

Substance Misuse Policy



"Live as free people"

St Peter's Community School

Approved November 2017

INTRODUCTION

The central objective of the school Substance Misuse Policy is the welfare, care and protection of every young person in line with the Education Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

We are committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs. The policy is a result of a consultative process involving a school sub-committee, the Board of Management, teaching staff, parents/guardians and the Pupils' Council.

For the purposes of this policy we define a drug as: Any substance that changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. Such substances include:

- Legal drugs, e.g. alcohol and tobacco, vaping substances
- Illegal drugs
- Substances in daily use whose misuse produces a volatile effect, e.g. sprays and solvents
- Illegal use of prescribed medication/misuse of over the counter drugs

As part of the school community we have a role and obligation in terms of education, prevention, support and handling of drug abuse and drug incidences.

ETHOS

In St. Peter's, the aim is to create an environment conducive to the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social and physical welfare and development of its pupils, both individually and collectively. It is based on an appreciation of human dignity and respect both for the individual and the broader school community.

THE USE OF DRUGS IN SCHOOL

The school does not permit the possession, use or supply of drugs in the school or on school grounds, during school time, on the way to or from school or on school trips by any member of the school community. The only exception is for legitimate medical use and in that case the school must be informed beforehand.

MANAGING THE INCIDENT

St. Peter's recognises that the primary focus in managing all substance misuse incidents will be the well-being and safety of all those involved in and influenced by the incident.

Immediate Response

Teaching Staff: Any member of the teaching staff who becomes aware of or sees something they suspect to be drugs in a pupil's possession, should seek to confiscate the item or items and bring this matter to the attention of the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head immediately. Parents will be informed.

Ancillary Staff: Any member of the ancillary staff who becomes aware or sees something they suspect to be drugs in a pupil's possession should report their concerns to the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head or supervising teacher where relevant as soon as possible.

We acknowledge that in all situations involving substance misuse there needs to be a balance between the needs of the young person and the needs of the school community. Listening, separating fact from myth and offering support will be the initial approach to the situation. Disciplinary procedures, according to the school's Code of Behaviour, will be applied if the school rules are broken. Guidelines are in place to handle specific substance abuse incidents. (See appendix).

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND TRAINING

Pupils

This school is committed to providing comprehensive drug education for all pupils. Education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs are primarily carried out within the overall context of a healthy living programme. In addition the topic will be touched on in other subjects across the curriculum: Religion, SPHE, Science, Home Economics, CSPE, English and Irish. Drug education should ensure that:

- Pupils have clear information about the effects of various drugs.

- Pupils examine their attitudes to alcohol, tobacco and illicit substances in their lives and in the environment in which they live.
- Pupils are equipped with the skills to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions around substance use.
- Pupils are offered supportive intervention – thus minimising harm.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS/PASTORAL CARE

Where a pupil has been in difficulty because of their use of any drug, the pupil will be enabled to identify positive sources of support when they need it, to help prevent the inappropriate use of substances. The help they receive will also assist them in developing more long-term skills to cope with traumas or problems they encounter.

OUTSIDE SPEAKERS

When and where appropriate, outside speakers will be used to supplement or reinforce the work done in the classroom. These may include a Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer, health professionals in the field, youth services or previous abusers.

TEACHERS

- All SPHE teachers will be facilitated in accessing courses to equip them to deliver an effective drugs programme.
- All teachers will be offered drug information and drug awareness training through in-service.

PARENTS

The school will provide opportunities for parents to attend information evenings on issues relating to drugs. These will be run in conjunction with the Parents' Association or adult education in the school and could be addressed by outside speakers.

MONITORING, EVALUATION and FEEDBACK

Teachers, parents, pupils and the Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for a set period of time. Any changes will be incorporated into the amended policy.

APPENDIX

Guidelines on Managing Incidents of Substance Abuse

A. SMOKING

- The school is a smoke free area which is covered by St. Peter's Smoke Free Policy.
- People are not permitted to smoke on the school premises or on school grounds.
- Staff should not permit pupils to smoke on any school trip.
- Visitors will comply with the smoking policy.
- Pupils who are in breach of these regulations will be dealt with according to the schools disciplinary procedures. (St. Peter's Smoke Free Policy indicates an automatic suspension for a pupil found smoking on the school premises).

B. ALCOHOL

- The school is an alcohol free area.
- Pupils are not allowed to bring alcohol into school or to consume alcohol in the school.
- Alcohol for pupils is not allowed on school activities or trips.
- If a pupil comes to school under the influence of alcohol their parents/guardians will be called to take them home.
- Pupils who are in breach of these regulations will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary procedures.
- Support will be given in school and the parents co-operation will be expected in agreeing to and seeking the help of outside professionals where deemed appropriate.

C. ILLICIT DRUGS AND SOLVENTS

- Pupils are prohibited from being in possession of or using illicit drugs or solvents on the school premises.
- If ever illicit drugs are found on the school premises they will be confiscated and the Gardaí informed.
- If ever the school suspects trafficking of drugs, an investigation will be carried out by the Principal/Deputy Principal. The parents/guardians of any pupil involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer or Community Garda will be sought.
- Pupils who are in breach of these regulations will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary procedures.
- The school management will expect parents/guardians to inform the Principal or Year Head if they suspect their child of drug taking.
- Support will be given in school and the parents co-operation will be expected in agreeing to and seeking the help of outside professionals where deemed appropriate.

In keeping with the Code of Behaviour pupils are expected to comply with all regulations considered necessary by the school authorities from time to time.