



Substance Use Policy

Introduction

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 St. Sylvester's I.S. is primary prevention. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco / e-cigarettes, alcohol, prescription and non-prescription drugs, solvents and illegal 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.

The school's definition of 'drugs' is:

"Any substance which changes the way the body functions - mentally, physically or emotionally".

Purpose of Policy

- To comply with requirements of the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008: 'Building on Experience', which sets out a detailed programme of action to be implemented by Government Departments and Agencies to combat the very serious problem of drug misuse in our society
- To ensure for the provision of welfare, care and protection of every young person provided for in the Education Act, 1998 and the Education Welfare Act, 2000
- To promote prevention of the misuse of substances in an age appropriate manner
- The school has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.

Application of Policy

The policy applies to all staff, parents, pupils, school users and visitors to the school. The policy applies during school time including breaks, and on all school related trips/activities.

Formulation and Implementation of Policy

The policy was formulated by a representative group of teachers. The responsibility for the implementation and on-going monitoring of the policy lies with the Principal, the post-holder for SPHE (responsibility for Walk Tall programme), class teachers, parents, school users and visitors to the school.

Current Provision regarding Alcohol, Tobacco/E-cigarettes, and Substance use Education

The provision for such education is school-based, developmental, and delivered as recommended in the SPHE curriculum for schools

Pupils are taught the SPHE curriculum. This includes the strands of “Myself” (under which falls the strand units of “Taking care of my body” and “Safety and Protection”); “Myself and Others” (which includes the strand unit of “Making Decisions”) and “Myself and the Wider World” (which includes the strand unit of “Media Education”)

The school uses the Walk Tall programme, which aims at building self-confidence enabling children to say no to drugs, and also an awareness of the effects of drugs. This programme is taught in conjunction with the SPHE curriculum

The school uses methodologies such as circle-time, drama and role play to enhance substance use education

The Management of Substance-Related Incidents

Incidents of Misuse by Staff or Pupils might Include:

- Use or suspected use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco/e-cigarettes, or solvents on the school premises or during a school related activity;
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour
- Disclosure about use
- Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia
- Possession and/or supply on the school premise or during a school related activity
- In incidents of misuse, our primary response will be a pastoral one. When an incident, as described above, occurs, a teacher should:
- Ensure the safety of the person where necessary (follow appropriate first aid procedures and contact first aid officer)
- Immediately involve another adult to witness and record proceedings, while investigating the incident on a strictly confidential basis

- Person may be requested (not instructed) to reveal contents of pockets and/or bag. Any substances found should be confiscated
- Inform Principal of the situation
- Inform parents if incident involved a pupil
- Inform Gardaí in accordance with the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1977 and 1984.
- The school has a clear policy regarding smoking in the workplace (on which there is a complete ban).
- This policy should be viewed in line with the schools Health and Safety statement.

Management of Persons in the Workplace Under the Influence of Drugs And/or Alcohol

The Board of Management shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that pupils and other persons in the workplace are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare from persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The term “in the workplace”, in the preceding sentence includes all school related activities taking place under the supervision of a teacher, with the Board’s approval, and both within and away from the school premises.

Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and others. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of any contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a parent or adult collecting a pupil from school or presenting themselves on the premises for another reason is unfit to be on the premises or to take care of the said pupil, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal will be informed and the duty of care will apply to the pupil. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the pupil and safeguard their best interests.

In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove him/herself from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers. An Employee Assistance Service (telephone: 1800 411 057 or e-mail: eas@vhics.ie) is available to teaching staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the

performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service.

The Board of Management also acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all other staff members. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the non-teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to seek counselling or other professional intervention.

All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded and reported as soon as possible to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management shall consider all such reports and decide on the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

Staff Responsibility/Development

All staff members are responsible for their own prescription and non-prescription drugs. Staff members must ensure that their own personal medication is kept in an inaccessible and secure location, out of reach of children.

Staff should be made aware of laws relating to alcohol, tobacco/e-cigarettes and drug use and how they relate to themselves, to the school and its pupils. The responsibility for making staff aware of such laws lies with the Board of Management, Principal, Health and Safety Representative and SPHE post-holder.

All staff will be made aware of this policy. New staff and visitors to the school will be briefed regarding this policy.

Parental Involvement

Parents/Guardians are made aware of the school's SPHE programme through the Junior Infant introductory night, group meetings in September and parent-teacher meetings in January.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 7th December 2021. This policy will be reviewed in 2025.

The Board of Management reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time as deemed necessary.

Signed:



Mr Michael McKenna
Chairperson
Board of Management