



**HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL  
ROLL No 19433M**

# **SUBSTANCE USE POLICY**

**Ratified  
By  
BOARD of MANAGEMENT  
On  
21 March 2022**



## **Holy Family School**

# **Substance Use Policy.**

### **Introduction Statement**

This policy was formulated in consultation with staff, members of the Board of Management and Parents. In this policy "Drug" means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The School recognizes that drugs both legal and illegal are available in the local community and that the School, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents.

### **Scope of Policy**

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 Holy Family School 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, 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.

### **Relationship to School's Mission, Vision and Aims.**

As stated in our school Mission Statement, Holy Family School is committed to

- Developing each child intellectually to the best of his/her ability.
- Enriching each child's life by promoting and fostering social & personal development.
- Promoting moral growth and formation in co-operation with parents.
- Ensuring that each child will grow to his/her maximum physical potential by promoting physical development and co-ordination.

### **Rationale**

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.

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.



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### Policy Content

#### Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug-related incidents

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.

#### Alcohol

- The school is an alcohol free area. If alcohol is required for an adult only school function, permission shall be sought from the Board of Management.
- Pupils are not permitted to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school activities.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a pupil is under the influence of alcohol, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Where a pupil comes to school under the influence of alcohol, his/ her parents will be contacted and asked to take him/ her home.
- School’s disciplinary procedure to be invoked where considered necessary.
- Parents may be advised to seek referral for child to an appropriate support agency.
- Confidentiality to be respected by teachers concerned notwithstanding obligations to liaise with Garda Síochána and HSE where necessary.
- All media inquiries regarding the use of alcohol by pupils to be referred to the Principal.

#### Tobacco

- The school premises are a no-smoking area. The school operates a **No Smoking Policy** in accordance with present national legislation.
- Pupils are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes/e-cigarettes or vaping fluid on the school premises or at any school related activity.
- Visitors will comply with the no-smoking policy
- Staff should not smoke in view of pupils either in school or on outside school activities including sporting events and school tours.
- Pupils found smoking or vaping on school premises will be reported to the principal and parents will be informed.
- School’s disciplinary procedure to be invoked where considered necessary.
- Confidentiality to be respected by teacher notwithstanding obligations to liaise with Garda Síochána where necessary.



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### **Illicit Drugs and Solvents**

- Pupils are forbidden from being in possession of or using illicit drugs in the school premises or at any school related activity.
- Illicit drugs found on school premises should be locked away and the Garda contacted immediately to take possession of them.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a pupil is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Parents of pupils involved will be informed and the advice and assistance of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer will be sought.
- Where illegal substances are involved, the Gardaí Juvenile Liaison Officer will automatically be involved. The Board of Management will be notified.
- The B.O.M expects parents to inform the principal if they suspect their child of drug taking.
- School's disciplinary procedure to be invoked where considered necessary.
- Parents may be advised to seek referral for child to an appropriate support agency.
- All media enquiries regarding the use of illicit drugs and solvents to be referred to the Principal.
- If an incident occurs when children speak inappropriately about misuse of any substance teachers will seek to redress the situation through the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme.

### **Adults:**

- 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.



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- 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- Inspire Wellbeing (telephone: 1800817433 is available to teaching staff and SNAs. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service or to seek counseling or other professional intervention.
- 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 counseling 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.

## **Confidentiality**

It is important that the limits of confidentiality are made clear to pupils making a disclosure with regard to substance use. The well-being of the child and teacher must be a primary focus. It is important that in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents that a limited number of people are involved in managing the incident. People will be informed on a 'need to know' basis.

## **Media**

The Principal will handle all media enquiries. There will be no comment on individual cases, refer to the school policy and procedures in place.

## **Disciplinary Procedures.**

The school aims to respond to incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use in a planned and considered way. 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 may include referral to a support agency.

**The administration of medicine to pupils during school hours is covered by the school policy on same.**

## **Educational programme.**

Education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs will be provided in the broader context of a Social, Personal and Health Education Programme under Department of Education and Skills guidelines. This is a development programme and will be delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment. As a Health Promoting School the following educational programmes may be used as resources:



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- Walk Tall
- North Western Health Board
- Stay Safe
- Circle Time
- P.S.H.E. Programme by Fiona Speirs.
- Outside Speakers (Only undertaken in the presence of a teacher)

The educational programme should aim to provide the pupil with a broad range of life skills and building up of self-esteem as well as age appropriate related knowledge about alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

### **The role of the Board of Management is to:**

- Ratify this policy
- Implement this policy
- Monitor and evaluate it
- To sponsor/provide training for staff members
- Make decisions involving critical incidents
- To deal with the media in the event of a critical incident.

### **This policy puts the following procedures in place to deal with an incident requiring medical intervention:**

- 'Universal Precautions' will be applied; e.g. wearing of proper protective gloves etc., washing and making safe an area after an incident; provision of a yellow bin to dispose of needles or other unsuitable appliances
- Two school-based nurses will respond to emergencies
- Copies of all relevant phone numbers are appended (see Appendix 1)
- A local doctor from a local practice has agreed to respond to a medical emergency in the school
- The Board of Management has devised a Critical Incident Policy.

The school has established an excellent rapport with the local Garda station and will invite representatives from the local Garda station to speak with senior pupils. Whether or not to inform the Gardai of minor incidents will be at the discretion of the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management, but they will be involved in any serious substance abuse incidents.

At local level the following support agencies are available to which students involved in substance misuse might be referred:

- N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous)
- Child Care & Family Support Services
- Drug Education Officer
- Drug Helpline 1800 341 900
- Juvenile Liaison Officer
- Community Garda



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In the event of media interest in relation to a 'drug related incident', the matter will be referred to the Board of Management and the Chairperson will issue a prepared statement to the media.

### Training and Staff Development

An effective policy needs to be supported by an ongoing commitment from the school community to training and staff development. The school has availed of Primary Curriculum In-Service to assist in delivering S.P.H.E. Programme. Staff have also received training in the areas of "Stay Safe", R.S.E. and First Aid. The HSE has provided a wide range of supports to this school in relation to Health Promotion.

### Implementation Procedures

Copies of this policy will be distributed to the Board of Management members for ratification . When ratified and amended, copies will be available for all staff members, parents and the school community on request.

### Timeframe

This policy will be reviewed annually.

This policy was reviewed and approved on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

Signed:   
Chairperson of Board of Management

  
Principal/Secretary BOM.

Date: 4/4/2022

Date : 04/04/22