

## S.s. Peter & Paul's C.B.S.

# Substance Use Policy.

### **1. Introduction Statement.**

This policy was formulated on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2005 by Teachers, Parents Council & Board of Management.

The Policy applies to students, staff, parents and users of the school building. This applies at all times except on occasions where derogation has been sought from the principal.

### **2. Rationale.**

Why do we need a Substance Use Policy?

- ◆ To enable the school to provide for the needs of their students cohort and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues involving alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- ◆ 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 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.

### **3. Relationships to characteristic spirit of the school.**

The fundamental objective of this policy is to safeguard, the health and well being of all the members of the school community, in keeping with schoolsMission/Vision Statement.

#### 4. Aims.

- a. to provide honest and age-appropriate information on drugs, alcohol and volatile substances;
- b. to adequately inform pupils of the risks arising for them and for others from the abuse of Alcohol, Drugs, or any other Volatile Substances;
- c. to prepare students for present and future experiences and to enable them to make informed decisions which will eliminate the harm to themselves, their families and their communities that can arise from drug use or misuse, or abuse of alcohol or volatile substance abuse;
- d. to enable students to make informed, healthy and responsible choices
- e. to equip students with the necessary personal and social skills to deal with the situations they will be presented or confronted with in relation to the abuse of those various substances;
- f. to increase the self-esteem and confidence of the student;
- g. to adequately inform the student(s) of this Policy and the consequences for any student of offending the School Policy in this area;
- h. (where abuse does occur), to minimise the harm caused by the abuse of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs by offering supportive interventions.

#### 5. Roles and Responsibilities.

- ◆ The Principal (or in his absence) the Deputy Principal will co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy.
- ◆ Teachers in co-operation and consultation with parents, will address this topic through:
  - S.P.H.E. programmes
  - Talks for parents
  - Walk Tall programme – a Social, Personal and Health education programme for the prevention of Substance Misuse – Department of Education and Science. [www.dwec.ie/smpp](http://www.dwec.ie/smpp)
  - Alive-O programme
  - Guest speakers (doctors, nurses counsellors, gardaí).
  - Other relevant programmes.
  - Seminars.

N.B. Such programmes will be age appropriate.

**Accordingly parents agree** to support and assist the School in every way with reference to their son's participation in these Programmes.

#### **And the School agrees that:**

- a. Parents will at all times have access to information on what is happening in the School with regard to these education programmes.
- b. It will encourage and welcome ongoing consultation with Parents(s) as appropriate, mainly through the Parents' Council, in relation to the best use of whatever resources are available in the community to support these Programmes and this Policy.

Reference will also be made to the school's:

- ◆ Code of Behaviour Policy
- ◆ Health and Safety Policy
- ◆ Administration of Medicine Policy.

## **6. Managing Substance Misuse Incidents.**

### **Introduction – The School Approach.**

In any Abuse Incident the School will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student(s) involved and the welfare of the school community and the reputation of the school.

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

#### **The school will:**

- (a) In any case where it is apparent that there is an immediate danger to students or the school community, the Board of Management reserves 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;
- (b) An Abuse incident Report Form will be completed;
- (c) The School will take all appropriate and necessary steps to fully investigate and assess any Abuse Incident including the various steps set out herewith, and will take as much time as may be deemed necessary and appropriate to the completion of any such investigation;
- (d) The School will immediately take 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;
- (e) Where the School is to part with possession of the said items at (d) it will firstly take (& maintain) a record of all the items that came into its possession, and the number and volume of same, for the purposes of this investigation;
- (f) The School will immediately seek a statement or explanation from the student(s) or staff concerned and will carefully record same;

**(g) Records**

- At all stages of the investigation a written record should be kept of the investigation undertaken, including the records at (b) and (e) above communication to and with the Board of Management, the Parent(s), any Student(s) in any way involved or concerned with the matters under investigation, any teacher or other staff member involved, and any outside Agencies either communicated with or otherwise involved in the Abuse Incident(s), the outcome of the investigation, any decisions taken and the reasons for same, any penalties or disciplinary procedures imposed at the conclusion of same, and finally, in the event of an Appeal the entire management of the 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));
- (h) The School will at its own discretion, in an appropriate case, liaise with any appropriate outside authorities, such as relevant officers of the local Gardaí 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;
  - (i) Again the School will in appropriate case, at its sole and exclusive discretion, liaise with any appropriate outside authorities or experts on a confidential basis, and may seek any professional or expert advice or assistance it deems appropriate and necessary to deal satisfactorily with the circumstance of the specific Abuse Incident(s);
  - (j) If the circumstance merit (& 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;
  - (k) Copies of all Records deemed relevant only to the position of the student concerned and to the nature of the complaints or allegations that student is facing will be made available to that student(s) and his parent(s) at the appropriate stage, at the discretion of the School, but no later than at (j) and in time to permit the student a reasonable and just opportunity to make his own reply to the matters at issue, and any representations he would wish to make or have made on his own behalf;
  - (l) The School will then allow the student(s) concerned, and 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 reasonably expeditious and efficient manner. The School will take into account, any relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that it may be appropriate to take into account in the specific case;
  - (m) The School shall shortly thereafter, inform the student(s) and Parent(s) 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 penalty or sanction(s) that it intends to impose in the circumstances;

(n) The Board of Management as the circumstance of the matter may merit may implement disciplinary actions or sanctions including, but not limited to, any of the following:

- ◆ An oral warning
- ◆ A written warning
- ◆ A 3-day suspension
- ◆ A Suspension of more than 3 days
- ◆ Other discipline action
- ◆ 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 provision of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 [Act No. 22] 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 are maintained in the School and the safety of students is secured in accordance with the law the provision of Section 24 (5) of the said Act.

\* Example only of Compliance with the said Act:

Section 24(4)                      *A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of 20 days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer.*

This does not mean that the School is prohibited from taking any sensible or reasonable precautions in accordance with and for “the safety of students” etc as S24 (5) mentions. Parent(s) and the School hereby acknowledge and agree that where such circumstances may be deemed by the School to arise, then independently of any sanction of expulsion or extended suspension, the School and its Principal may be obliged and compelled to take or continue measures as at V (a) above, in the interests of good order and discipline in the School and the safety of students, pending completion of any engagement process with the education welfare officer or other parties under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, concerning an imminent expulsion.

(o) Again in an appropriate matter, if the School considers that the Abuse Incident(s) to be sufficient gravity, then it may again at its sole discretion, postpone the question of penalty or sanction(s) 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.

## **7. How Abuse Incidents are managed by the School.**

- (i) The Principal.
  - a) The Principal (or his delegate) is the first instance the primary person responsible with all Abuse Incidents arising in the School.
  - b) All other Staff, Students and Parents (where the circumstances should arise) are obliged to report particulars of any Abuse Incident, or any reasonable suspicion of the possible occurrence of an Abuse Incident(s), to the Principal or to the Deputy Principal without delay and in confidence.
  - c) Ordinarily the Principal, or in the absence the Deputy Principal, shall make all relevant decisions with reference to investigating the Abuse Incident, communicating with Parent(s) and liaising with or reporting (as appropriate) to any other relevant Agencies, the Board of Management, and ultimately (subject to the discretion of the Board of Management), the disclosure of information concerning the Abuse Incident investigation to relevant 3<sup>rd</sup> parties.
  - d) The Principal, or his Deputy shall keep the Class Teacher and other persons directly involved in or properly concerned with the Incident(s) duly and properly informed concerning the Incident(s) and all matters relating to the investigation of same (*see below re Confidentiality*).
  - e) All written documentation and records of any sort concerned with the Incident(s) will be held confidentially and securely by the Principal at his office.
  - f) The Principal (or Deputy Principal) or any designated person on the Principal's behalf, at his own discretion, may contact the Gardaí or relevant personnel or other authorities such as the Health Board, in the course of investigating and managing a suspected Abuse Incident(s).
  - g) Any drug paraphernalia or other banned or prohibited substances found at the School may be handed over to the Gardaí, and may be dealt with by the Gardaí at their discretion, subject only a previously mentioned above. >>>>>>>>>
  - h) The Principal may be assisted in the investigation and management of any Incident(s) by the Deputy Principal.
  - i) In relation to the investigation and management of any Incident(s), *only* the Principal should contact or liase with the Parent(s), the Gardaí, or any other outside Agencies, unless the Principal shall have expressly authorised or delegated another member of Staff to the contrary.

### **(II) Notifying and communicating with the Parents and Students.**

As mentioned already in accordance paragraph (Investigation Procedure), Parent(s) will in any event be contacted if an Abuse Incident continues to be investigated and the School is required to put particular of the matter to the student(s).

But independently of this, the School may require to contact the Parent(s) for a variety of reasons in connection with a *suspected* Abuse Incident.

If the School has reason to believe that student(s) have been involved in an Abuse Incident, the School will immediately notify the parent(s), and especially where there is concern about the health or welfare of the student(s) concerned will share all relevant information the School has available to it, that may be of assistance to the Parents or may be necessary for them in order to attend to the health and welfare of their child. The School will seek to involve Parent(s), wherever possible and offer support to them in relation to the incident(s), in the best interest of the student(s) concerned, but without prejudice to the school's separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage the Abuse Incident(s) themselves as outlined at paragraph (Investigation Procedure) above.

The School will also keep the student(s) concerned informed about what is happening and why. Again this will be without prejudice to its separation and independent obligation to investigate and manage the Abuse Incident(s).

**(III) Confidentiality when Managing an Abuse Incident.**

The school recognizes that it is important, in so far as is possible in the circumstances that only a limited number of people are involved in managing and investigating any Abuse Incidents(s). The School's policy here is only to involve those properly concerned with the management and investigation of the Incident(s) in question. For example, as stated above, the Principal is obliged at all material times to keep the Deputy Principal, 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.

But otherwise the Student(s) and Parent(s) concerned with the Incident(s) recognize and acknowledge that for example:

- a) Firstly, that any teacher or other staff involved, cannot offer total confidentiality to any student(s), where that teacher or other person comes on notice of an Abuse Incident(s) or a suspected Abuse Incident(s) whether through a disclosure or otherwise. 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 time reserve the right to bring any such matters to the prompt attention of the Principal or other School personnel concerned. And all the more especially so in any circumstances where another student or child (be they a pupil of the School or otherwise) may be considered to be in danger of harming himself or others.
- b) Secondly, the School may be bound in specific case to contact other relevant authorities, such as the Gardaí, the Health Board (for the area), any officer at the Probation Service who may be concerned

with any student(s) who may be involved in the Incident(s), or even other Officers of the Courts, again in circumstances where the Court Officers may already have 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 of more of the student(s)

- c) Thirdly the student(s) and their parents acknowledge that the School may of necessity require the expert assistance of an appropriate 3<sup>rd</sup> party if it is to properly investigate and manage any Abuse Incident(s).
- d) Fourthly, the student(s) and their parents acknowledge that, again in a 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 investigations concerning same, such as for example an Education Welfare Officer under the terms of the Education Welfare Act 2000, or a Juvenile Liaison Officer under the provisions of the Children's Act 2001.
- e) Parents/Student agree to participate in any programme of rehabilitation the B.O.M. may put in place as a possible condition of a student being re-admitted to school after suspension.

**(IV) 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 an Abuse Incident may be obliged to report same promptly to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

**(V) Media**

The School will not comment on any individual matter when investigation of an Abuse Incident is in progress. But the School if confronted with Media enquiry may 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.

**8. Provision for Training and Staff Development.**

The Board of Management is committed to the on-going training of school personnel vis-à-vis substance use.

Assistance to fulfil this obligation will be sought from:

- ◆ Health board
- ◆ Primary Curriculum Support Programme
- ◆ Gardaí
- ◆ Local Drugs Task Force Area Primary Schools.

Such programmes/training will seek to address the following:

- ◆ Develop a shared understanding among staff of the contribution that SPHE programme can make to the prevention of substance misuse.
- ◆ Staff members made aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of substance misuse within their own class (e.g. by developing a supportive class environment).
- ◆ Help members of staff to be sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse.
- ◆ Help members of staff to be sufficiently aware of laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they relate to themselves to the school and the students.
- ◆ Encourage Parents' Council to organise talks/seminars for parents on Substance Misuse.

**9. Areas/Occasions where misuse may occur:**

- ◆ Playground
- ◆ Toilets
- ◆ Classroom
- ◆ Playing Field
- ◆ School trips
- ◆ School bus

**10. This Policy has been circulated to:**

- ◆ Members of Staff
- ◆ Members of Parents Council
- ◆ B.O.M.

for observations/suggestions etc.

**11. The Policy has been ratified by the Board of Management.**

**12. Monitoring, review and evaluation** of 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

