



SAINT FINIAN'S NATIONAL  
SCHOOL

# Substance Use Policy

## 2023/2024

## **Substance Use Policy**

### **The Substance Use Policy of Saint Finian's National School**

#### **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 Saint Finian's National 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, 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.

#### **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 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. 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 misused 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.

The school authority in [Insert School Name] has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.

#### **Implementation Procedures**

Copies of the policy were distributed to Board of Management members for ratification in October 2017. When ratified and amended, copies were given to:

- All staff members
- Parents' Association
- Committee members
- School Community on request

### **Timeframe**

This policy in its final draft was ready by 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017. It was circulated to staff members, parents and Board of Management by November 2017. The first annual review was held on June 2017 and procedures will be reviewed annually each October.

### **Monitoring and Review Procedures**

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. There will be an annual meeting of this Drugs' Formation Policy Committee to monitor and review procedures to be held in September each year. A copy of this policy will be issued to all staff members and a reminder of its contents will be given at the first staff meeting of each year. A Board of Management member has agreed to take responsibility to monitor procedures annually and ensure they are being adhered to.

## **Policy Content**

### **Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents**

The policy committee members believe that young people are most at risk in relation to substance use in Saint Finian's National School in recreational areas, on the way to and from school and at out of school related activities supervised by staff members of Saint Finian's National School.

Incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use are addressed in the school's Code of Behaviour and the Enrolment Policy and pupils may be suspended or expelled if involved in any drug related incident.

The school's shared understanding of a 'drug related incident' is:

- Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs
- The sale or passing on of any illegal substance,
- The possession of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs on school grounds or at school related activities
- Disposal of drugs or related items (e.g. syringes) found on school property.

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

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

Parents will be involved by accepting the school's Code of Behaviour and Enrolment Policies. They will be informed of an incident involving their own child and will be asked to accept responsibility, co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardai if necessary.

Parents will be involved in incidents involving another child only if deemed necessary by the school authorities; if parents are aware that another child is involved in drug-related incidents under the scope of this policy they should inform the teacher, Principal or a Board member.

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
- First Aid training has been given to staff members in August 2017
- Copies of all relevant phone numbers are included (see Appendix 1)
- The Board of Management is currently updating our 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

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.

### **Management of Persons in the Workplace Under The Influence of Drugs And/or Alcohol**

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.

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.

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 (telephone: 1800 411 057 or e-mail: [eas@vhics.ie](mailto: eas@vhics.ie)) is available to teaching staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service.

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.

**Appendix 1**

Important Contact Numbers

Drugs Advisory and Treatment Centre 01 677 1122  
Trinity Court, 30/31 Pearse Street, Dublin 2

**Drugs/AIDS Services:**

South Western Area Health Board, 01 620 6400  
Bridge House, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10

East Coast Area Health Board, 01 280 3335  
Centenary House, Dun Laoghaire

Northern Area Health Board, 01 882 0300  
Phisboro Tower, Dublin 7

Alcohol Services 01 660 7838  
East Coast Area Health Board:  
Baggot Street Community Alcohol Treatment Unit