

## CANNABIS LEGALIZATION INFORMATION SHEET

### For Parents/Guardians

October 12, 2018

On October 17, 2018, recreational cannabis will be legal for individuals 19 and older in Ontario. As a Catholic school community, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDsb) is committed to ensuring student safety, which includes prevention of cannabis use among youth.

**The HWCDsb does not permit smoking or the use of cannabis or tobacco products on all Board properties or during school or Board sanctioned activities or events** (*Board Policy Cannabis, Tobacco and Smoke-Free Schools*). Students must abide by the Student Code of Conduct where expectations of behavior are outlined, including consequences for being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

#### **What are the risks of cannabis use for youth?**

*(Cannabis: What Caregivers/Guardians Need to Know, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health & School Mental Health ASSIST)*

- **Increased risk of harm to the brain** – such as problems with memory, concentration, thinking, learning, handling emotions, and decision-making
- **Increased risk of mental health problems** – such as psychosis or schizophrenia and, possibly, depression, anxiety and suicide, especially if there is a personal or family history of mental illness
- **Difficulties with relationships** – at home, school or work
- **Physical health harms** – including lung and respiratory problems from smoking cannabis
- **Addiction** – cannabis can be addictive, especially for youth

#### **What are the signs that may indicate that a youth is using cannabis or other substances?**

*(Cannabis: What Caregivers/Guardians Need to Know, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health & School Mental Health ASSIST)*

- Ignoring responsibilities at work, school, or home
- Giving up activities that they used to find important or enjoyable
- Changes in mood (e.g., feeling irritable and paranoid)
- Changing friends
- Having difficulties with family members
- Being secretive or dishonest
- Changing sleep habits, appetite, or other behaviors
- Borrowing money or having more money than usual

#### **How to talk to youth about cannabis?**

*(Cannabis Talk Kit, Drug Free Kids)*

- Be calm and relaxed

- Be positive – avoid shame, anger, scare tactics or disappointment, as it is counterproductive
- Don't lecture
- Find a comfortable setting
- Be aware of body language
- Attentive listening

### **Resources for Youth in Hamilton**

- Contact Hamilton 905-570-8888
- COAST: 905- 972-8338
- Kids Help Phone: 1800-668-6868
- Alternatives for Youth: 905- 527-4469

### **Helpful Websites**

- Ontario's safe and sensible approach to federal cannabis legalization, including legalization timeline [www.ontario.ca/cannabis](http://www.ontario.ca/cannabis)
- Health effects of cannabis on the brain and body [www.canada.ca/cannabis](http://www.canada.ca/cannabis)
- Laws and risks of impaired driving [www.canada.ca/cannabis](http://www.canada.ca/cannabis)
- <https://smh-assist.ca/wp-content/uploads/PRINT-Cannabis-Information-Document-SMHA-CAMH-ENGLISH.pdf>
- <https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/34-17-1850-Cannabis-Talk-Kit-EN-10.pdf>