

# ST. PATRICK'S CLASSICAL SCHOOL



## SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION /ETHOS

1. St. Patrick's Classical School is a Catholic school offering a holistic and person centred education. Our school gives priority to the integration of the spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical, and emotional development of the individual student. This policy is part of a general pastoral approach which attempts to foster this integration and create a healthy, caring and supportive learning environment.

Substance abuse hinders the achievement of positive goals and invariably leads to a decline in academic performance, to higher levels of truancy and to increased incidents of misconduct. St. Patrick's Classical School is committed to the health, safety and well-being of the school community as a whole and as a result the School Management will not tolerate any form of substance abuse by any student.

2. Definition of a banned substance - any drug/ substance which changes the way a body functions mentally, physically or emotionally. This policy applies to the whole school community, staff, students, Parents/Guardians and users of the school building.
3. Our school asserts the right to protect and promote its characteristic spirit by requiring certain standards of behaviour and prohibiting certain practices.
4. This policy is informed by the strategic plan adopted by the Government under the National Drugs Strategy 2009-16 and 2017-2025 ,Circular 18/02, the Education Act (1998) and the Education Welfare Act (2000). It takes account of The Misuse of Drugs Act 1977-84 (hereafter referred to as the Misuse of Drugs Act), Safety and Welfare at Work regulations Act 1993, and Non Fatal Offences Against Persons Act 1997, The tobacco Regulations 1995, Public Health (tobacco) Health Act (amendment) 2004 and all future relevant legislation. Also, of our Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Mission Statement, and the Health and Safety Statement, School Wellbeing Policy are taken into account.

### 5. Rationale

St. Patrick's Classical School follows a proactive approach in its care and education of its students towards a healthy lifestyle. Its aim is to prevent substance misuse while at the same time having strategies in place in the event of such problems arising. The rationale of the policy is:

- To promote the health and wellbeing of each student
- To ensure that the students' parents and staff will be informed of the policy
- To set the policy in the current context of Irish society
- To view substance use/misuse as an issue for all schools; in a society where drugs, legal and illegal are widely available it is important for schools to develop policies and procedures in advance of drug related issues coming to attention
- To meet the requirements of the Education Act 1998 and 2000 and Circular 18/02.

*'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' (Guidelines, P1).*

## SECTION 2: SCHOOL POLICY

### DEFINITION OF BANNED OR PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES:

A banned substance includes all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act. These can include non-validated prescription medication, all alcohol, tobaccos and any drug-like substance, including hallucinogenic, depressant, sedative, anxiolytic, opiate (derivative), or stimulant.

"Any chemical entity or mixture of entities, other than those required for the maintenance of normal health (food), the administration of which alters biological function and possible structure" - World Health Organisation (1971).

- Students are strictly forbidden to possess, consume, supply, attempt to supply, acquire or attempt to acquire a banned substance from other students in the school or be under the influence of banned substances e.g. non-prescription drugs, inhalants etc. while they are in the care of the school authorities, on or off school property. The school reserves the right to determine that any such substance found in the school building, grounds, on school trips, outings or during any school related activity at the school qualifies as a banned or a prohibited substance. Drug paraphernalia is understood to include all items deemed to be used in the taking of banned substances and any written or printed material promoting the use of banned substances.
- Substance abuse poses a threat not only to the student's well-being but to the school community as a whole and as a result any student who violates the provisions of this policy may be required by the School Management to participate in a substance abuse education programme or a rehabilitation programme at the student's own expense.
- In the case of banned substances being offered for sale on the school premises, in addition to implementing the school's own sanctions, the School Management may be required to report the matter to the Drugs Unit of the local Gardaí.
- Smoking/cigarettes, including electronic or e-cigarettes, is/are not allowed in the school buildings, school grounds or on any outside activity organised by the school. Students are also prohibited from smoking on the way to or from school and during the morning or lunch breaks even if outside the school grounds.
- Students should note that a violation of this code may also be a violation of the law. Under Section 47 (2) of the Public Health (Tobacco) Acts a person who smokes in contravention of subsection (1) of that section i.e. on school grounds, is guilty of an offence. Under Section 5 (2A) of the said Acts, a person found guilty of an offence under Section 47 is liable on summary conviction of a fine of up to €3,000.
- The School Management reserves the right to request students to turn out their pockets or to search bags, lockers etc. belonging to students if there is a suspicion that alcohol, drugs, illegal substances, cigarettes etc. are being concealed. Such searches will only be carried out in exceptional circumstances.

- Students found to be taking banned substances or performance enhancing supplements will not be considered for selection for any of the school teams.

### **SECTION 3: PROGRAMME FOR ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, E-CIGARETTES, E LIQUID PRODUCTS VOLATILE SUBSTANCES AND DRUG EDUCATION.**

1. Our school adopts a proactive stance in relation to education in substance abuse prevention. The school provides formal programmes through S.P.H.E, CSPE, RE Science and PE and Wellbeing programmes, that are both developmental in nature and age appropriate.
2. Our Educational programmes on substance use have the following aims:
  - To enable students to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practicing skills particularly in relation to self-esteem.
  - To provide information about substance abuse.
  - To increase understanding about the implications and consequences of substance abuse.
  - To encourage an understanding of the personal situation of those experiencing or likely to experience substance abuse.
  - To enable students to identify sources of appropriate personal support and information. There are opportunities provided in cross curricular and in extracurricular activities to reinforce learning occurring in S.P.H.E.
3. The school will assist Parent(s)/Guardian(s) in their role providing them with information on the S.P.H.E. Programmes and by hosting information seminars at least every three years.
4. The school acknowledges the central role of Parent(s) / Guardian(s) in the implementation of this policy:
  - To acknowledge the importance of these programmes,
  - To recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse.
  - To assist and co-operate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

### **SECTION 4: PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING DRUG (including Alcohol, E Liquid Vapes/ Products) RELATED SUBSTANCE MISUSE/ABUSE INCIDENTS.**

Please note: The school will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of an incident including records referred to in the below steps. Also, communications with other people or agencies involved or concerned with the matters under investigation, the investigation outcome, decisions taken and the rationale for these decisions, any penalties or disciplinary measures imposed following an investigation, and the management and outcome of any appeal that may arise following an incident will all be written down on record.

1. Incidents will be reported to the Principal / Deputy Principal.
2. In the event of an incident, the school will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student or students involved and the welfare of the school community as whole.
3. The school reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school any student involved in a suspected misuse incident pending a further and completed investigation of the incident.

4. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed immediately by the Principal, unless home circumstances warrant disclosure in a more appropriate manner.
5. The completion of an Incident Report will take place.
6. The Principal will inform An Garda Síochána if any incident involves illegal activity, only after the parent(s)/guardians(s) have been informed.
7. The Principal will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any incident and will take whatever time is deemed necessary to do this.
8. The school recognises the importance in limiting, as far as practicable, the number of people involved in investigating and managing a misuse incident. It is the aim of the school to involve only those directly concerned with the student. In addition to the Principal, these may include the Deputy Principal, the Year Head, Guidance Counsellor and/or Chaplain, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator (to make sure this policy is used properly), and specific staff directly involved with the incident.
9. The Principal will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances and drugs paraphernalia associated with the incident, carefully recording all such items. All items will be handed to the An Garda Síochána at the earliest convenience or opportunity.
10. The Principal or a person nominated by the Principal, will seek statements from all persons involved in, concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident and will record these statements.
11. The Principal will liaise with any appropriate outside authority, if necessary, and seek advice or assistance as is deemed appropriate in relation to the investigation of the incident.
12. On completion of the preliminary investigation and in the event of an investigation continuing, the school will put the full particulars of the incident to the student(s) concerned and his (their) Parent(s)/Guardian(s) in the following manner:
  - Copies of all records deemed relevant to the position of the student concerned and to the nature of complaints or allegations that a student is facing will be made available to the student and her Parent/Guardian. Names of other students will be removed for privacy reasons. A student will be given an opportunity to make his reply to the matters at issue and any representations that he would wish to make or have made on his behalf.
  - The school will allow the student concerned reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue and will take into account any response so made and any other relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.
13. The Principal shall shortly thereafter inform the student and his parent/guardian of the schools findings by letter. If the investigation finds that the student is guilty of or involved or implicated in an incident the Principal will indicate the penalty or sanctions imposed.
14. The matter is referred to the Board of Management for further consideration. The student/parent/guardian will again be given an opportunity to make a reply to the matter at issue. The decision of the Board will be conveyed by registered letter outlining where necessary procedures for appeal.
15. The school management can at its sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstances or representations that it considers should be taken into account.
16. In the event of an inquiry from the media, the school management will not comment on any individual matter other than to outline its policy and procedures for managing incidents. The school, staff, or principal may not at any point, during or after the incident, comment on the incident or the school's position. The student(s) directly involved with the incident are to take all precedence. In no circumstances may the reputation of the school be any way considered.
17. Sanctions may include detention, suspension (short or long term), or permanent exclusion. Return to school may depend on participation in, and compliance with, appropriate addiction counselling programme.

18. All records and reports will be kept. However, when the student(s) leave the school, his (their) name(s) will be removed from all reports and records.

## **SECTION 5:**

### **Drug Testing**

The Principal/ Board of Management (BOM) shall have the right to request a student to undertake a drugs test (by a doctor specified by St. Patrick's Classical School) in a case where:

- a) The Principal, Deputy Principal or Teacher is of the opinion that the student is under the influence of a drug or a banned substance.
- b) the student has been convicted before the courts in any matter in relation to drugs, banned substances.
- c) a student enrolling into the school has been expelled from another school due to a drug related issue.
- d) a student has been hospitalised as a result of drug use or arrested by Gardaí for same the school may request a negative blood/urine drugs test from a specified doctor by St. Patrick's Classical School.

*In the case of a student who is a minor, parents/guardians will be required to accompany their child to the appointment with the doctor (arranged by St. Patrick's Classical School.). Results will be sent to parents and parents are required to furnish same to school.*

Note: A positive drug test result constitutes a breach of the policy. Parents may be required to arrange for the student to engage with a drug rehabilitation programme. The student may be required to complete the programme. Students will be required to take subsequent tests if the school is concerned by his/her behaviour. If they fail any of these tests, they may face expulsion.

## **SECTION 6: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

1. The school will provide staff with opportunities to attend training in the delivery of Health Education Programmes and will inform all staff of procedures in the management and investigation of a substance misuse incident.
2. The school will provide, if possible, opportunities for parents to attend information session on substance misuse.

## **SECTION 7: REVIEW OF POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management.

## SECTION 8: DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY

This policy will be available online, through the school app and from the school office. Students will be made aware of this policy within the context of the SPHE Programme, and if necessary they will also be given a copy of this policy freely through the school office/communications systems.

**Date of Adoption by the Board of Management: 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

The Board of Management reviewed and ratified the School Policy on the 08-02-2025.

Signed: 

Signed: 

Fr. Gerry Stuart

Mr. Harry Mc Garry

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 08-02-2025.

Date: 08-02-2025.

## Appendix 1

Incident Report Form for completion by member of teaching staff

*Name of student(s):*

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*Date of incident(s) occurring:*

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*Details of Incident*

Only details which are pertinent to the incident should be recorded. Please attach any written accounts by students.

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<b>Signature of Teacher:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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<b>Signature of Year Head/ Deputy Principal/Principal:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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