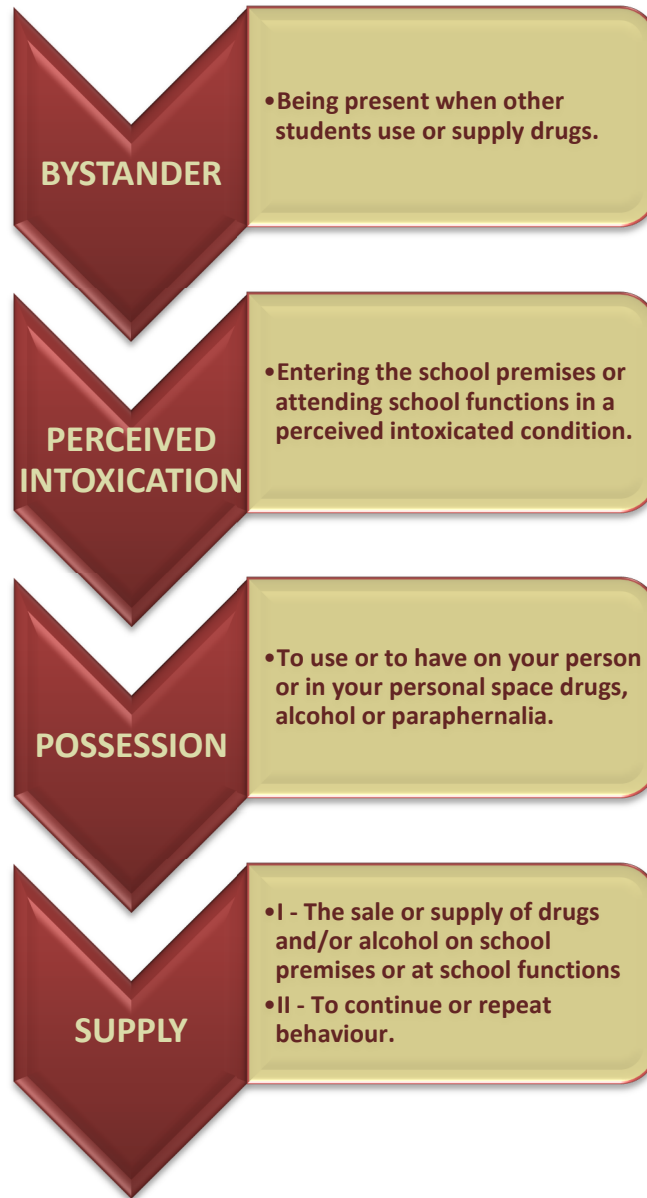
Several possible actions or consequences are listed below in Table 1: Actions and Consequences of Behaviour Incidents for Students; ***it is suggested responding in the order listed but the principal or designate will use their discretion (i.e., the steps are not linked to the number of incidents)***. It is assumed that the first response will be providing the student instruction regarding school expectations, rationale, and appropriate behaviour, which could include a referral to the guidance counsellor. Further, police involvement may be necessary (even when not listed as a mandatory response) if there is a possibility of harm to others or unlawful activity such as theft or driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Table 1: Actions and Consequences of Behaviour Incidents for Students

Behaviour Incident	Suggested Actions/Consequences	
Bystander	1. Conference with student 2. Conference with student & parent / guardian	3. Detention (with behaviour coaching) 4. Withdrawal of privileges
Perceived Intoxication*	1. Conference with student 2. Conference with student & parent / guardian 3. Referral to External Partners / SchoolsPlus (where appropriate)	4. In-school suspension (with academic supports) 5. Suspension
Possession	1. Conference with student & parent / guardian 2. Referral to External Partners / SchoolsPlus (where appropriate)	3. In-school suspension (with academic supports) 4. Involvement of community/school police liaison officer 5. Restorative conference 6. Suspension
Supply I	1. Conference with student & parent / guardian 2. Referral to External Partners / SchoolsPlus (where appropriate)	3. In-school suspension (with academic supports) 4. Involvement of community/school police liaison officer 5. Restorative conference 6. Suspension
Supply II	1. Conference with student & parent / guardian 2. Referral to External Partners / SchoolsPlus (where appropriate)	3. In-school suspension (with academic supports) 4. Involvement of community/school police liaison officer 5. Suspension

*Entering the school premises, attending school functions or on school busses in a perceived intoxicated condition.





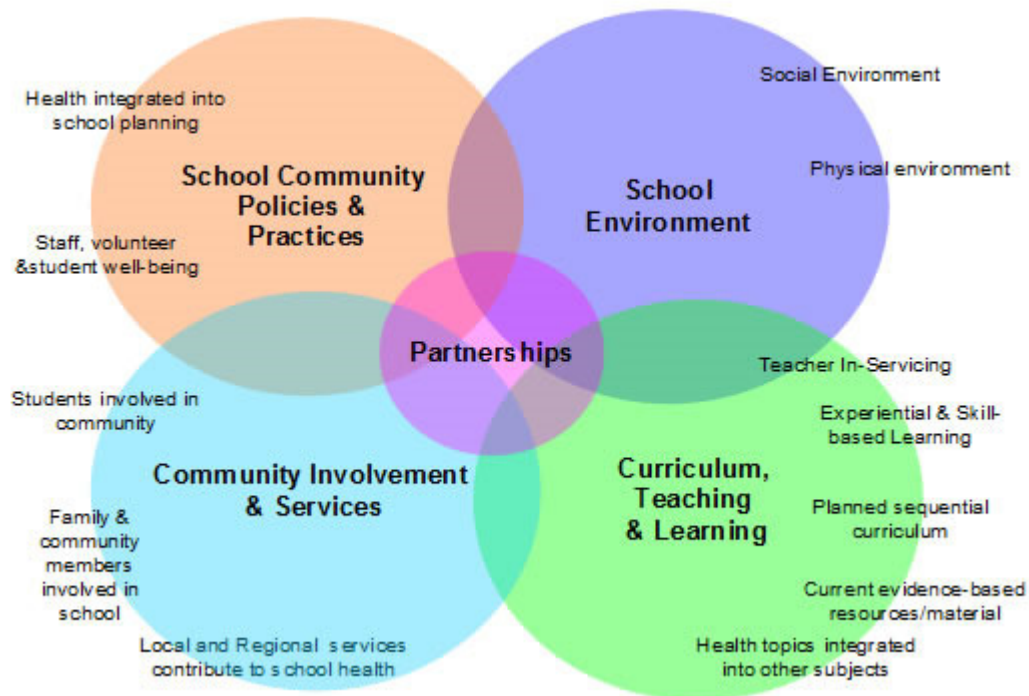
Behavioural Incidents

Prevention and Intervention

The quality of the school environment can have an impact on academic performance, well-being, and risk behaviours such as harmful substance use (Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse [CCSA], 2010). Substance use can, in turn, threaten the health and well-being of students and the broader school community. Therefore, to promote a healthy school environment the focus must be on the entire school community. As such, this policy is seen as an essential component of the Tri-County Health Promoting Schools approach, which promotes and supports health within the school community in the following five areas (2011; see Figure 1):

1. **School community policies and practices** that promote and support health and wellbeing of students, staff, and community
2. Supportive social and physical **school environments** that promote health
3. **Curriculum, teaching, and learning** that builds knowledge and skills of students, staff, and community for health and health promotion
4. **Community involvement** in the life of the school and school involvement in the community
5. **Partnerships** between the school and community members, community groups and organizations are essential to the success of a health promoting school

Figure 1: Tri-County Health Promoting Schools Model



Goals

The goals of this School Substance Use Policy are to:

- Prevent or delay the onset of student substance use
- Reduce the harms associated with student substance use
- Reduce the harms associated with student substance use through early intervention, including referral to community-based services
- Outline the consequences of incidents involving substance use

The TCRSB will use the Tri-County Health Promoting Schools model to achieve these goals through collaboration with Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS), South West Nova District Health Authority and other community based organizations, as appropriate. This collaboration will allow for the implementation of a comprehensive prevention strategy that addresses the use of alcohol and other drugs on school property. This policy will be organized into the following components:

- Health Promotion and Prevention
- Early Intervention and Referral to Support Services

Health Promotion and Prevention

Goals: (a) to prevent or delay the onset of student substance use, and (b) reduce the harms associated with student substance use.

For the purpose of this policy, health promotion is the promotion of healthy behaviour and a healthy school environment through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values (Nova Scotia Department of Health [NSDOH], 2002). Health promotion efforts will include:

- Supporting healthy child and youth development
- Strengthening the protective factors that promote health and mitigating the risk factors that impair health
- Promoting the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities (to the extent possible)
- Engaging youth as partners in community life initiatives
- Utilizing the incident data annually from the Student Information System to create a strategic action plan for health promotion and prevention
- Implementing best practices for substance use prevention programs
- Supporting school activities that enhances knowledge, values, and skills to protect youth from harmful substance use (e.g., breakfast programs, recreation, leisure, drama club presentations, peer education activities)
- Restricting alcohol advertising and sponsorship of activities

Early Intervention and Referral to Support Services

Goal: reduce the harms associated with student substance use through early intervention, including referral to community-based services.

The early intervention component of this policy will identify students experiencing harms associated with substance use and provide early assistance. In addition, the TCRSB will encourage staff to promote the use of community-based services. To achieve this goal, early intervention and referral efforts will include:

- Training opportunities provided to all appropriate school personnel by Mental Health and Addiction Services regarding substance use situations
 - Familiarize school personnel with the signs and symptoms of substance use by students
 - How to deal with students who are showing signs of intoxication
 - Acquaint school personnel with this policy, including the Actions and Consequences of Behaviour Incidents for Students (**Appendix A**)
 - Train appropriate staff in assessment, counselling, and referral skills related to substance use
- Informing students and parents of this policy (see Communication section) and resources such as Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Encouraging students to self-refer to Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Obtaining parental consent when a teacher or administrator refers a student to Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Promoting early intervention and referral as everyone's responsibility. Therefore, the school principal or designate should be contacted if a staff member:
 - Believes a student is under the influence of drugs
 - Believes a student is experiencing a substance use problem (even if not intoxicated at the time)
- Keeping counseling separate from discipline. To increase the effectiveness of both counseling and discipline, schools should have two separate staff members to provide counseling and discipline, wherever possible. Furthermore, the TCRSB will:
 - Encourage individual schools to support and partner with appropriate services with regard to referral and counselling
 - Recognize that Mental Health and Addiction Services is primarily responsible for the provision of counselling and treatment services for students harmfully involved in substance use

Complementary Approaches

In addition to the possible actions outlined in **Appendix A**, complementary methods such as Restorative Approaches and Community Conferencing may be available. These complementary approaches are non-punitive and consistent with the philosophy of the TCRSB. While there are similarities between the two approaches, only schools trained in restorative approaches can use that method, whereas any school can use community conferencing.

These approaches are only available if all parties (e.g., the student facing disciplinary action, the people harmed, and the principal) agree:

- that the approach chosen represents an appropriate level of discipline
- to be bound by the recommendations

Implementation

The principal or designate will be responsible for the implementation and reporting of the policy.

Revisions

Due to the dynamic nature of substance use it is recommended that this policy be reviewed at least every four years by the Elected School Board.

Communication

The Tri-County Regional School Board and the individual schools will regularly communicate with the school community about the School Substance Use Policy. It is recommended that students and parents be informed about this policy (including any revisions made) at the beginning of the school year. Additional options to promote the policy include (AADAC, 2009; Evans-Whipp et al., 2007; NSDOH, 2002):

- Highlighting the policy in regular communications to parents, such as school newsletters or parent-teacher meetings
- Putting the policy in student, staff, and parent handbooks (as applicable)
- Sending an informational letter to parents
- Having information meetings with students, staff, parents, and the school community
- Displaying the policy in a public area for members of the school community to read
- Including the policy on the school website
- Producing brochures, posters, or signs

The following information may be included when promoting the School Substance Use Policy (NSDOH, 2002):

- The need for the policy and benefits to the school community
- The process used to develop the policy
- Emphasize how all community members can share responsibility in managing student substance use
- Information about community resources related to substance use such as Mental Health and Addiction Services, Department of Community Services, and the RCMP
- Ways that the community can become involved in supporting student health and wellbeing

References

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