

St. Peter's College
Dunboyne, Co. Meath
71950F



Substance Use Policy

Policy Reviewed and Ratified: 12th June 2023

Signed: Maria Murphy Date: 12th June 2023

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

1. Scope:

This Substance Use Policy applies to the entire school community including teachers, students, parents/guardians and users of the school building and grounds. It is in force at all times on the school premises, during school time and during school related activities (including school tours, away trips, work experience, extracurricular activities and evening classes.) This is not an exhaustive list.

2. Relationship to School's Mission/Vision/Aims:

- 2.1 To encourage students to be positive in their outlook on life and to make a positive contribution to their school and society.
- 2.2 To foster the confidence in our students and teachers to develop their talents and abilities.
- 2.3 To provide a fair disciplinary process in regards to substance use that provides protection and support to students whilst dealing with the risk to the student, other students, teachers and the school community associated with the consumption and supply of substances.

This policy is part of a general pastoral approach by the school in order to ensure a healthy, caring and supportive learning environment.

This approach is reflected in our Substance Use Policy. For the purposes of this policy substance use refers to: a) use of alcohol and tobacco, b) use of illegal drugs, c) illicit use of other substances e.g. solvents, aerosols, gases, nitrites, chemicals, medicines and many other substances in daily use, d) Use of any substances such as psychotropic drugs that could adversely affect the health and well-being of students. The school, at its discretion, will determine what substances are deemed to be unacceptable for use or possession by students.

4. Rationale:

- 4.1 The school is committed to the health and safety of its community and will take action to safeguard their well-being.
- 4.2 The school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people, and through the general ethos of the school, will seek to persuade pupils in need of support to come forward.
- 4.3 To outline the procedures for dealing with incidents of substance use and misuse as stated in the Code of Behaviour of their school.

5. Goals/Objectives:

The school recognises that drug's both legal and illegal are available in the local community and that the School, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents within the school.

We believe and support the following educational aims in respect of substance use and misuse:

- 5.1 To enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practising skills.
- 5.2 To increase understanding about implications and possible consequences of substance use and misuse.
- 5.3 To encourage an understanding for those experiencing or likely to experience substance use and to encourage those students to seek professional help.
- 5.4 To enable young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support within the school and locality.
- 5.5 To make sure parents and guardians are aware of and support this policy

These aims are fulfilled through aspects of the pupils' experiences in the taught curriculum and the informal curriculum and through opportunities for extra-curricular activities.

Drug Education Programmes:

The Social, Personal and Health Education Department will co-ordinate the teaching of substance use throughout the school. This will involve liaising with teachers of SPHE, Social Education, CSPE and Religion Education.

The school actively co-operates with external agencies.

6. Roles and Responsibilities:

6.1 The Board of Management:

6.1.1 Board of Management supports and is committed to providing the training of teachers on matters of substance use.

6.1.2 To ensure the policy is developed and evaluated over time.

6.1.3 To approve the policy at a meeting of the board.

6.1.4 To consider reports from the principal and relevant post holders on the implementation

6.1.5 To decide on appropriate sanctions for the students found using, attempting to obtain or dealing alcohol or prohibited substances.

6.2 Principal and Deputy Principal(s):

The Principal or his/her nominee is responsible for dealing with substance abuse incidents arising in the school.

6.2.1 To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy.

6.2.2 To monitor the implementation of the policy.

6.2.3 To ensure that the policy is reviewed after 3 years.

6.2.4 All reports of abuse incidents or suspected incidents must be reported to the principal

6.2.5 The Principal is responsible for all decisions regarding investigation of the incident.

6.2.6 The Principal is responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed regarding investigation developments.

6.2.7 The Principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any written documentation and reports associated with an incident.

6.2.8 The Principal is responsible for taking possession of any banned or prohibited substances and disposing of them via the relevant authorities.

6.2.9 Will, where deemed appropriate,,make teachers and staff aware of any medications students may be using

6.2.10 The Principal/Deputy Principal are responsible for the provision of support and CPD to staff members in relation to such matters.

6.2.11 The Principal will establish the nature and extent of activity of any student found selling or distributing substances. The student will then be referred to the Board of Management and the Gardaí.

6.2.12 In all cases where there is no immediate danger to the young person/s, it is important to take time to assess the situation before responding. Due care will be taken to discern between allegation, suspicion and direct evidence of drug use.

6.3 Parents and Guardians:

6.3.1 Parents/Guardians are required to support school policy. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to attend school organised activities relating to substance use awareness.

6.3.2 Parents and Guardians are obliged to make the school authorities aware of any prescribed medications a student brings onto the school campus.

6.3.3 Parents should not give students packets/full blister cards of paracetamol or packets/full blister cards of other over the counter medicines or more than a daily dose of other tablet medications to school. If students require such medicines only the dosage for the day should be brought on site. Insulin pumps are exempt from this rule.

6.4 Teachers and Staff:

6.4.1 Teachers and staff must be aware of the contents of this policy and realise that they may have the initial contact with substances user, and are required to control any given situation, pending notification and arrival of the relevant school authorities. At all times be aware of your own Health and Safety.

6.5 Students:

6.5.1 Alcohol and/or prohibited substances must not be used, bought or sold while on school property grounds, on school tours and activities or while wearing the school uniform.

6.5.2 Students must not encourage others to use alcohol or prohibited substances.

6.5.3 Students must not provide over the counter medications to friends while in school.

7. Monitoring Procedures and Sanctions:

It is important in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents that a limited number of people are involved in managing the incident. The following relate to the Substance Use Policy. The following procedures relate to any school activity, which includes all extra-curricular activities, school tours and coming/going to school. These procedures will be incorporated as part of the School Code of Behaviour.

7.1 A student suspected of using or being under the influence of substances will be reported to the Principal/Deputy, group leader.

7.2 The Principal will interview the student and an evaluation of the situation will be made.

7.3 The Principal may consult with other members of staff.

7.4 As a result of this interview, an opinion will be formed by the relevant leader as to the extent and nature of the problem presented by the student.

7.5 If the Principal is satisfied that there is a case to answer by the student, the following will take place:

7.5.1 The Student may be temporarily excluded, parents will be informed, and Tusla may be informed.

7.5.2 A meeting will be arranged with student and parent(s)

7.5.3 Gardaí may be informed

7.5.4 A student who accepts involvement with substances will receive the following support;

7.5.4.1 Will be placed on Ceannaire Diary – a daily log of class activities reviewed by Ceannaire

7.5.1.2 Will be offered Chaplaincy or Guidance Counsellor support

7.5.1.3 May be requested to undergo drug testing before returning to class.

7.5.1.4 Ceannaire will review their situation on a continuous basis and report to Principal.

7.5.1.5 If a student re-offends the case will be referred to the BOM.

7.6 If a Student denies any involvement in the use of substances, but the Principal is unable to establish a case with certainty, the procedure in 7.5 will be followed. If this student is found at any other time to be in breach of the school policy on substance use, the case will be referred to the BOM with a view to permanent exclusion from the School.

7.7 Any Student found in possession, selling or distributing such substances, will be referred to the Gardaí in the first instance, suspended from school and the case brought to the BOM with a view to permanent exclusion from the school.

7.8 These records will be maintained by the Principal or Deputy Principal and completed immediately following each relevant substance related incident.

7.9 It is the duty of teachers and staff of the school community to inform students that cannot offer total confidentiality regarding these matters.

7.10 The School may be required to contact an appropriate outside authority/expert such as the Gardaí or Tusla.

8. Pastoral Support.

8.1 Students directly involved in a drug related incident will be offered the support of the school pastoral team – chaplaincy or guidance counsellors who will refer to specialist external agencies as deemed appropriate.

8.2 Students, parents/guardians, or other members of the school community who wish to speak to someone about their own drug use are invited to approach any member of staff. Where voluntary, such disclosures are seen as a desire to seek help and will therefore not be subject to disciplinary consequences, but will be subject to the confidentiality policy outlined above.

9. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation.

This policy will be subject to review at regular intervals

APPENDIX 1

The term “Substance” as referred to in this policy is defined as being any chemical which alters how the body works or how the person behaves or feels .Prohibited substances may include but are not limited to:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco / Tobacco products ‘Snus’
- Medicines Illegal Drugs.
- Solvents e.g. glue, etc.
- Cleaning agents.
- Aerosols
- Vapes/ E-Cigarettes

This is not an exhaustive list.

Please visit https://www.drugs.ie/drugs_info/for_parents_carers/ for further information

The use of properly prescribed drugs is excluded from this list, but parents/guardians of students taking prescribed medication should inform the school in writing of that fact, and any possible side effects the student may display. Students must only bring the daily dosage of such medicines (over the counter or prescribed) on site.

Legal Context:

To comply with the school’s legal obligations.

- The Education Act (1998) provides that schools promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- The School aims to co-operate fully with the strategic plan adopted under the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 and made mandatory for school in Circular 18/02.
- Educational and Welfare Act 2000

This policy sets out the framework within which the whole school community manages issues relating to substance use.