

Syringe Safety Procedure



Syringes and other illicit drug paraphernalia are occasionally found by children/community members in our schoolyard. Unfortunately some users of intravenous drugs discard their used syringes and other illicit drug paraphernalia on our school site. This is something we need to be aware of and to know what action to take.

In the event that a syringe or other illicit drug paraphernalia is found, the school organises for an adult to do a complete clean of the school grounds in the event that there are other discarded syringes or other illicit drug paraphernalia.

Teachers need to inform children at the commencement of each year, as to what action to take if they find a syringe or other illicit drug paraphernalia in the school yard.

Action to take if a child encounters a syringe at SKPS:

1. The child is to stand astride, or close by the syringe or other illicit drug paraphernalia.
2. Send a friend to find the teacher on yard duty.
3. The yard duty teacher will ascertain if it is a syringe or other illicit drug paraphernalia and will then send for Nurse Nicole, Sue, Jo, Mary or Dave to collect the item/s.
4. The syringe or other illicit drug paraphernalia will be disposed of in the correct specific hazardous waste container. We have the containers removed from site (and replaced) as required.

Classroom Program:

Children need to be informed that syringes or other illicit drug paraphernalia contain potentially harmful fluid, and are not to be handled under any circumstances. The timely notification to staff and the subsequent safe removal of these items is an effective strategy historically used to keep our grounds safe.

Children should also be reminded of the importance of wearing closed toe shoes at all times whilst at school (even in the warmer months).

Nurse Nicole has sterile samples of syringes/hypodermic needles to assist in class education sessions.

Needle disposal:

This table describes how SKPS disposes of syringes and other illicit drug paraphernalia.

Step	Action
1	If the discarded syringe or other illicit drug paraphernalia is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ accessible, continue with the disposal procedure▪ not accessible:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- mark the area so that others are not at risk- supervise area- contact the Syringe Disposal Helpline on 1800 552 355.
2	Put on single-use gloves.
3	Place the disposal container on the ground next to the syringe or other illicit drug paraphernalia.
4	Using tongs, pick up the syringe from the middle keeping the sharp end away from yourself and place it in the disposal container, needle point down.

Step	Action
	Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Never try to recap a needle, even if the cap is also discarded. ▪ Long metal tongs can be used to reach difficult to access places.
5	Repeat step 4 for each individual needle or syringe.
6	Screw the lid of the disposal unit on firmly.
7	Remove gloves and place them in a plastic bag. Seal the bag and dispose of it in a rubbish bin.
8	Wash hands in warm soapy water and dry thoroughly.
9	To dispose of the sharps disposal container, contact the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Syringe Disposal Helpline on 1800 552 355 for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advice about handling syringes - the location of the nearest local council syringe program or public disposal bin ▪ local general practitioner ▪ local hospital. <p>Note: Disposal containers or syringes must not be put in normal waste disposal.</p>

Treating needle stick injuries:

This table describes how schools treat needle stick injuries.

Step	Action
1	Flush the injured area with flowing water.
2	Wash the affected part with warm soapy water, then pat dry.
3	Cover the wound with waterproof dressing.
4	Report the injury to the principal/school nurse.
5	Ensure the injured person sees a doctor as soon as possible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ assessment of the risk ▪ treatment, if required. <p>An adult should accompany the student to the nearest doctor/medical centre.</p> <p>Note: Research indicates the risk of infection from needle stick injury is low and should not cause alarm. See: Department of Health's Victorian Infectious Diseases Bulletin</p>

Note: SKPS has an approved disposal container for discarded needles, stored out of reach of students and visitors.