

Substance Use Policy

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to students, teachers, auxiliary staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the building. It is applicable during school-time - including breaks and to ALL school related activities. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place, e.g. School Tour.

Aims of Policy

The aim of the Substance Use Policy of School of the Holy Spirit is primary prevention. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents, illegal drugs and misuse of prescription drugs. We aim to develop in our pupils better self-esteem, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils age appropriate information from educational programmes.

Relationship to School's Mission, Vision and Aims

The characteristic spirit and ethos of this school has been developed and agreed with our Bishop and partners in education. This Substance Use Policy reflects the school policy by:

- Drawing together the views of teachers, parents, Board of Management and members of the local community, jointly responsible for formulating the policy.
- Including reference to substance use in our Enrolment Policy
- Including reference to substance use in our Code of Behaviour

Rationale

Why is this policy necessary?

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of this reality. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their student cohort and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.

The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them. The National Drugs Strategy '*Building on Experience*' is now government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place. The more recent report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled '*Drug Use Prevention*'

(November 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.

School of the Holy Spirit is dedicated to the care of the whole school community. It aims to provide a safe and secure environment for learning and it supports those who are experiencing difficulties. To this end and in response to the encroaching drug culture in our society, we feel the need to implement a comprehensive policy to address the problem of substance misuse.

The Board of Management in School of the Holy Spirit has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law. We take into account the fact that a significant number of children may take medication daily.

Implementation of the Policy

The policy will be available to the Board of Management, Principal, teachers, Special Needs Assistants and other staff members, as well as parents.

Parents and guardians will be given a copy of the policy on enrolment of their child in the school. Enrolment will be on acceptance of this and other school policy documents by them. Parents and guardians of children already enrolled in the school will also receive a copy of the policy.

The policy will be reviewed evaluated and updated where necessary.

Policy Content

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

School of the Holy Spirit believes that young people are most at risk in relation to substance use (in school), in recreational areas, on the way and at out of school related activities supervised by staff members of School of the Holy Spirit.

Incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use are addressed in the school's Code of Behaviour and the Enrolment Policy. Pupils may be suspended or excluded if involved in any drug related incident, and will be subject to the disciplinary processes and procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour.

The school's shared understanding of a 'drug related incident' is:

- Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs
- The sale or passing on of any illegal substance,
- The unauthorized possession of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs on school grounds or at school related activities
- Disposal of drugs or related items (e.g. syringes) found on school property.

In a drug related incident, it will be necessary to contact and inform the following people:

- Principal
- Gardai if possession of drugs is highly suspected or proven
- Parents/Guardians of the student
- Chairperson, Board of Management
- HSE/ other professionals involved with the student
- HSE to dispose of any drug-related items.

Parents will be involved by accepting the school's Code of Behaviour, Substance Use Policy and Enrolment Policy. They will be informed of an incident involving their own child and will be asked to accept responsibility, co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardai if necessary.

Parents will be involved in incidents involving another child only if deemed necessary by the school authorities. If parents are aware that another child is involved in drug-related incidents under the scope of this policy they should inform the teacher, Principal or a Board member.

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Ratify this policy
- Implement this policy
- Monitor and review it
- To sponsor/provide training for staff members as appropriate
- Make decisions involving critical incidents

Substance Use Procedures

A drug can be defined as a chemical, which causes changes in the way the human body function mentally, physically or emotionally. For the purpose of this policy we are concerned with drugs which have the power to change a previous mood and the way a person thinks about things or which the taker may become physically or psychologically dependent.

Where a student is suspected of taking a drug type substance, the matter must be reported immediately to the Principal. The Principal will make immediate contact with parents and where necessary will furnish a report to the H.S.E. Other professionals may be contacted eg. Family worker, Junior Liaison Officer, Social Worker, or a doctor if deemed necessary.

Where a student brings an illegal substance on to the school premises, the Gardai will be contacted and H.S.E. will be informed. The matter will be raised at the next Board of Management meeting.

Where a student brings alcohol or cigarettes or nicotine products or lighters / matches on to the school premises, parents will be informed. The said substances will be confiscated and a suspension may be issued. Where it is felt

necessary, a report will be sent to the H.S.E. Other professionals may be contacted eg. Family worker, Junior Liaison Officer, Social Worker.

Where a student presents with a smell of cigarette smoke from his / her breathing or clothing, parents will be contacted. They may be asked to remove him/her from the school at the earliest opportunity. The student will not be allowed to take his/her place in class.

Where a student presents displaying apparent effects of alcohol or drugs, the Principal will be informed immediately; parents will be asked to collect the student from the school, a report will be made to the H.S.E. Other professionals may be contacted eg. Family worker, Junior Liaison Officer, Social Worker, Youth Worker.

Where a student is suspected of supplying illegal substances or alcohol / cigarettes to other students, the Gardai will be informed; parents will be informed; a report will be sent to the H.S.E. Other professionals may be contacted eg. Family worker, Junior Liaison Officer, Social Worker.

This policy puts the following procedures in place to deal with an incident requiring medical intervention:

- 'Universal Precautions' will be applied; e.g. wearing of proper protective gloves etc., washing and making safe an area after an incident.
- Phone call to parents and / or emergency services.
- Refer to the school's Critical Incident Policy.

The school has established an excellent rapport with the local Junior Liaison Officer and Garda station and will invite representatives from the local Garda station to speak with senior pupils on a regular basis. Whether or not to inform the Gardai of minor incidents will be at the discretion of the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management, Gardai will be involved in any serious substance abuse incidents.

Training and Staff Development

At local level the following support agencies are available to which students involved in substance misuse might be referred:

- Ciaran Scanlon J.L.O. - 0870601812
- John Leahy - H.S.E. Drug Protection Officer - 1890464600
- Kilkenny City Drug Initiative Tel: Mel Bay / David Gray -056 7761200
- Substance Misuse Team: Kickham St, Kilkenny Tel: 056 7784638
- Community Addiction Service Tel: 056 776 3677
- Aislinn Adolescent Addiction Centre Tel: 056 8833777
- HSE Drugs Helpline Tel: 056 7764638
- Community Garda - 056 7722222
- Drug Outreach Office Tel: 085 7888326 (18 +)

In the event of media interest in relation to a 'drug related incident', the matter will be referred to the Board of Management.

Training and supports for staff can be found in the following:

Garda Siochána - Junior Liaison Officer

Alive-O

S.P.H.E.

Walk Tall Programme and Support Office

Aisling Centre

Aisling services - South Eastern Health Board

Implementation/Ratification and Review:

This policy was re-ratified by the Board of Management on 29th September 2021.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in September 2022.

Signed: _____
Chairman Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____