

**St Vincent's Secondary School**

**Glasnevin**

**Dublin 11**



**St Vincent's Secondary School**

**Substance Abuse Policy**



Iontaobhas Scoileanna Éamainn Rís  
Edmund Rice Schools Trust



## Contents:

Section	Page
School Context	2
Introduction and Rationale	2
Our Mission Statement	3
Scope of the Policy	3
The School Ethos	3
The Aims of the St. Vincent's Secondary School Substance Abuse Policy	4
Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education programmes at St Vincent's Secondary School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Junior Cycle</li> <li>• Senior Cycle</li> <li>• LCA</li> <li>• TY</li> <li>• Visiting speakers</li> <li>• Pastoral Care</li> </ul>	5
Managing substance use related incidents in St Vincent's S.S <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidentiality</li> <li>• Disciplinary Procedures</li> <li>• External Support Agencies</li> </ul>	6
Training and staff development relating to substance use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Parents/Guardians</li> </ul>	8
On-going monitoring,review and Evaluation	8
Other relevant policies	9
Ratification by the Board of Management	9
Appendix I - Incident report form for Substance misuse	10

## School Context:

**Name:** St Vincent's Secondary School, Glasnevin

**Address:** Glasnevin, Dublin 11

**Phone Number:** 01-830 4375

**Category:** DEIS

**Enrolment 2020/2021 :** 371

St Vincent's Secondary School is an all-boys school under the trusteeship of Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). The characteristic spirit of our school is based on the vision and values of the E.R.S.T. Charter as outlined in our mission statement. This is reflected in the operations of our school and in our school policies. In St. Vincent's Secondary School, we believe that effective communication structures are essential for the proper functioning of our school.

## Introduction and Rationale:

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges that affect their overall health and wellbeing. 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 students in this regard and how they might respond to issues appropriately that can be both sensitive and emotive. 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 2001-2008 and the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 set out a detailed programme of action to combat the problem of substance misuse in society in Ireland. Children First Act 2015 sets out best practice procedures that should be in place for all organisations providing services to children. Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 are adhered to in St. Vincent's SS when dealing with child disclosure and issues of confidentiality. 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. At St. Vincent's Secondary School, we have considered the above requirements and have designed a policy and a programme for substance use and misuse that suits the needs of our school community with a particular focus on our school ethos and mission statement.

St. Vincent's Secondary School is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs. The policy has been drawn up 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 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.



## Our Mission Statement:

St. Vincent's School aims to provide a quality Catholic education for all, in the tradition of Edmund Rice, which promotes leadership, fosters community and respects diversity.

## Scope of this Policy

The term 'substance' will be interpreted in a broad sense to include alcohol, tobacco, legal/illegal drugs and any other dangerous substances (Note: medication, which has been prescribed by a medical person for a student, should only be taken by that student).

To whom will the policy apply? This policy addresses substance use issues mainly in respect of students and all those employed by the school.

When will the policy apply? 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. Incidents relating to substance abuse outside of these times will be assessed with regard to the impact it has on our school community.

## The School Ethos

As stated in the school's mission statement, St. Vincent's Secondary School is committed to enabling students to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, cultural and physical potential. It also is committed to fostering the development of personal responsibility. This is the ethos which guides this policy.

- The school does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs by any person in the school, on school trips or during any school related activity.
- The school does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco in the school or on school activities by any student.
- The school does not accept the misuse of solvent-based substances. Students may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only (See prescribed medication below).
- Students who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school long term must inform the school as per the school First Aid and Administration of Medication policies respectively.
- The school must be informed if a student has a medical condition and relevant teachers, e.g. P.E. the teacher/First Aid Officer must be informed also.

- A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine.
- Chemicals in school laboratories will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher's supervision.

## Prescribed Medication

The exception to this policy is the legitimate use of prescribed drugs/medications and the school has to be informed if a student has such needs. When a student is required to take legitimate medicines during school hours a note from his/her parents to that effect must be placed in the student's file in the main office (*if this information is not already recorded on the student's registration form*) and the class tutor and First Aid officer must be informed. The First Aid officer will inform the teachers of the student involved. In the case of a school trip/event, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian of the child involved to inform the organiser of the event of any medication which the child may be taking e.g. inhaler (*See First Aid and Administration of Medication Policy 2018*). On occasion the school may require a letter from the student's family doctor to clarify the medication regime/administration requirements.

## The Aims of the St Vincent's Secondary School Substance Abuse Policy:

- 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 misuse within schools/communities.
- To manage incidents of substance misuse in a consistent manner.
- To provide a framework of support for the stakeholders of our school.
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of the young person

The policy is focused in four key areas:

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



# **Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education programmes at St Vincent's Secondary School**

The school is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programme for all students.

Issues of substance use are addressed in the following ways:

## **Junior Cycle:**

- Social Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.)
- Relationship and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.)
- Classroom rules for subjects using certain dangerous substances such as Woodwork , Science, Art etc.
- Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme
- Guest Speakers

## **TY:**

- Peer to Peer Programme
- Religious Education
- First Aid Course
- Personal Health Programme
- Guest speakers

## **Senior Cycle:**

- Classroom rules for subjects using certain dangerous substances such as Woodwork, Biology, Chemistry, Art etc.
- Religious Education (R.E.) programme at senior cycle.
- Guest Speakers

## **LCA:**

- Leaving Certificate Applied (L.C.A.) Social Education module.
- Guest Speakers

Content and details of topics can be found in the individual department plans for the above subjects.

## **Visiting speakers :**

To ensure the efficient running of the school, the principal and deputy-principal must be consulted when the extension of an invitation to a visiting speaker is being considered. All visiting guests must be signed in at the school office and wear a visitor pass for the duration of their visit.

St Vincent's Secondary School adopts the following guidelines to good practice and supplementary material as set out in Circular 43/18, Dept. of Education and Skills:

- Visitors to the classroom or school, particularly those engaging directly with students, should be aware of relevant school policies including the school's Child Protection policy, RSE policy and Substance Abuse policy. Any such

visit must be carefully planned in advance in line with the relevant whole-school SPHE/RSE programme(s) and policies.

- Talks/programmes delivered by outside agencies or speakers must be consistent with and complementary to the school's ethos and SPHE/RSE programme. Visits should be planned, researched and implemented in partnership with school personnel.
- Relevant teachers need to liaise with and be involved with all visitors and external agencies working with the school and the whole staff needs to be made aware of the same.
- It is strongly recommended that parents should be consulted and made aware of any such visiting people/agencies to classrooms / schools.
- The school's SPHE/RSE coordinator may also help in the process of whole-school planning and coordination to support the effective implementation of SPHE/RSE.
- It is of the utmost importance that classroom teachers remain in the classroom with the students and retain a central role in the delivery of the core subject matter of the SPHE/RSE programme. The presence of the classroom teacher should ensure that the school follows appropriate procedures for dealing with an issue(s) that may arise as a result of the external input(s).

### **Pastoral care at school:**

Communication and/or support via:

- Tutor system
- Guidance and counselling services
- HSCL Officer
- BFL Teacher
- SEN Department
- Care team
- School completion
- Extra-curricular programme

### **Managing Substance Use 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:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student
- 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.
- A teacher/ member of staff must report this to the Principal or Deputy Principal at the earliest opportunity.
- Then complete the drug incident report (*Appendix I*)



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 involved. They will be informed sensitively and support offered to them. In the case of illegal drugs the Principal or Deputy Principal reserves the right to contact Gardaí - Juvenile Liaison Officer. In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered.

If a student has a substance abuse issue then referral 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 well being and welfare of the student and teacher must be a primary focus.

## **Confidentiality**

It is school policy and in line with Child Protection Procedures 2017 that in circumstances where a student makes a disclosure or is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer this immediately to the principal as the DLP or in the event of the principal being unavailable they must report to the deputy principal as the deputy DLP. The principal or deputy principal will inform the parents/authorities and may arrange for additional school support as appropriate.

## **Disciplinary Procedures**

The use/misuse and or sale/distribution of any illegal substances by students of St. Vincents Secondary School will be taken very seriously. Any punishments or sanctions will be consistent with our Code of Behaviour up to and including expulsion.

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. These will be consistent with school rules set out in the Code of Behaviour.

## **External Support Agencies**

Substance misuse issues are dealt with through the multi-agency approach. Among our contacts are:

- C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Tusla (Child and Family Agency)
- Meitheal (Tusla support)
- N.E.P.S. (National Educational Psychological Service)
- Temple Street Children's Hospital
- Finglas Cabra Drug Task Force
- Finglas Youth Services



## **Training and staff development relating to substance use:**

### **Staff:**

The school facilitates (P.D.S.T. or other approved organisations) training for staff involved in the teaching of S.P.H.E.

All staff will be offered drug information and information on awareness training where possible.

Specific guidance will be made available to staff in relation to managing drug related incidents.

Management are committed to upholding our Child Protection responsibilities and the appropriate training and certification is offered to staff.

First Aid Officers are trained and this training will remain up to date.

### **Parents/Guardians:**

The school will provide information regarding support in the local area, opportunities for parents to attend drug workshops and information evenings. This will be done via local agencies such as the Finglas Cabra Drug Task Force.

## **On-going Monitoring, Review and Evaluation:**

The policy committee and well being coordinator will monitor the policy annually to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the school.

The result will be recorded and made available to the Principal.

The areas of:

- Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents
- Parent, Staff and Management Training

will be reviewed and enhanced where required and possible.

As part of our ongoing review process, this policy will be examined to reflect feedback from our evaluation practices and to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

### **Evaluation:**

We are committed to evaluating the effectiveness of this policy within our school community.

Feedback will be sought from members of the school community.

### **Dissemination of Policy:**

A copy of this policy will be available on the school website in the Policy Section. It will be available upon request from the School Office Wellbeing Coordinator. It will be referenced in the staff handbook. Students will be made aware of the policy within the context of the SPHE programme.

## Other Relevant Policies:

The following policies may contain important information regarding this Substance abuse policy:

- School Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Safeguarding Statement
- RSE Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid and Administration of Medication Policy

Please also familiarise yourself with these school policies.

### **\*Ratification:**

***This policy is under further development and the updated version will be ratified by the Board of Management this academic year 2020/2021.***

This Substance Abuse Policy was agreed on ([Date of BOM Meeting](#))

Signature:

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(Chair of the Board of Management)

Date for Review:



## Incident report form for Substance misuse.