



St Paul's Secondary School

Care - Inclusion - Respect

# SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

Ratified: 10 October 2017

To be reviewed: March 2021

# St. Paul's Secondary School, Greenhills, Dublin 12

## Policy on Substance Misuse

### Introduction

St. Paul's Secondary School's Policy on Substance Misuse is primarily concerned with the welfare, health, care and protection of every person in the school community in accordance with the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. The policy is formulated in the context of our Code of Behaviour, Children First – National Guidance for the Protection of Children (2011), St. Paul's Safety and Health Policy and other relevant school policies.

### Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, a Substance/Drug is any material, legal or illegal, which acts on the central nervous system to effect intoxication, stimulation, sedation, change of mood, perception, or behaviour. These include alcohol, tobacco, all illegal drugs and the illicit use of over-the-counter and prescribed medication.

A substance abuse incident is defined as any incident relating to banned or prohibited substances that occurs in the school or during school functions or outings, or any such incident that may be deemed damaging to the health or welfare of the student concerned, or to other students.

St. Paul's Secondary School reserves the right to determine whether or not a specific incident constitutes an abuse incident to be addressed under the terms of this policy.

### Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all students enrolled in St. Paul's Secondary School, at all times during the school day and during school organised activities or events. It applies whether these activities or events are held on or off the school premises and grounds. The policy extends to students travelling to and from organised school activities and events.

## **Aims of the Policy**

The overall aims of the policy are:

- to uphold the ethos of St Paul's Secondary School and in accordance with our Mission Statement, provide a safe and secure environment within which each student can develop to her full potential
- to provide clear guidelines on the respective roles and responsibilities of students, staff, management and parents in relation to substance use
- to outline procedures for managing incidents related to substance misuse

## **School Position on Substance Misuse**

St. Paul's Secondary School does not accept or tolerate:

- the possession, use or supply of banned or prohibited substances
- the possession, use or supply of drug paraphernalia
- the supply or organisation of supply of banned substances or drug paraphernalia by a student to any other party, or parties, on or in the vicinity of the school grounds, on school trips and outings, or during any school-based or school related activity
- the possession or consumption of alcohol, cigarettes, lighters and matches on the school premises, its vicinity or during school functions or activities

The Board of Management considers substance misuse or the possession and/or supply of any of the materials listed above, either on the school premises or on school-related activities, to be an extremely serious infringement of St Paul's Secondary School's Code of Behaviour.

### *Use of Prescribed Medication*

St. Paul's Secondary School recognises that students are prescribed a range of medication which may need to be taken during the school day. The school should be informed in writing of any students who are on regular prescribed medication and these students are expected, in the normal course of events, to be independent managers of their own medicines.

Students are not allowed, in any circumstance, to share with others, any

medication.

## **Substance Education Programme**

The school acknowledges that it has a vital role to play in education on drugs, especially in the prevention of substance misuse.

Our educational aims in relation to Substance Use are:

- to foster the self-esteem and confidence of all students
- to equip students to make healthy, informed and responsible choices
- to increase students' understanding of the implications and possible consequences of substance use and misuse
- to provide honest and age-appropriate information on alcohol and drug use
- to educate students on the legal position in relation to the misuse of drugs, alcohol and tobacco

St. Paul's Secondary School shall endeavour to meet these aims through:

- the Wellbeing Programme
- in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) classes
- the development of responsible attitudes across the curriculum and in areas such as RE, CSPE, PE, Science and Home Economics
- providing resource materials and availing of the support of relevant outside agencies and visiting speakers
- facilitating relevant staff to attend relevant in-service
- providing information to parents on issues relating to substance misuse

## **Managing Substance Misuse Incidents**

In all situations involving substance misuse, there must be a balance between the needs of the student or students involved, and the welfare of the school community as a whole. In dealing with any alcohol, tobacco or drug-related incidents, the school will seek to combine its necessary disciplinary response with an appropriate pastoral response. Such a response may include in-school counselling, the support of staff and/or referral to a substance misuse counsellor. The school will consider

each substance misuse incident individually and recognise that a variety of responses will be necessary to deal with incidents.

All members of staff have a responsibility to report all known incidents of substance misuse on the school premises or on school related activities to the Principal. The Principal/Deputy Principal has the overall responsibility for managing substance misuse incidents.

Where it is considered that there is an immediate danger, the Principal, Deputy Principal or person acting on the authority of the Principal will contact the Emergency Services immediately. Parents/Guardians will be informed as soon as possible. The Principal shall reserve the right to suspend any student involved in a substance misuse incident pending a further and complete investigation.

Where a decision is taken to suspend a student as a consequence of a substance misuse incident, the Board of Management may specify certain conditions to be met by the student and her parent(s)/guardian(s) prior to the student returning to school. Where such conditions are not met and/or the student is again found to be in breach of rules regarding substance misuse, a proposal for expulsion may ensue.

In all instances and having regard to its statutory obligations, the Board of Management reserves the right to proceed to expulsion procedures where the re-admission of a student is considered a threat to the safety, health and welfare of others in the school.

The rules of natural justice will apply and the procedures outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour will be followed.

### *Confidentiality*

The prime focus in any incident relating to substance misuse is the well-being and safety of the students and staff, as well as the orderly running of the school.

It is important that in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents, a limited number of people will be involved in managing the incident. The Principal, Deputy Principal, and some or all of the following: Guidance Counsellor, Year Head, Form Teacher and persons directly involved in the case, may be informed as appropriate.

### *Parents/Guardians*

If there is a substance misuse incident in the school, the Parents/Guardians of the student concerned will always be involved. Situations will be handled in a sensitive manner and whenever possible support will be offered. Notwithstanding that, substance misuse is a very serious infringement of the school's Code of Behaviour and must be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

#### *Gardaí*

The Principal or a designated person may contact the Gardaí and / or the Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) in the event of a suspected or confirmed incident involving illicit substances.

#### *The Media*

If contacted by the media, the Principal or his/her representative will act as spokesperson. No comment will be offered on individual cases but a brief response where necessary will be given, for example *"The school has a policy in place to deal with any substance misuse related incidents and that policy will be implemented in this instance"*.

## **Monitoring, Review and Evaluation**

This policy will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated as necessary.

*This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011*

*This Policy was reviewed and revised by the Board of Management on: 10<sup>th</sup> Oct 2017*