

# St Joseph's Patrician College, Galway. 'THE BISH'



## Substance Use Policy 2021

Ratification Date: May 24<sup>th</sup> 2021

Review Date: As required

This policy is in keeping with the Child Protection Procedures as adopted by the Board of Management. Teachers are reminded that they are mandated persons and must be familiar with their obligations with reference to the child first: National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and the Children First Act 2015

<b>Policy Revision Number:</b>	<b>Date.</b>
1	May 24 <sup>th</sup> 2021

## **St. Joseph's Patrician College**

This policy was devised in consultation with the all of education partners in our school, staff, pupils and parents. It was submitted to the Board of Management. It is being reviewed as part of the School Development Planning Process. In devising this policy, we have considered the democratic and child centred principles of this school. The establishment of a sound learning environment at school and classroom level is critical to effective learning and teaching

### **Rationale**

- Drugs and their misuse are an area of concern for parents, teachers, and students.
- The prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and drug misuse in modern society and its growth among young people pose challenges and opportunities for the school community as an important social partner in providing drug awareness and education.
- As a Le Chéile school we are constantly striving to realise the ideal of Education in line with the Le Chéile Charter and the Patrician Ethos. St. Joseph's Patrician College is a place where students feel safe and cared for, where the individual is respected both as a person in his own right but also as an integral part of a larger learning community, where justice and fairness are mediated in its structures and procedures.
- This holistic approach to education and the communal context in which it takes place underpins our policy on Substance Use. This policy sets out the framework within which the whole school community – teachers, parents, students and Board of Management – manages issues relating to Substance Use. The formulation of this policy has involved and included the whole school community
- The Education Act 1998 requires schools to promote the social and personal education of students and provide health education for them.
- The National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 and the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 set out a detailed programme of action to combat the problem of Substance Use in society in Ireland. These strategy documents, which are government policy, highlight the important contribution that schools can make in the area of education and prevention and require that a substance use policy be put in place.

### **The Substance Use policy is focused in the following key areas:**

- Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.
- Managing Drug Related Incidents.
- Training and Staff Development.
- Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

## **Scope and Objectives**

The Substance Use Policy applies to the entire school community including teachers, students, parents/guardians and users of the school building.

1. The policy is designed primarily to educate and protect and is seen as part of a larger pastoral effort by the school to ensure the wellbeing and Christian formation of our students. The school asserts its right to protect and promote its characteristic spirit by requiring defined standards of behaviour and prohibiting certain practices.
2. This policy is in effect during school time (including break times), and at all school related events such as team training, sporting events, international/national school tours, and day trips. However, the school may, when appropriate, apply sanctions, as per our Code of Responsibility and behaviour, in response to serious incidents that occur outside the school grounds and/or the school day. Items that would fall under this category would include incidents that impact on the health, Safety and welfare of a members of the school community.
3. The welfare, care and protection of every person in the school in line with the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008.
4. To address education relating to tobacco, alcohol and drug use through a planned and developmental education programme offered to every student and set within the context of the SPHE programme.
5. The use of pastoral principles and practice along with fair and consistent actions and disciplinary procedures in managing Substance Use related incidents.
6. A commitment to training for staff, parents and the Board of Management and to reviewing the policy on a regular basis.
7. The aims of our policy are:
  - To provide a programme of education for all students in substance use issues.
  - To equip our school to deal with issues relating to substance use.

- To meet statutory responsibilities in the area of substance use.
- To reinforce the role of our school in contributing to local and national issues of substance use.
- To minimise the dangers caused to young people by Substance Use within schools/communities.
- To manage incidents of Substance Use in a consistent manner.
- To provide a framework of support for the stakeholders of our school.
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### **Definitions:**

- **‘The School’** ‘The School’ includes school buildings, grounds, play/sports areas and public areas where students congregate coming to and going from school.

- **‘Banned/Prohibited’** This term includes all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non-validated prescription medication, all alcohol and tobacco substances used contrary to the law of the land. As per **Appendix 1**.

St Joseph’s Patrician College further reserves the right to determine that a substance found at school qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance.

- **‘Paraphernalia’** This includes any banned or prohibited substance as defined above, any items that may be deemed to be used in the taking of illicit substances and any written or printed material promoting the use of illicit substances.

- **‘Abuse Incident’**

Any incident relating to banned or prohibited substances that occurs in the school or during school functions or outings or any such incident that may be deemed damaging to the health or welfare of the student concerned, to other students, or to the Policy or reputation of the School. St Joseph’s Patrician College reserves the right to determine whether a specific incident constitutes an abuse incident to be addressed under the terms of the Policy.

- **‘Parents’** For the purposes of the policy, parents are defined to include natural parents, foster parents, step parents or guardians of the student concerned as applicable, or any person acting in loco parentis,

either on a temporary or permanent basis, on the date of the abuse incident.

- **Principal** In the policy, reference to the Principal should be taken to mean the Principal for the time being as appointed by the school and defined in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 or a Deputy Principal where the Principal is either unavailable or has delegated to a Deputy Principal.

### **School Position on Prohibited Drugs**

- St. Joseph's Patrician College does not accept or tolerate the possession, use or supply of banned or prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia by any student in the School, on school trips and outings or during any school-related activity.
- St. Joseph's Patrician College does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances.
- Chemicals in school laboratories will be held in secure storage facilities. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher's supervision.
- Medically prescribed drugs may be used provided in the following circumstances:
  - ✓ Teachers/Staff are not personally obliged to administer medicines. It is recognised that children with long-term recurring health problems such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes etc. be accommodated within the school.
  - ✓ Proper procedures for the administration of such prescribed medicines must be made. Parents /guardians are to be encouraged to provide maximum support and assistance in helping the school accommodate such students. This would include measures such as self-medication where necessary and only after approval from a GP/consultant or under parental supervision. Parents of students that may be required to take prescribed medication during school time should provide the school office with written details of the medication require and a procedure on how the students will be able to self-medicate.
  - ✓ No member of staff has the authority to administer any other medication or over the shelf painkillers to a student without parental approval and permission from the Principal.
  - ✓ In the case where a student is suffering from a life-threatening illness, parents/guardians should consult with the Principal/Deputy

Principal and should outline clearly in writing what may and may not be done in a particular emergency situation with particular reference to what may be at risk to the student. This must be backed up with a letter from the GP/consultant caring for the student.

- ✓ In the case of medical emergencies where staff have been given medication to administer, only the smallest dose possible to ensure recovery, until a medical expert can take over, should be provided for administration. Confirmation of this should be obtained from the GP responsible for the child in question before the school would agree to hold such life-saving medication in its care.

### **Education Programmes**

- St. Joseph's Patrician College will provide, in so far as its resources will allow, appropriate education in the area of health education and substance use for all students.
  - This education will be provided in the context of S.P.H.E., Religious Education, Science, C.S.P.E., and other subject areas when the opportunity arises. All faculties are encouraged address this area of pupil's education.
  - Contributions from parents, parties with relevant expertise and experience and relevant outside agencies will be encouraged and facilitated by the School, provided that such contributions complement the School's approach, values, and ethos.
  - Drug Awareness and other relevant programmes will be offered to parents and teachers of the School when opportunities to do so arise and the School's resources permit.
  - Guidelines and agreed procedures for the management of drugs-related incidents will be issued to all staff member.

### **Role of Key Stakeholders**

#### **Parents**

Parents are expected to:

- Acknowledge the importance of the School's Substance Use Policy.
- Recognise that they are in partnership with the School about informing and educating their children regarding Substance Use.
- Assist and co-operate fully with the School as it seeks to deal with Substance Use related incidents.

- Contribute to the formation and review of the School's Substance Use Policy.

What should Parents / Guardians do if they are concerned?

- Parents / guardians should contact the Year Head in person regarding incidents of substance use / abuse which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents / guardians.

### **Students**

1. The Student Council should, where possible, be consulted on awareness campaigns that are being organised by school staff/management.

2. The Student Council will endeavour to organise/help in the organisation of one day of Substance Use Awareness Campaign each year (in consultation with school management).

What should students do if they are concerned?

- Students should discuss any incident of substance use / abuse with a parent / guardian or teacher or another trusted adult within the school system; this is responsible behaviour rather than "telling tales".

### **Managing Substance Use-Related Incidents**

In the event of a Substance Use incident, St. Joseph's Patrician College will seek to strike a balance between the health, safety and welfare of the student(s) involved and the health, safety and welfare of the school community as a whole and the reputation of the School.

### **Procedure.**

Where St. Joseph's Patrician College is concerned that a student is under the influence of a prohibited substance (A list of Common Signs and Indicators of Substance Use can be found at **Appendix 4**)

**or**

- Where it is apparent that there is an immediate danger to students or the school community, the School reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the School any students involved in a suspected Substance Use incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident.
- A '**Substance Use Incident Report Form**' **Appendix 5** will be completed.

- St Joseph's Patrician College will take all the steps required to investigate and assess any Substance Use incident fully and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this.
- St Joseph's patrician College will take possession of any prohibited substances and drug paraphernalia associated with a Substance Use incident, carefully recording all such items and retaining them securely pending completion of the investigation unless otherwise instructed by appropriate outside agencies. Subject to the 'right to search' protocols. **'Appendix 6'**
- In the event of an incident, the St. Joseph's Patrician College will seek statements from all persons involved with or concerned with or knowing about the incident and will record these statements.

### **Record Keeping.**

St Joseph's Patrician College will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of the alleged incident, including records referred to in the above steps, communications with other people or agencies involved in 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 investigation.

### **Confidentiality**

It is the aim of St Joseph's Patrician College to involve, as far as is practicable, only those persons properly concerned with an alleged incident when investigating and managing a Substance Use incident. It is important that students and parents accept that:

- The duties of teachers and staff of St Joseph's Patrician College preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any students when they come in contact with a Substance Use incident or suspected Substance Use incident.
- St Joseph's Patrician College may be required to contact an appropriate outside authority such as the Gardai, Health Board, Probation Service or officers of the Courts.
- St Joseph's Patrician College may need to engage the expert assistance of an appropriate third party to properly investigate a Substance Use incident.
- St Joseph's Patrician College may be duty bound to notify certain persons about an incident and/or the outcome of an incident investigation under statute, regulations or D.E.S. guidelines.



## **Keeping Parties Informed**

If the circumstances merit and an investigation are continuing, St Joseph's Patrician College will put the full particulars of the incident or alleged incident to the students concerned and their parents in the following manner:

- Copies of all records deemed relevant to the student concerned and to the nature of the complaints or allegations that a student is facing will be made available to the student and his parents – at the discretion of St Joseph's Patrician College – in time to permit the student a reasonable opportunity to make his own reply to the matters at issue and any representations that he would wish to make or have made on his behalf.
- St Joseph's Patrician College will allow the student concerned and his parents reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. St Joseph's Patrician College will consider any response so made and any other relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.
- St Joseph's Patrician College shall shortly thereafter inform the student and his parents of the School's findings and their reasons for these. If St Joseph's Patrician College finds that the student has been guilty of or involved or implicated in an incident, it shall indicate sanctions it intends to impose in the circumstances.
- In the case of a suspected Substance Use incident, St Joseph's Patrician College will inform parents, particularly where there is concern regarding the health, safety and welfare of a student, and share any information that may help parents to attend to the health and well-being of their child/children.
- St Joseph's Patrician College will keep students informed of what is happening and why.
- Such actions will be undertaken without prejudice to St Joseph's Patrician College's separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage any Substance Use incident.

## **Disciplinary Procedures and Sanctions**

In relation to a verified and investigated Substance Use incident, the Board of Management of St Joseph's Patrician College may implement disciplinary actions or sanctions in accordance with the School's code of Responsibility and Behaviour. St Joseph's Patrician College can, at its sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of

mitigating circumstances or representations that it considers should be considered. St Joseph's Patrician College will endeavour to offer pastoral supports to the students and parents affected by an incident of Substance Use.

### **Media Inquiries**

St Joseph's Patrician College will not comment on any individual matter when an investigation is in progress other than to outline its Substance Use policy and procedures for managing incidents. In the interests of the reputation of St Joseph's Patrician College, the Board of management may clarify the School's position regarding an incident after the investigation has been completed.

### **The Role of the Principal**

The Principal or his/her nominee is responsible for dealing with abuse incidents arising in St Joseph's Patrician College.

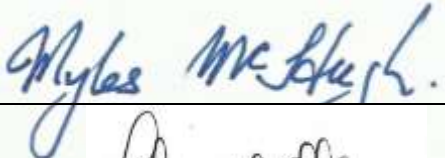
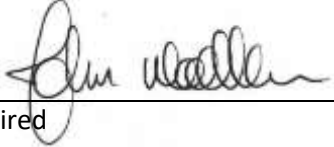
- All reports of Substance Use incidents or suspected incidents must be reported to the Principal.
- The principal or his / her nominee can make all decisions regarding investigation of the incident, communication with, liaison with and reporting to relevant parties and disclosure of information regarding investigation.
- The Principal or his / her nominee is responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed regarding investigation developments.
- The Principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any written documentation and records associated with an incident.
- The Principal or his / her nominee is responsible for taking possession of any banned or prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia and deciding what should be done with same upon appropriate advice.
- The Principal may seek assistance of the Deputy Principal, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor or other relevant school personnel in conducting an incident investigation

### **Monitoring**

The Principal will liaise with the Deputy Principal and relevant Leadership and Management teachers in monitoring the implementation of the policy.

## Implementation

This policy is subject to periodic review by the Board of Management of St. Joseph's Patrician College.

The Board of Management ratified this policy on the:	DATE: <b>May 24<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>
	Signed:
<b>Myles McHugh Chairperson</b>	
<b>John Madden Secretary of the BOM</b>	
Date of next review:	As required

## **Appendix 1:**

List of prohibited substances.

The following list while not exhaustive, is an example of some prohibited substances:

- Tobacco
- E-cigarettes
- Alcohol
- Cannabis & any derivatives
- MDMA (Ecstasy)
- Cocaine & any derivatives
- Opium & any derivatives
- Methamphetamines
- Prescription medication
- Psilocybin mushrooms

For an extensive list and further information please refer to the. Or the appropriate statutory Instrument that is applicable at the time of a suspected or alleged offence.

**‘Banned/Prohibited’** This term includes all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non-validated prescription medication, all alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarette substances used contrary to the law of the land.

- **Confiscation**
  - School staff can seize any prohibited item found as a result of a search. They can also seize any item, however found, which they consider harmful or detrimental to school discipline.

## **Appendix 2:**

### **DUTY OF STAFF**

The Board of Management requires all staff to report immediately, via the incident report form **(Appendix 5)**, any incidents where pupils/employees/visitors:

- Encounter the use /suspected Substance Use on the school premises in the school grounds or during a school related activity
- Exhibit symptoms/behaviour that may suggest Substance Use. **(Appendix 4)**
- Are involved or suspected of being involved in the distribution, purchase or use prohibited substances.
- Discover suspect substances /paraphernalia in the school.

1. The school personnel will seek to establish the facts and to be clear about the nature of the incident before deciding on a course of action. There will be no assumption of guilt at this stage
2. The student should not be confronted openly before his peers. There should be no assumption of guilt regarding Substance Use/abuse, as there are a variety of conditions, which might mimic the suspected misuse of substances. The possession of tablets might be for medicinal use.
3. The teacher is entitled to request the surrender of a suspicious substance or paraphernalia.
4. This should be handed over without fuss. The teacher should not seek to search the pupil or his possessions. Where there is a refusal to co-operate, the pupil should be brought to the Deputy principal/Principal whose responsibility it is to proceed with the matter.
5. On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender the suspicious substance and to cooperate in revealing the contents of bags clothing and personal possessions if necessary
6. In the case of lack of cooperation from the student, the parents should be informed of the situation and that the Gardai may also have to be notified. The student's bags, and personal property should be isolated until the parents/Gardai arrive.

See **Appendix 6:** Right to search protocol for more detailed information.

### **Appendix 3** Proper procedures for the administration of such prescribed medicines

#### **Administration of Epi-Pens by staff.**

Only a NLO qualified 'First Responder' may administer an epi-pen to a student or staff member suffering from anaphylaxis.

If someone is suffering an anaphylactic shock and the First Responder is not NLO qualified. They may administer an Epi-Pen under the strict guidance from a paramedic who is on their way to the school.

## **APPENDIX 4: Common SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF SUBSTANCE USE. (This is not an exhaustive list)**

### **1. Common features indicative of drug-taking among adolescents**

- Unusual loss of interest in school
- Poor school results
- Increased truancy
- Habitual lateness for school
- Rowdy or unusually giddy behaviour in class after breaks
- Groups congregating in out of the way places
- Unexplained loss of consciousness in class
- A secrecy about activities and whereabouts
- New and different friends
- Keeping unusually late hours
- Losing interest in old friends, sports or hobbies
- Excessive tiredness or loss of appetite
- Mood swings that cannot be explained.
- Appearing drunk or stoned
- Selling prized possessions
- Stealing
- Clashes with the Gardai
- Information learned from other members of the group/class

### **2. General signs and indicators of Substance Use**

Substance Use can involve a wide range of different drugs and each drug used will have specific consequences. Among the initial signs which are often noted are:

- Drunkenness
- Hallucinations
- Erratic or violent behaviour
- Fixed stare blurred or double vision
- Restlessness tiredness and lack of energy
- Unusual smells including solvents
- Persistent cough runny nose and eyes
- Unusual spots, rashes, red marks or unexplained burns on the face area or on arms
- Nausea, loss of appetite and weight

### 3. Reasons why young people start taking drugs

Substance Use is found in all social classes and in all ages with the majority of people starting to take drugs in their teenage years

There are many reasons including the following:

- Peer influence
- Drugs are more available
- Desire to experiment, for pleasure and excitement
- Relieve boredom
- A need to escape from other stresses and traumas in life
- Media influence



**Appendix 5**

**'Substance Use Incident Report Form'**

**St. Joseph's Patrician College**

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date on Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporting Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Factual Account of Events:

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Who has been informed?

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What action has been taken?

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Any Further items that may be relevant:

Signed Date:

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## **Appendix 6: Right to search protocol.**

On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal or designated senior member of staff may in certain circumstances request any student to cooperate in revealing the contents of their bags ,clothing and personal belongings when requested to do so.

On Health and Safety grounds school staff can search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees. However, parents must be informed, unless the student is 18 or over and chooses not to involve his parents(s), and given an opportunity to be present.

- Lockers are school property and may be searched by the Senior Management or staff authorised by them.
- On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal or designated senior member of staff may in certain circumstances request any student to cooperate in revealing the contents of their bags, clothing and personal belongings when requested to do so.
- Search of a student's locker
- Search of a student's school bag
- An instruction to a student to empty his/her schoolbag or pockets or locker.

### **The following conditions will apply:**

- Any such search will be authorised by the Principal/Deputy.
- Consent and/or the presence of the parent/guardian should be sought where possible.
- Any search will be undertaken in the presence of two members of staff.