

## Drug & Bullying Policy

G-Star School of the Arts is one of the safest schools in Florida. With a student population of 700 and small class sizes, our school keeps a close watch on our students, particularly when it comes to inappropriate or threatening behavior (bullying) and the use of drugs.

EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO A SAFE AND SECURE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. G-STAR IS UNEQUIVOCALLY COMMITTED TO PROVIDING SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR OUR STUDENTS.

The moment drug use or bullying is reported we bring the alleged offender(s) and witnesses to the office for a full investigation. If the offense is verified at the end of the investigation, it is entered into the student's record and becomes permanent documentation.

### Drug Offense:

The seriousness of even the most mild or casual drug use cannot be excused away by old paradigms. Today, there are violent gangs in Palm Beach County who deal in drugs being sold to teenagers. G-Star School of the Arts is gang-free, but drug users bring the menace of gang activity and physical danger to any school. Innocent bystanders are at risk equally as are the drug users themselves. For this reason, **G-Star does not tolerate any drug use of any kind on or off campus.**

The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled in *The State of New Jersey vs. T.L.O.* decision that every school in the nation has the right of *loco parentis*, meaning once a parent drops off a student at school (or from the time the student steps on a school bus) the school assumes certain parental rights. These parental rights are granted "to provide a safe learning environment" for the students. The students relinquish certain 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment rights. For example, if a parent suspects their child is using drugs and searches their child's room, the child does not have to be read their Miranda Rights, is not entitled to one phone call, and is not entitled to have a lawyer present. These rights are waived at school also. A student does not have to be "caught" or "observed" doing a crime. A suspicion of drug

use by the school or the naming of a student as a drug user by another student, even an anonymous report, warrants the **search** of the student's possessions and the **administration of a drug test** given at school without notification to the parent.

### **The Procedure:**

When a student is brought into the office for a suspected drug offense, a search is conducted. The student is not touched and they are not "patted down". In front of two Administrators or teachers they are instructed to empty their pockets and take off their shoes. They bang their shoes upside-down and then put them back on. Their book bag and/or purse is searched. They are administered a noninvasive drug test. Cell phones that take pictures are illegal in Palm Beach County schools. If they have one, it is confiscated and the pictures on the phone are viewed. If physical evidence of drug use (illegal drugs of any kind) is discovered, the Sheriff's Department is called and the student is arrested. In serious cases such as this, the school immediately files for expulsion, the student is suspended, and the student is automatically dismissed from the school.

In cases where there are no physical drugs present, but there are indications of drug use such as drug paraphernalia, positive drug test or pictures on the cell phone indicating drug use, the School District Disciplinary Matrix is followed. G-Star may require the dismissal of the student from the school or remedies such as random or regularly scheduled drug testing at the parent's expense.

### **Remedies for drug use available to the school:**

Remedies for drug use in the school are available. These include, but not limited to: the use of trained dogs from the **K-9 Unit** of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, and the registering of a Sheriff's **undercover narcotics agent** as a student in the school, which has been done at other Palm Beach County School District schools.

### **Bullying:**

In the case of bullying, to be fair, we interview the witnesses on both sides of the issue separately and then compare the information knowing that there are always two sides to every story.

If punishment is evident, the offending party is punished in accordance with the School District Discipline Policy, which can include suspension or expulsion, and other remedies governed by the School District Discipline Matrix.

If the offense is a low level threat, G-Star will enact mediation to resolve the issue between the students. If the issue is resolved, we monitor the behavior of both parties to make sure the resolution is permanent. In most cases, our experience has been the students become good friends again.

If the incident is serious, including bodily harm, and the witnesses concur, we call the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office. They step in and perform their own investigation. Once the Sheriff is involved, G-Star is no longer in charge and we comply with their findings and directions. Serious bullying may result in criminal charges against the perpetrator. In serious cases, the school immediately files for expulsion, the student is suspended, and the student is automatically dismissed from the school.

**Dismissal Policy regarding bullying and drug use:**

At the discretion of the G-Star Administration, a student may be dismissed from the school for any violation of the school's zero tolerance Drug & Bullying Policy any time during the school year.

G-Star is a school of Choice; therefore, at the discretion of the G-Star Administration, a student may not be invited back (dismissed) for the following school year for any violation of the school's zero tolerance Drug & Bullying Policy regardless of the disciplinary action taken during the school year.