

## **POLICY ON BODY PIERCING AND TATTOOS FOR SCHOOL AND HOSTEL**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The same rules governing safety issues in schools (eg. not wearing sleepers, wearing footwear in a laboratory, not having long sharp fingernails) apply to body ornaments and tattoos. The only acceptable body piercing is plain gold or silver standard size studs in the ear. Visible tattoos are not acceptable.

### **PURPOSES**

To encourage young people to consider the possible and permanent consequences of body piercing/tattooing and the wisdom of leaving such a decision until they are older.

### **RATIONALE**

There are serious health and hygiene issues associated with body piercing and tattooing. Because of the expense, some young people will try to do it themselves. There is a risk of Hepatitis B, septicaemia, Hepatitis C and Aids. Navel piercing can quickly become infected under belts and tight clothing. About 20% of people are allergic to metals such as nickel. The cartilaginous part of the ear above the lobe can become very disfigured if infected and many people are prone to keloid scarring which can leave a hard, ugly lump.

### **GUIDELINES**

1. Factual information about the health issues involved should be available to students.
2. It will be emphasised to the school community that tattooing, and body piercing other than ear piercing is unacceptable at the school. The Principal will speak to all Year 9 students and their parents about piercing and tattooing rules at enrolment interviews.
3. Mufti at Year 13 level and the hostel is to a standard acceptable to the Principal. Tattooing and body-piercing, other than studs in the ear is unacceptable at this year level also.

### **MEDICAL INFORMATION ON BODY PIERCING – for student decision-making after leaving school**

- Piercing should always be done by a professional under sterile conditions.
- Local anaesthetics performed by people who are not medically qualified can be extremely dangerous as well as being illegal.
- All piercing should be done with disposable needles and syringes from a pre-sterilised packet. These should not be re-used.
- All surgical instruments in contact with broken skin and all jewellery to be inserted should be sterilised in a steam steriliser.
- To reduce the risk of skin and soft tissue infection, the skin should not be touched except with sterile disposable rubber gloves.
- Jewellery should be made of top-grade surgical steel or high carat gold. Nickel and silver are to be avoided.
- Once inserted, the jewellery and the pierced area should be kept dry and touched as little as possible. Disinfectant and antibiotic creams should be used only with the advice of a medical practitioner. (Old disinfectants in the bathroom cupboard can harbour organisms).
- Pierced areas of the body like the navel should be kept clean and dry and covered by loose clothing.

(Acknowledgment: Department of Public Health and Epidemiology, King's College, London.)

This policy was adopted on 24 February 1998.

Reviewed May 2008