



# **Sacred Heart Secondary School**

# **Substance Misuse Policy**

**January 2018**

## **Sacred Heart School, Drogheda,**

### **Substance Misuse Policy**

#### **Mission Statement**

As stated in the school's mission statement,

Sacred Heart School Drogheda is committed to excellence. We see the primary role of our school as providing an experience of living in a Christian community, which has, as its ideal the community of the gospel; one of love, care and trust.

We are committed to enabling students to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, cultural and physical potential. It also is committed to fostering the development of personal responsibility. This is the ethos, which guides the Substance Misuse Policy.

#### **Introduction**

For the purpose of this policy a drug is any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. This description refers to legal and illegal drugs and includes alcohol, solvents, tobacco, over the counter prescribed medication and over the counter dangerous substances. This list is not exhaustive.

The Substance Misuse Policy is part of a general pastoral approach being adopted by the school to ensure a healthy, caring and supportive learning environment.

The policy is one among many that serve to inculcate the school's ethos which the school has a right to promote and protect by requiring certain standards of behaviour and prohibiting certain practices.

The prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and drug misuse pose challenges and opportunities for the school community as an important social partner in providing drug awareness and education. Therefore, the following school policy on substance misuse aims to co-operate fully with the strategic plan adopted by the government under the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 and made mandatory for schools.

#### **Aims:**

Sacred Heart School, Drogheda is committed to providing an education for all students that is provided in a safe, secure and healthy environment.

The school will support and educate students to enable them to make healthy decisions about the life they wish to lead through the education programmes of SPHE, CSPE, PE and Guidance.

The pastoral care structure aims to enhance this educational programme during the students five or six years in the Sacred Heart School and will provide assistance for individual students.

### **Rationale:**

The school is aware of its responsibility under legislation in regards to substance misuse.

- The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- The Social Personal and Health Education curriculum, of which substance misuse prevention education is an integral part, is a mandatory subject on the primary curriculum and must be taught to all primary pupils from junior infants to sixth class (DES Circular 022/2010).
- The National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 requires every school to have a substance use policy in place.
- Action 21 of the National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 mandates the Department of Education and Skills to monitor the implementation of substance use policies in schools through the whole school evaluation process as operated by the Inspectorate. It is also mandated to ensure that best practice is disseminated to all schools
- The 2003 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (E.S.P.A.D.) report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among 16 year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 34 E.S.P.A.D. countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland, with girls ranking higher than boys in terms of regular alcohol use. In terms of drug use in Ireland, there was a notable increase in lifetime use of any illicit drug between 1999 (32%) and 2003 (40%), up eight per cent.

It is the policy of the Sacred Heart School to ensure that the all stakeholders in the school work together in implementing this policy ensuring that the we create an environment that focuses on the academic, personal and social development of each students in a drug free environment.

### **Goals:**

The substance use policy of the Sacred Heart Secondary School is intended to:

- To ensure the implementation of an educational programme on the effects of drugs and the legal ramifications of drug use.
- To ensure that students develop a positive attitude and understanding of the importance of healthy decisions on life now and into the future.
- To set clear guidelines to all the stakeholders on the consequences and disciplinary action that will be imposed if there is a violation of the substance misuse policy.
- To ensure the safety of students, teachers and all other members of the school community.
- To ensure the reputation of the school is not undermined by breach of this policy.

**This policy is focused on four key areas:**

- A. Education concerning Substance Misuse
- B. Training and Staff Development
- C. Managing Drug related Incidents
- D. Monitoring, review and Evaluation

**A. Education concerning substance misuse**

The school, within the resources available to it, will provide appropriate education programmes for all its students. At present the school is providing education on ill effects of drug use, the law and dangers to the student's health through the following:

- Education concerning substance use in the Sacred Heart Secondary School will be provided within the broad context of SPHE in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> year. The subject teachers are provided with the relevant resources and updates by the SPHE coordinator.
- The ill effects of substance misuse in Religion, Home Economics, Science, Social Education.
- Awareness campaigns carried out by students in the Student Representative Council/Student Leadership Council/Leaving Certificate Applied students /Transition Year students.
- Outside speakers are invited to visit the school from time to time to present on the use of drugs.

**Role of Parents**

Parents can play a supportive role in:

- Acknowledging that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance misuse.
- Assist and co-operate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.
- The school encourages and welcomes consultation with parents on the best use of available resources in the community to support the school in its programme and policy implementation.

**B. Training and Development.**

Staff members are aware of the contribution they make to the prevention of substance misuse within their own class by developing a supportive class environment and implementation of active learning methodologies.

Procedures are adopted in the school in relation to the administration of medicines (policy) in the school and staff are adequately informed of same.

The school will provide training for staff, Board of Management, Parents and students.

In relation to staff the school will

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- Provide opportunities to attend SPHE in-service
- Provide Whole School training from time to time.
- Provide specific training on the role of staff in relation to the identification, management and investigation of an abuse incident.
- Make the Substance Misuse Policy available for all staff.

In relation to Parents/Guardians & Board of Management the school will

- Provide opportunities to attend information sessions and workshops in relation to drugs, and this policy.
- Provide appropriate information, guidance and support to the Board of Management regarding issues relating to investigation and/or adjudication on incident investigations and all matters such as confidentiality.
- Provide support to parents/guardians who find they have to address a substance misuse concern.

In relation to the students, the school will

- Offer all students programmes in relation to substance misuse within the context of the Junior Certificate, Transition Year and Leaving Certificates Programme
- Provide students with additional training opportunities when they arise e.g. Substance misuse peer education-training programme.

### **C. Management of drug related incidents.**

In the event of a substance use incident, the school will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student or students involved and the welfare of the school as a whole and the reputation of the school.

The school's Substance Misuse Policy will be made available to each parent/guardian on the school website and/or the school office. All students sign a summary of the Code of Behaviour upon registration each year. This policy is directly linked to the Substance misuse Policy.

The Principal or her delegate is the person responsible for all matters relating to substance misuse incidents. She may nominate a deputy principal or another member of staff to act on her behalf in the investigation of a substance misuse incident.

The duties and responsibilities of the Principal (hereafter to be understood as meaning Principal or her nominee) in this regard include the following: -

- The Principal is responsible for dealing with abuse incidents arising at the school.
- All reports of abuse incidents or suspected incidents must be reported to the Principal without delay.
- The Principal makes all decisions regarding investigation of an incident, communication with, liaison with, and reporting to the relevant parties, and disclosure of information regarding an investigation.
- The Principal is responsible for keeping all relevant parties duly and properly informed regarding investigation developments.

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- The Principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any written documentation and records associated with the incident.
- The Principal is responsible for taking possession of any banned or prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia and deciding what should be done with same upon appropriate advice. It may be handed over to the Gardaí, and may be dealt with by the Gardaí at their discretion.
- The Principal may seek the assistance of the Deputy Principal/Year Head/Form Teacher/Teacher and /or school Guidance Counsellor in conducting an incident investigation.

The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of drugs in the school, or on school related activities such as tours and outings both during the school day and outside school hours.

The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco or related substances in the school or on school activities.

The School does not accept the misuse of solvent-based substances.

Students may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only.

Parents/Guardians of students who have in their possession and who take medical drugs in school long-term must inform the school in writing in advance.

The School must be informed if a student has a medical condition and relevant teachers, e.g. P.E. teacher must be informed also.

A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter "medicine.

Chemicals in school laboratories will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher's supervision.

The School prohibits the possession, use or supply of drug paraphernalia including all items associated with illicit substance use and any written or printed material promoting the use of substances.

Valid medical drugs may only be taken on school premises or on school-related activities upon receipt of notification from parent(s)/guardian(s).

### **Notifying and Communicating with the Parents/Guardians & Student**

If the school has reason to believe that student(s) have been involved in an abuse incident, the school will immediately notify the parents/guardians and especially if there is a concern regarding the health and welfare of a child – and share any available information that may help parents in caring for their child's health and wellbeing. The school will keep the relevant student(s) concerned appropriately informed about what is happening and why. Such actions will be undertaken without prejudice to the school's separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage any abuse incident.

### **Confidentiality**

The school recognises the importance in limiting as far as is practicable, the number of people involved in investigating and managing an abuse incident, and it is the aim of the school only to involve those concerned with an incident. For example, the Principal is obliged at all material times to keep the Deputy

Principal, Year Head. School Guidance Counsellor and Board of Management properly informed. Otherwise (and subject to the following qualifications) the school, the Principal, and all persons concerned with the Incident(s) shall respect the principle of confidentiality and shall do all things proper and necessary, jointly and individually, to try and observe that confidentiality.

However, students and their parents must accept that;

1. The duty of teachers and staff to the school community preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any student when they come in contact with an abuse incident or suspected abuse incident. The teacher has a higher duty to the school community, and while he/she may see fit to assist any student(s) in an appropriate manner, the teacher must at all times, reserve the right to bring any such matters to the prompt attention of the Principal or other school personnel concerned. In particular in any circumstances where another student or child (be they a student of the school or otherwise) may be considered to be in danger of harming himself or others.
2. Secondly, the school may be bound in a specific case to contact other relevant authorities, such as the Gardai, the local Health Board, any officer at the Probation Service who may be concerned with any student(s) who may be involved in the Incident(s), or even any other Officers of the Courts, again in circumstances where the Court Officers may already have reason to be concerned with any student(s) who may be involved in the Incident(s). It may be reasonable and proper for the school in an appropriate case to make enquiries to ascertain if any of the foregoing authorities have reason to be concerned with any one or more of the student(s)
3. Thirdly, the student(s) and their parents/guardians acknowledge that the school may of necessity require the expert assistance of an appropriate third party if it is to properly investigate and manage any Abuse Incident(s):
4. Fourthly, the student(s) and their parents/guardians acknowledge that, again in an appropriate case, the school may be obliged under Statute or Regulations or Departmental Guidelines to notify other persons concerning either Abuse Incident(s) or the outcome of any investigation concerning same, such as for example an Educational Officer under the terms of the Education Welfare Act 2000, or a Juvenile Liaison Officer under the provisions of the Children's Act 2001.
5. If there is a need for medical intervention this will be a priority when dealing with the situation.

### **The Role of the Teacher or other School Staff Member**

The position of the teacher or other school staff with reference to confidentiality has already been outlined in the previous section. Any teacher, staff member or other employee of the school who encounters an Abuse Incident or even has suspicions of it is obliged to report same promptly to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Where a student discloses to a teacher that she is misusing banned substances, the teacher should make clear to the student in a sensitive manner that he/she cannot guarantee confidentiality. However, the student should be reassured that no information will be passed on to another person without her knowledge.

A teacher's responsibility in the first instance is to listen to the student and offer support. However, a teacher must keep in mind that he/she alone cannot solve the problem. In a confirmed case of drug misuse a student needs professional help. Therefore a teacher's objective is to refer the student to the next link i.e. the teacher must refer the matter to the Principal or Deputy Principal. The facts at this stage must be recorded in writing (See Appendix 1)

## **The School's Management & Investigation Procedure for an Abuse Incident**

The school will:

1. In any case where it is apparent that there is an immediate danger to students or the school community, the school authorities reserve the right (acting through the Principal) to temporarily suspend or remove any student(s) involved from the school premises and/or from any specific school activities, or take whatever other action is deemed appropriate and necessary to remove the said danger, pending a further and complete investigation as described below
2. An Abuse Incident Report Form will be completed.
3. The school authorities will take all appropriate and necessary steps to fully investigate and assess any Abuse Incident including the various steps set out herein, and will take as much time as may be deemed necessary and appropriate to the completion of any such investigation.
4. The school authorities will take immediate possession of any 'Banned or Prohibited Substances' or any 'drug paraphernalia' found in connection with the incident(s) and will retain same pending the completion of this investigation, unless otherwise required by any relevant outside Agencies, or unless otherwise advised to part with possession of same by the said outside Agencies.
5. Where the school authorities is to part with the possession of the said items at (4) it will firstly take (and maintain) a record of all items that came into its possession, and the number and volume of same, for the purposes of this investigation.
6. The school authorities will immediately seek a statement or explanation from the student(s) or staff concerned, and will carefully record it.
7. The school authorities will seek out, obtain and record the views of all or any other person concerned with or having knowledge of the Abuse Incident(s).
8. At all stages of the investigation a written record should be kept of the investigation undertaken, including the records at (2) and (5) above, communications to and with the Board of Management, the parents/guardians, any student(s) in any way involved or concerned with the matters under investigation, any teacher or other staff member involved in the Abuse Incident(s), the outcome of the investigation, any decisions taken and the reasons for same, any sanctions or disciplinary procedures imposed at the conclusion of same, and finally, in the event of an Appeal the entire management of that Appeal and the outcome of same. (This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the records to be kept. The school will retain all records relevant to investigation of any Incident(s)).
9. The school will, at its own discretion, in an appropriate case, liaise with any appropriate outside authorities, such as relevant officers of the local Gardai or Health Board, and may seek their advice or assistance as the school deems appropriate and necessary in the circumstances of the specific Abuse Incident(s) being dealt with.
10. Again the school will in an appropriate case, at its sole and exclusive discretion, may seek any professional or expert advice or assistance it deems appropriate and necessary to deal satisfactorily with the circumstances of the specific Abuse Incident(s).
11. If the circumstances merit (and the investigation is continuing), the school will then put the full particulars of the Abuse Incident(s) to the student(s) concerned, and to their parents/guardians.
12. Copies of all records deemed relevant only to the position of the student concerned and to the nature of the complaints or allegations that the student is facing will be made available to that student(s) and her parents/guardians at the appropriate stage, at the discretion of the school, in time to permit the student a reasonable and just opportunity to make her own reply to the matters at issue, and any representations she would wish to make or have made on her own behalf.
13. The school will then allow the student(s) concerned, and her/their parents reasonable and sufficient time to permit of a response to the matters at issue, but otherwise matters shall be dealt with in a reasonable, expeditious and efficient manner. The school will take into account any response so



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made, and if such should arise and require to be taken into account, any relevant extraneous consideration or mitigating circumstances that it may be appropriate to take into account in the specific case.

14. The school shall after shortly thereafter, inform the student(s) and the (ir) parents/guardians of its findings, and their reasons for same, and if the school deems that the student(s) have been guilty of, or has been involved or implicated in an Abuse Incident, it shall indicate the sanction(s) that it intends to impose in the circumstances.
15. The Board of Management, as the circumstances of the matter may merit, may implement disciplinary actions or sanctions including, but not limited to, any of the following; -
  - No involvement in certain school trips/events/activities
  - An oral warning
  - On report
  - A written warning
  - A 3 day suspension
  - A suspension of more than 3 days
  - Other discipline action short of expulsion Expulsion

Sanctions up to and including expulsion may be invoked in an appropriate case. Where expulsion arises the Board of Management will notify the Education Welfare Officer and will otherwise comply with the provisions of the Education Welfare Act 2000 subject to “and without prejudice to the right of a Board of Management to take such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline is maintained in the school and the safety of students is secured in accordance with the law and the provisions of the Act.

16. If the school considers that the Abuse Incident(s) to be of sufficient gravity, then it may again at its sole discretion, postpone the question of sanctions if it considers it appropriate to do so in order to take account of any mitigating circumstances or representations that it may deem it appropriate to receive and take account of prior to imposing any penalty or sanction(s) in the specific case.

### **D. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation**

#### **Monitoring**

The School will monitor aspects of the policy to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the school community. The three areas to be monitored are:

- Education concerning Substance Misuse
- Managing Substance Related Incidents
- Training and Staff Development

#### **Review and Evaluation**

This policy and all related work and procedures will take place on an ongoing basis in order to keep the school up to date with current best practice in this area.

#### **Dissemination of Policy**

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This policy will be available to the school community on request at the office and will be available on the school website.

### **Substance Misuse on School Trips**

Students and parents are informed at the parent information meeting, prior to a school trip that substance misuse is unacceptable. The related consequences are explained which include a parent/guardian requested to travel to the destination to collect their daughter to bring them home at their own expense. The Principal will deal with the issue upon the students return.

### **Media Inquiries.**

The school will not comment on any individual matter when investigation of an Abuse Incident is in progress. However the school, if confronted with a media enquiry, may decide to elect to outline its policy and procedures for managing and investigating any Abuse Incident. In the interest of the school's reputation the Board of Management may decide, after the investigation of any Abuse Incident has been entirely concluded, to clarify its own position with reference to any particular Abuse Incident investigation. Only the Principal or a nominated spokesperson on behalf of the school will handle all media enquiries, and the response to it.

### **Links to other policies:**

The following policies are linked to the Substance Misuse Policy:

- Health and Safety
- Code of behaviour, Suspension & Expulsion
- Guidance Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- School Trip policy
- Attendance Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Administration of Medicine Policy

**Appendix 1:**

**Report Form for recording Incidents involving substance misuse**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Name of Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What happened? Include only the facts. What was seen? What was said? Who was involved?**

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**What are your concerns? Is this incident related to others? Do you have suspicions aroused by the incident?**

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**Who has been informed?**

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**What Action has been taken?**

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**What further action is necessary?**

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**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **1**