

# St. Paul's S.N.S. Whole School Plan



## Substance Usage/Abuse Policy



## Substance Use/Abuse Policy

### Introduction

The central objective of St. Paul's S.N.S. substance use policy is the welfare, care and protection of every student in line with the Education Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. Our policy seeks to address both education concerning alcohol, tobacco and drugs and the procedures for managing incidents relating to these substances in our school.

Our policy represents an integrated community-based response. It was developed through existing consultation structures within the school and was built on existing school policy, e.g. discipline, anti-bullying, RSE. The school's substance use policy covers alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

### Why a Policy on Substance Use?

- The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges that 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.
- The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- The National Drugs Strategy, 'Building on Experience', is now Government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.

After meetings with parents, activists in the campaign against drug abuse, (members of the Pioneer Association, teachers, Gardaí, local drugs task force), developed the following understanding of the term 'drugs':

*'A drug is any chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels.'*

**Substance Use/Abuse Policy***continued...***Strategies/Aids**

The following were the strategies/aids we decided to deploy:

- Walk Tall Programme - a social, personal and health education programme for the prevention of substance misuse - Department of Education & Science.
- Social, Personal & Health Education - primary school
- Curriculum & Teacher Guidelines - Department of Education & Science/NCCA (1999).
- Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Primary Schools - Department of Education & Science (2001).
- Substance Misuse Prevention information booklet outlining a multi-strand approach for Boards of Management, teachers, parents and other educators - Department of Education & Science (1997).
- Directory of Alcohol, Drugs and related services in the Republic of Ireland - Health Promotion Unit, Department of Education & Science.
- Facts about Drug Abuse in Ireland - compiled by Dr Des Corrigan - Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health & Children.
- Understanding Substances & Substance Use - A Handbook for Teachers.
- Making the Links - a guide to using the materials from the three SPHE Programmes.

**Management of Alcohol, Tobacco & Drug-Related Incidents**

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use include:

- Use or suspected use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco on the school premises or during a school-related activity is prohibited. Smoking is banned throughout the school's grounds. Neither drugs nor alcohol have any place inside the school grounds and possessions of them will be reported to the Gardaí.

**Substance Use/Abuse Policy***continued...*

- Intoxication/unusual behaviour - all such incidents to be reported to the Principal, and as below

Step 1: Witness to drug related incident informs teacher/staff member/Principal  
Step 2: Principal informs parents/guardians  
Step 3: Principal informs Chairperson of the Board of Management  
Step 4: Gardai informed depending on seriousness of incident  
Step 5: Area Health Board informed for disposal of items

- Finding of substances and/or associated paraphernalia to be reported to the Principal.
- Possession and/or supply on the school premises or during a school-related activity will be reported forthwith to the Gardaí.
- In certain cases, it may be necessary to seek legal advice. Due care will be important in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response.
- An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use may include referral to a support agency. Suspension and expulsion are guided by our Discipline Policy Guidelines.

### Substance Use/Abuse Policy

*continued..*

#### Ratification and Communication

Ratified by Board of Management:

Date: 9/3/22

Signed by Chairperson:

Peter Darcy  
Peter Darcy

Signed by Principal:

Mrs Aine Carthy  
Mrs Aine Carthy

