

# Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Pádraig ST. PATRICK'S OF LA SALLE BOYS NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Caisleán an Bharraigh,  
Co. Mhaigh Eo.



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## **Substance Use Policy**

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all users of the school building.  
It is applicable to all school related activities.

### **Relationship to school's Mission/Vision/Aims**

The substance use policy of St.Patrick's is linked to the school ethos in that we aim to

- a) Provide a safe and secure environment for learning
- b) Support those who are experiencing difficulties
- c) Seek to engage the partners in the education process.

### **Rationale : why is this policy necessary?**

- 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 students 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.
- The recent report from the National Advisory Committee on drugs entitled 'Drug use Prevention' (November 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.
- The 1999 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) Report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among

sixteen year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 29 ESPAD countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland whilst the use of tobacco and other drugs was above the ESPAD average.

- For the population as a whole, alcohol consumption per capita in Ireland has increased by 41% in the period 1989 to 1999, while the other EU Member States showed either a decrease or a modest increase. Ireland now has the second highest per capita consumption of alcohol in the EU.

## **Goals/objectives**

### **Policy Content.**

It may be helpful to divide the policy content into three sectors.

#### **1.Education concerning substance use.**

Education concerning substance use in St.Patrick's National School will be provided within the broad context of SPHE through specific modules or programmes, specific projects and school projects

Knowledge --- what is a drug? Effects of drugs? Different kinds

Skills --- self-esteem, communication, assertiveness, keeping safe, resisting peer pressure, dealing with feelings.

Values and Attitudes --- respect for others, responsibility for self and others, saying 'no' to friends.

Any of these skills will be done under the umbrella of the SPHE programme.

Considerations which inform the selection of content and methodologies include the fact that we are a town school and the fact that our students meet with Second and Third level students.

Approaches to co-ordinate and involve teachers and allocate time include a programme being carried out over 2 years and staff being informed of such.

The use of an outside speaker/visitor to enhance the work done in class should always be considered in the context of the full SPHE programme and should be undertaken in the presence of a teacher.

#### **2.Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents.**

St.Patrick's school will respond to incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse in a planned and considered way. In certain cases it may be necessary to seek legal advice.

## **Alcohol**

A pupil comes in drunk.

The pupil will be kept out of harm. If this is a first offence the parents will be contacted to remove the pupil.

If this is a repeat offence the duty social worker will be contacted as per Children First Guidelines --- procedures all teachers must follow in relation to child protection.

If an older pupil has given the pupil the alcohol, the guards will be informed so as to ascertain the source of supply.

Pupil brings alcohol to school and consumes it on the premises.

All other parents with pupils in the same class will be informed of the incident without naming the pupil involved.

If this is a first offence the issue will be dealt with by the parents.

If this is a repeat offence the duty social worker will be contacted.

If the pupil has been given the alcohol by an older pupil the guards will be informed so as to ascertain the source of supply.

The pupil brings alcohol to school but has not yet consumed it .

Parents will be contacted and the alcohol returned if it came from home.

If the source of supply is not known, a letter will be sent to all parents advising them to be alert.

If Parent/Guardian turns up drunk with the intention of driving the pupil home.

Another adult will be contacted to drive the pupil home.

School employee turns up drunk for work.

The staff member involved will be relieved of their duties for that day by the principal and the matter may be reported to the BOM.

## **Illegal drugs.**

Pupils under the influence of illegal drugs.

If this is a first offence the parents are contacted. If this is a repeat offence the Duty Social Worker will be informed.

If the pupil uses illegal drugs on the school premises.

Guards are informed and asked to remove the substance. No member of staff will transport illegal substances at any time.

If this is a repeat offence the Duty Social Worker is informed.

Illegal Drugs are found on the premises.

The room is cleared of pupils and the guards are informed.

### **Tobacco.**

If a pupil is caught smoking the parents will be informed and the cigarettes returned to them.

If tobacco is found in the classroom, all parents of class pupils are advised to be alert.

### **3.Provision for training and staff development.**

The shared understanding among the staff regarding the contribution that an SPHE programme can make to the prevention of substance misuse is that keynote messages will be delivered in a two month block over 2 years.

Staff members are aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of substance misuse within their own class by developing a supportive class environment eg. using glue, tippex, aerosol sprays and permanent markers when the children are not in the room, only water based glues are used in school.

Staff members have been made sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse by inservice.

Staff members have been made sufficiently aware of laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drugs and how they relate to themselves, to the school and the students by inservice. Policy to be reviewed by a legal expert.

Further training needs we have in relation to the implementation of the substance use policy include review of the current situation.

Training can be accessed from SPHE and Walk Tall coordinators based in Dublin West Education Centre.

New staff in particular will be briefed on the substance use policy of the school within a policy folder and at staff meetings.

Parent education on SPHE and issues relating to substance misuse will be promoted in the school community by inviting an outside speaker to address them.

### **Roles and responsibilities.**

#### **Teachers:**

Policy development.

Policy implementation.

Policy evaluation.

#### **Parents :**

Policy development.

Policy implementation.

Policy evaluation.

#### **Board of management :**

Policy development.  
Policy implementation.  
Policy evaluation.

### **Success criteria**

The following indicators will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the substance use policy in St.Patrick's Boys National School

- Review by staff and parental input will be sought
- School community have a good working knowledge of the dangers of substances
- Staff, parents and pupils are aware of the procedures that will be followed if there is a drug related incident.

### **Monitoring procedures**

The following actions will be taken by the core committee at certain junctures to ensure the policy is working --- review by staff and parental; input will be sought.

### **Review procedures**

The following actions will be taken by the core committee at certain junctures to evaluate the effectiveness of the substance use policy and to ascertain what changes, if any, are necessary --- review by staff and parental; input will be sought.

### **Implementation programme.**

The staff will devise the procedures necessary to implement the provisions of this policy.

Details will be circulated to all concerned by the principal.

The staff will carry out the procedures once they have been devised.