

PROHIBITED SUBSTANCE POLICY

approved December 4, 2024

Introduction

At Dallas International School (DIS), the well-being and safety of our students are paramount. Our Prohibited Substance Policy is rooted in the commitment to providing a safe and healthy environment conducive to academic achievement and personal growth. The use of prohibited substances can have a profoundly negative impact on a student's academic performance, physical health, and overall well-being. Moreover, it can disrupt the educational environment for others and undermine the values of our school community.

Health education is a cornerstone of our approach, aimed at empowering students to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. DIS takes a stern stance against the use, possession, and distribution of prohibited substances, reflecting our commitment to maintaining a drug-free school environment. We are dedicated to providing our students with the knowledge, resources, and support they need to make positive choices that contribute to their success and the safety of the school community.

Texas Statute

Under Texas law, strict regulations govern the presence and use of controlled substances in and around schools, which are designated as Drug-Free Zones under Texas Penal Code §481.134. This law is designed to provide additional protection to minors and enhance the safety of school environments.

Key elements of TPC§481.134 include:

- **Minor** means a person who is younger than 18 years of age.
- **School** means a private or public elementary or secondary school or a day-care center.
- **Felony Offense:** Under this statute, any offense involving prohibited substances within a designated Drug-Free Zone, including the premises of a school or within 1,000 feet of a school, is classified as a felony. The severity of the offense can result in enhanced penalties, including a higher degree of felony charges.

The purpose of these stringent laws is to protect young people from the dangers of drug use and to maintain a safe educational environment. DIS is committed to upholding these legal standards and ensuring that our campus remains a drug-free zone.

Definitions

Prohibited Substance

A prohibited substance includes, but is not limited to, illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes (vaping products), and any controlled substances not prescribed by a licensed healthcare provider.

Controlled Substance

A controlled substance refers to any drug or chemical whose manufacture, possession, or use is regulated by the government under the Controlled Substances Act, including but not limited to narcotics, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, and cannabis.

Zero Tolerance

Zero Tolerance at DIS means that any violation of this policy will result in consequences, regardless of the circumstances or individual involved. This strict policy underscores the seriousness with which we approach the issue of prohibited substances, ensuring a consistent and unwavering response to violations.

Consequences

The consequences for violating the Prohibited Substance Policy at DIS are designed to be clear, consistent, and commensurate with the severity of the offense. They include the following:

Loss of Privileges (LOP)

Students found in violation may lose the right to participate in student leadership roles, off-campus privileges, field trips, and student exchange programs.

In-School Suspension (ISS)

A temporary removal from regular classroom activities, where the student is required to complete their schoolwork in a designated area under supervision.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)

A temporary removal from the school, during which the student is not permitted on school grounds or to participate in school activities.

Expulsion (EXP)

Permanent removal from the school, which may occur in the most severe cases of substance abuse violations.

Report to Dallas Police Department (DPD)

In cases involving possession or distribution of prohibited substances, the school will involve law enforcement authorities, resulting in potential legal action in addition to school-based consequences.

Violations

Intoxication: LOP, ISS, OSS, EXP

Any student found to be under the influence of a prohibited substance will face consequences that may include loss of privileges, an in-school suspension, an out-of-school suspension, or expulsion. The severity of the response will depend on the circumstances and the impact on the school community.

Possession: LOP, OSS, EXP, DPD

The possession of prohibited substances on school grounds or during school activities will result in consequences that may include loss of privileges, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and/or a report to the Dallas Police Department.

Distribution: EXP, DPD

The distribution of prohibited substances is considered a grave violation of this policy and will result in mandatory expulsion and report to the Dallas Police Department.

Investigations

DIS reserves the right to conduct thorough investigations whenever there are allegations or suspicions of violations of this policy. This may include interviewing students, staff, or other individuals who may have witnessed or have knowledge of the incident. The school is committed to handling these investigations with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity.

Prevention

Preventive measures are a critical component of maintaining a drug-free school environment. Some measures employed at DIS include:

- **Random Searches.** DIS reserves the right to conduct searches of students' personal belongings, including bags, lockers, and vehicles, without prior notice. These searches are conducted to ensure compliance with the Prohibited Substance Policy and to maintain a safe school environment.
- **Sniffer Dogs.** Periodic sniffer dog searches will be conducted on campus as a proactive measure to detect and deter the presence of prohibited substances. These searches are conducted randomly and without prior notice to students, families, or staff.

Support

DIS is committed to supporting students who may be struggling with substance use. We encourage any student who feels they need help to speak with a trusted adult. The school offers counseling services and has an anonymous reporting system (See Something, Say Something) to provide support and intervention as needed.

Facilities and Responses

First Aid Training

All staff members at DIS are trained in First Aid to respond to emergencies promptly and effectively.

On-Campus Naloxone

Naloxone, a medication that can reverse opioid overdoses, is available on campus as part of our emergency response plan.

Emergency Response

In the event of an emergency, such as unresponsiveness, shallow breathing, or violent behavior, DIS will call 911 immediately, even without parent/guardian permission, to ensure the student's safety.

Student Education

Academic Curriculum

Substance abuse education is integrated into the academic curriculum, providing students with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their health.

Prevention Programs

DIS organizes guest speakers, group sessions, and counselor-led discussions to educate students on the risks and consequences of substance use.

Community Resources

Students are provided with information on support hotlines and other community resources that can offer additional help and guidance.

Family Education

Prevention Programs

DIS also offers prevention programs for families, including guest speakers and informational sessions, to help parents and guardians understand the risks of substance abuse and how they can support their children.

Family Responsibilities

Communication with School

Families are encouraged to inform DIS if their child has received outside help for substance use. This allows the school to provide additional support and ensure a coordinated approach to the student's well-being.

Drug Screening

Families who wish for their child to be randomly drug screened should arrange this with an outside provider. The school does not conduct random drug screenings but will support families in their efforts to ensure their child's safety by granting excused absences for drug screenings.

Restorative Actions

Evaluative Meeting

To return from suspension, any student found in violation of this policy will be required to have an evaluative meeting with an outside counselor, at the family's expense. This meeting ensures that the school can put into place any necessary support for the student's successful reintegration.

Community Resources

DIS can provide a list of community resources to families seeking additional support for their child.

Policy Review and Publication

This policy is reviewed regularly through collaborative planning, and final versions for publication are sent to and formally approved by the DIS Executive Leadership Team. The latest version of this policy is made available to the DIS community through the MyDIS platform.