



Prevention of Drug Use and Alcohol Abuse Craighouse School

Introduction

Craighouse has an unconditional commitment to its students, which is expressed through specific policies aimed at encouraging their development, enhancing their knowledge and conveying positive social values.

The school's mission statement, which is part of its Institutional Educational Project, expresses Craighouse's commitment to creating and maintaining a safe, gratifying, dignified and productive study environment for its students.

In keeping with this, Craighouse maintains that the educational community's main assets are its teachers, students and families, and administrative staff, who contribute to its growth with professional enthusiasm and a spirit of self-improvement. In this sense, Craighouse strives for excellence among all members of its educational community, especially those preparing for adult life.

Likewise, Craighouse considers those phenomena that impede the normal running of its activities and that prevent it from fulfilling its responsibilities as detrimental to its students and to the school. The school therefore deems it necessary to exercise the faculties established in its regulations that may help prevent the use of drugs among its students, and avoid the harmful effects they can have on the pupils, their families and the institution.

Research carried out in our country clearly illustrates that the **great majority of Chileans do not consume, nor have ever tried illegal substances**. The Fourth National Study on Drug Use in Chile carried out by CONACE in 2000 states that 6.28% of the population have consumed illegal drugs over the last year, which means that practically 93% have not consumed any of these substances over the same period. Regarding the school population, the study states that **76.4% of students between 8th Básico and IVth Medio have never consumed illegal drugs**, and even larger percentages have not consumed such substances over the last month or year.

Likewise, figures of “early consumption”¹ of illegal drugs have maintained their levels for those born in the seventies and those born in the eighties.

Despite the generally low consumption of illegal drugs in the country, there are a series of indicators that are a source of concern:

- there has been a constant, although not particularly significant increase in the consumption of illegal drugs among the Chilean population as a whole.
- alcohol consumption is significantly high among the general population, and particularly among youths. Chile has the fourth highest levels of alcohol consumption in the world, and the second-highest death rate due to cirrhosis; 25% of deaths in our country are associated with alcohol consumption.
- people between 19 and 25 years of age are those who consume drugs the most, followed in the statistics by those aged between 12 and 18.
- new drugs have entered the market.

The harmful effects of drugs and alcohol on the individual have strong repercussions on the school. Absenteeism, distraction, increased risk of accidents, poor academic performance, changes in personal habits, behavioural problems and dysfunctional relationships with peers, are some of the ways in which the normal running of the school can be seriously affected.

This situation has prompted Craighouse to adopt measures to contribute to the personal development of its students by promoting healthy, responsible and respectful behaviour, in an environment free from drugs and alcohol abuse.

From the school’s point of view, the use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol are complex biological, psychological and social phenomena which can manifest themselves in different ways at different stages in a person’s life, and which represent particularly serious problems for young people.

Craighouse considers that all educational centres must take on a facilitating role in the implementation of preventative educational strategies. Most strategies to prevent the use of drugs aim to protect the health of the individual and their community. Health and welfare are, therefore, their

¹ Early consumption: those who consume for the first time before the age of 15



ultimate goals.

The school understands that only a joint effort by the educational community and other relevant institutions within society, will enable us to overcome such a serious problem which is affecting our youth and the country as a whole.

Educational Basis of the Policy

If there is a particularly privileged setting for preventing drug abuse, it is without any doubt the school. Schools are vehicles for formal socialization in which a series of values, rules of conduct, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, patterns of behaviour and skills are transmitted, with an obvious emphasis on conveying knowledge.

Some of the most important elements within schools that facilitate prevention strategies are:

- **Interaction.** Within the school there is social interaction, direct relationships between individuals, and a wealth of opportunities for immediate feed-back on prevention strategies.
- **Committed adults: teachers and parents.** The teacher plays an important role as a behavioural model for his/her students.
- **A group of peers.** A community of peers that remains constant over a long period of time, with whom students can rehearse interaction skills and who exert an influence over each other.
- **An organized environment,** in which there are study programs, structured activities, family and cultural events, well-defined schedules, etc.

The School is designing its own preventative education strategies on the subject of drugs and alcohol, with a view to incorporating these subjects into its Educational Project, developing an institutional **Policy** on the matter and carrying out specific activities as part of a **Prevention Program**.

The Policy

This term refers to the stand taken by the school on the prevention of drug use and alcohol abuse. The policy is as follows:

- The school considers it essential to promote values and attitudes that favour the personal development of its students in an environment free from drug use and alcohol abuse.
- The school considers the prevention of drug consumption and alcohol abuse a top priority task for the family, and one that must be shared with the school. It will therefore promote the participation of the students' families in initiatives that Craighouse pursues on the subject.
- The school expects a personal commitment from each student and member of the educational community to help maintain an educational environment free from drug consumption and alcohol abuse.
- The school does not permit the consumption of illegal drugs and alcohol on its premises nor during school-related activities. Likewise, the sale of these substances is not permitted on its facilities.
- The school believes that the problem of drug and/or alcohol dependence can be remedied, in as far as each student makes a personal commitment to help achieve this.
- In a context of strict confidentiality, the school will make special efforts to help those students who are found using drugs and/or abusing alcohol, and who together with their families, express their willingness to overcome the problem.
- The school reserves the right to request evaluations by independent specialists when a student is found to be using drugs or abusing alcohol, and to adopt all relevant disciplinary actions for students that violate the regulations established in this Policy².

² These regulations will form part of the Student's Discipline Manual.



The Program

The Program refers to the way in which the school aims to prevent the use of drugs and abuse of alcohol.

General Objectives of the Program

1. To contribute to the students' personal development, by promoting a healthy, responsible, and respectful lifestyle free from drugs.
2. To prevent drug consumption and alcohol abuse among the school's students (and as far as possible their families), and among teachers, administrative and support staff.
3. To raise awareness among the students, their families and the school community, of the harmful effects of drug consumption and alcohol abuse, by means of educational activities and training.
4. To train the school's staff in the early detection of drug use and alcohol abuse, in order to reduce the risk of harmful effects on students.
5. To implement a methodology for assessing levels of alcohol and drug consumption among students, in order to produce a realistic diagnosis of the current situation, and monitor changes in this situation over time.
6. To facilitate access to independent specialized treatment for those students with problems of drug or alcohol abuse or dependence.
7. To maintain a healthy, safe environment within the school, which is free from drugs, and discourage the excessive consumption of alcohol.
8. To prevent, as far as possible, the sale and consumption of drugs and alcohol on school premises, and to discourage these practices outside of school.

Implementation of the Program

The school will develop a Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program, which will be implemented in different stages and will include the following components:

- General coordination strategies
- Diagnosis of levels of consumption
- Primary prevention strategies
- Secondary prevention strategies
- Tertiary prevention strategies or treatment

General Coordination Strategies

The school has designated a coordination team that will be responsible for the coordination of the Program for the Prevention of Drug Use and Alcohol Abuse, and relevant policies. This team has the following duties and responsibilities:

- Plan, program and coordinate prevention activities to be carried out at the school
- Carry out diagnosis of levels of consumption among students
- Give support in the implementation of prevention activities
- Supervise the implementation of prevention activities, and the general regulations of the Policy
- Supervise the guidance and counselling team
- Coordinate with independent specialists when necessary.

In order to carry out these duties, the coordination team will receive support from independent specialists with expertise on the subject, with whom they will hold periodic meetings. The members of this team will include the Headmaster, members of the Department of Counselling and Psychology, the Chairman of the Parents Association, a teacher and two High School students³.

³ Ideally these will be students from the IIIrd or IVth Medio, one girl and one boy, who will participate in all meetings except those at which situations that directly affect students or other people (concerning drug abuse, treatments, etc.) are discussed.

Diagnosis of Levels of Consumption

In order to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the Prevention Program, and to focus specific actions on high-risk groups, a direct and indirect evaluation of drug and alcohol abuse among students will be carried out, in order to produce a diagnosis of drug and alcohol consumption among students. This evaluation will be carried out every other year, with the aim of monitoring trends in consumption among students at the school. These evaluations will ideally coincide with those carried out by CONACE at a national level, so as to make a comparison between the situation at Craighouse, that of the population as a whole, and of particularly relevant sub-groups. The results yielded by this diagnosis and the successive evaluations shall be made known to the Craighouse community periodically.

Case-related information produced by these evaluations will serve as the basis for a separate document which will remain confidential, in order to safeguard the validity and reliability of the instrument used.⁴

Primary Prevention Strategies

Most of Craighouse's efforts will be focussed on designing and implementing a complete educational program for students and their parents. This program aims to promote values and attitudes that act as protective factors, reducing the risk of drug use and alcohol abuse, and also seeks to provide information on the negative effects these substances have on a person's life. The program may subsequently be extended to the rest of the school's educational community.

The school will adopt the necessary measures to assure the active participation of its members in the specific educational activities carried out.

At this level of intervention the following activities will be carried out:

- Training Program for Teachers
- Specific preventative educational strategies by grade-level
 - In-school activities
 - Extracurricular activities

⁴ A Direct Consumption Survey and an Indirect Evaluation of Consumption will be carried out.

- Educational activities for parents

Secondary Preventive Activities

Considering that consumption of alcohol and drugs among some youths is a reality, it is necessary to address the subject of early detection of those students who are consuming, and those who have not yet initiated consumption but who are in a high-risk situation. By high-risk we mean those who have a high propensity or vulnerability for consumption⁵. It is also necessary to address the problem of those youths who do not have alcohol dependence, but who do consume alcohol on a regular basis. Here, emphasis must be put on developing and implementing a Training Program for Teachers, which aims to prevent youths in high-risk situations from initiating consumption, and to discourage continued consumption by those who have already started.

At this level of intervention, the following activities will be carried out:

- Training Course for teachers of 5th Básico to IVth Medio in the identification of risk factors for drug use and alcohol abuse, and Counselling strategies for students with consumption problems.

Support for Tertiary Prevention or Treatment

The school will establish special procedures by which to give the necessary support to those who are using drugs or abusing alcohol, and who ask for help or are willing to receive it at the school's suggestion.

It is worth pointing out that if a student infringes the general regulations on drug use or alcohol abuse — regardless of any disciplinary measures that may be taken — the school, with the aim of providing the best support possible, may ask the family for an independent professional evaluation, and if necessary, suggest that the student participate in a specialized treatment program.

⁵ Propensity refers to those youths who have not yet consumed drugs, but who claim not to perceive any risk associated with in using them, and to have easy access to them, which makes future consumption probable. Vulnerability refers to youths that have not consumed drugs but who recognize that they do have friends or people close to them that do so and that have offered them drugs during the last year.

The school, by means of its coordination team or whoever the Headmaster should designate for such a purpose, will do all that is in its power to help the student and his/her family find the most appropriate specialists or treatment programs to help overcome the problem. The school will maintain a supportive relationship with the student and his/her family, in order to help him/her keep up with his/her academic work. Likewise, all necessary measures will be adopted to permit the student's reintegration into his/her normal school activities, in the eventuality that his/her treatment calls for a period of in-patient hospital care or absence from school. The school will take all steps to assure confidentiality regarding any treatment that the family chooses.

Appendix

Regulations on the use of drugs and abuse of alcohol to be included in the School's Discipline Manual

Craighouse believes that the abuse of alcohol and the use of drugs among its students has a serious negative impact on their family and social life, affects their ability to behave correctly in the educational context and produces adverse effects on the school environment and the other members of the educational community. The school has therefore established the following general regulations:

1. The use, possession, distribution or sale of illegal drugs⁶ is forbidden on school premises and during school-related activities, and is considered a serious misdemeanour in the student's conduct. This restriction also applies to the use of psychotropic substances without medical prescription and for non-therapeutic purposes.
2. The possession or consumption of alcohol on school premises or during school-related activities is forbidden and is considered a serious misdemeanour in the student's conduct.
3. Smoking on school premises is forbidden and is considered a serious misdemeanour in the student's conduct.
4. Students are not permitted to attend school, or other activities carried out under the tuition of the school and that are conducted outside school

⁶ Illegal drugs are understood as all psychotropic substances, excepting alcohol and tobacco.



premises, under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Any student who is found in such a condition incurs in a very serious transgression of the norms of healthy coexistence with the other members of the educational community.

Disciplinary Measures

Notwithstanding the strategies for secondary and tertiary prevention described in previous sections, the following disciplinary measures have been established in response to the infringement of any of the general regulations set forth in the Policy.

- Participation in community work or activities prevention carried out at the school.
- Verbal reprimand
- Written reprimand
- Suspension from school activities
- Expulsion

The enforcement of any of the above measures shall be analysed in each case, considering the specific circumstances in which a regulation is broken, the seriousness of the misdemeanour, and whether it is an isolated or recurrent act. In addition, these measures may be applied independently or complementarily. In any event, it is normal procedure in these cases that the school inform the parents of any such situation.