

# St Aidan's Community College

## Substance Use Policy

### Introduction

St Aidan's Community College is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to substance use. The policy has been drawn up in consultation with and accepted by the Principal, Teachers, Parents/Guardians, Board of Management and Students. It is necessary that all involved work together to implement this policy. It is vital that parents/guardians actively work with the school to implement this policy to ensure their children's health and safety.

In this policy "Drug" means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The school recognises that as part of the community it has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents.

### THE SCHOOL ETHOS

In St Aidan's Community College, we aim to develop all aspects of the student - their physical, intellectual, moral and emotional wellbeing. This is the ethos which guides this substance use policy. It also is committed to fostering the development of personal responsibility.

- The school does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs or alcohol by any member of the school community.
- Students are not allowed to possess use or supply vapes or tobacco.
- The school does not accept the misuse of any solvent based substances.
- Students may have legitimately prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for their personal use only.
- Students who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school long term must complete and submit the medical details form to the school office.
- The school must be informed if a student has a medical condition. This information will be made available to relevant staff.
- A staff member may not give a student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine without the permission of their parents.

The policy is focused in four key areas:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco, Vapes and Drug Education Programmes.
2. Managing Drug Related Incidents.
3. Training and Staff Development.
4. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation.

#### **1. Alcohol, Tobacco, Vapes and Drug Education Programmes.**

The School is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco, Vapes and Drug Education Programme for all students. Our educational aims are:

- To increase the self-esteem and confidence of our students.

- To equip our students with personal and social skills.
- To enable our students to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions.
- To provide clear and age-appropriate information on drugs.
- To minimise the harm caused by drug abuse by offering supportive interventions.

These aims will be achieved by:

1. Teachers undertaking relevant Drug Awareness or wellbeing training.
2. Outside speakers used where appropriate
3. Drug information and drug awareness sessions are organised for parents as required.
4. Student Drug Education will be achieved through:
  - Wellbeing modules/speakers
  - LCA Social Education Module
  - First Aid Course in Transition Year

## **2. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Related Incidents**

We acknowledge that in all situations involving drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the student, the needs of the school community, the reputation of the school and legal considerations.

Assessing a drug incident: If there is no damage to the student/s, it is important to:

- Take time to listen and assess before responding.
- Separate fact from rumour.
- In situations of confirmed use or possession or supply all details must be recorded and acted upon.
- Complete the incident report.
- Any concerns teachers have about a student should be reported to the Principal/ Deputy Principal.

### **Managing a drug incident**

- A limited number of people are involved in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents. People will be informed on a "need to know" basis.
- All written records will be held confidentially by the Principal or Deputy Principal. Parents/Guardians will be informed sensitively, and support offered to them.
- In the case of illegal drugs, the Principal or Deputy Principal will contact Gardaí and any drugs will be given to Gardaí.
- In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered.

If a student has a drug use problem then referral to support organisations will be recommended. Parents/Guardians, staff and other students involved in the incident will be offered support. Confidentiality is a complex issue. It is important that the

limits of confidentiality are discussed with students before any disclosure is made. The wellbeing and welfare of the student and teacher must be a primary focus.

The Principal or Deputy Principal will handle any media enquiries.

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. These will be consistent with the Code of Behaviour which states: Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school is a reason for expulsion to be considered.

### **3. Training & Development**

Staff: The school will facilitate training for staff involved in the wellbeing programmes. All staff will be made aware of drug information, resources, websites and training programmes available as required.

Parents/Guardians: The School will provide opportunities to attend drug workshops, information evenings and sessions as required. As part of the induction for parents/guardians of new pupils to the school parents/ guardians are made aware of all school policies including the substance use policy.

Students: The school will offer all its students drug education programmes within the context of their wellbeing classes. TY students during First Aid and LCA in the Social Education module.

### **4. Monitoring the Policy, Review and Evaluation**

The Substance Use policy will be monitored initially after 12 months or earlier if required.

### **Dissemination of Policy**

This policy will be distributed to all the school community on the school website and hard copies are available on request from the office.

**Policy ratified by BOM on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson BOM

