



# Substance Abuse Policy

**(Use or suspected use of illicit drugs, illegal use of legal drugs, alcohol and tobacco)**

**2018/19**

**John the Baptist Community School**

**Our Mission Statement**

***John the Baptist Community School is committed to the provision of a broadly based education in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, balancing vision with realism which facilitates personal growth and development among students, staff and community***

### **Rationale**

- Schools are not immune from the prevalence of substance use and misuse in society.
- Therefore we want to be in a position to address issues in this area that may arise for Management, Parents/guardians, Students and Staff;
- We strive to provide our students with education and coping skills so that they may be prepared to deal with a society where substance use is prevalent;
- It is also a DES requirement to have such a policy;
- This policy is informed by the strategic plan adopted by the Government under the National Drugs Strategy 2001-08, 2009-2016 and the "Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery" National Strategy 2017-2025 and made mandatory for schools in Circular 18/20, the Department of Education (1998) and the Education Welfare Act (2000), Misuse of Drugs Act 1977, 1984, 2015, Misuse of Drugs Regulations 1988 (plus amendments to said acts such as December 2017) and the Criminal Justice Psychoactive Substance Act 2010. It is also mindful of the Children's ACT 2001 and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011. It takes account of our Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy and the Health and Safety Statement.

### **Objectives**

- To devise clear and consistent procedures, which will outline the school's position in relation to substance use;
- To ensure that all interested parties – Management, Parents/guardians, Students and Staff are made aware of the above;
- To create a safe, healthy environment for all, predicated on the key indicators of wellbeing;
- To ensure that a Substance Use Education programme is in place to help students develop skills and attitudes to empower students to respond in an informed and responsible manner to any substance related encounter/issue that may arise;
- To provide a support structure should the need arise
- To make opportunities available through the Parents Association to raise awareness of parents/guardians and the community in general.

### **Substance Use Education**

#### **Programme for alcohol, tobacco, volatile substance and drug education**

Our school adopts a proactive stance in relation to education in substance abuse prevention, the aim of which is to give young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes to appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and relate these to their own actions, both now

and in their future lives. Our school provides formal programmes through S.P.H.E. that are both developmental in nature and age appropriate. Our Educational programme on substance use has the following aims:

- To enable students to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practicing skills particularly in relation to self esteem and wellbeing
  - To provide information about substance misuse
  - To increase understanding about the implications and consequences of substance misuse
  - To encourage an understanding of the personal situation of those experiencing or likely to experience substance abuse.
  - To enable students to identify sources of appropriate personal support and information. There are opportunities provided in cross curricular and in extracurricular activities to reinforce learning occurring in S.P.H.E.
- **Junior Cycle** - receives information in S.P.H.E classes. All junior cycle classes have a substance use module each year. Wellbeing classes focused on the wellbeing indicators are also provided for all students.
- **Transition Years** follow a Substance Abuse Programme, as well as having a class of wellbeing each week.
- **5<sup>th</sup> years, 6<sup>th</sup> years, LCA 1 and LCA2** receive substance use education through in many ways, which may include guest speakers, leaflets, parent'/guardians' information evening and dedicated class time. This list is not exhaustive.

### **School Policy**

For the purpose of this document, substance refers to a banned or prohibited substance includes all substances covered by the misuse of Drugs Act, non validated prescription medication, all alcohol, tobaccos and any drug like substance, hallucinogenic or stimulant that includes chemicals that could lead to a mind altered state. This includes any substance that constitutes a legal high and controlled substances. It is a substance which changes the body functions mentally, physically, emotionally and/or behaviourally.

According to the Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010 "psychoactive substance" means a substance, product, preparation, plant, fungus or natural organism which has, when consumed by a person, the capacity to—

- (a) produce stimulation or depression of the central nervous system of the person, resulting in hallucinations or a significant disturbance in, or significant change to, motor function, thinking, behaviour, perception, awareness or mood, or
- (b) cause a state of dependence, including physical or psychological addiction

- The school does not accept or tolerate the possession, use or intent to supply of banned or prohibited substances and/or drug paraphernalia by any student in the school building, grounds, on school trips, outings or during any school related activity. The school reserves the right to determine that any such substance found at the school qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance
- Properly prescribed medical drugs may be taken in school on receipt of written notification from Parents/Guardians. If a student develops a medical condition that require the taking of medication, prescribed or non prescriptive, during the school time, it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to inform the school immediately. This applies also in the case of allergies.
- The school must be informed if a student has a medical condition. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school of a medical condition and update the school as the need arises, in accordance with the Admissions and Health and Safety policies.
- Chemicals in use in the school will be under lock and key. Students will handle and use these substances only under teacher supervision.

### **When and to whom does this Policy Apply?**

- Except where otherwise stated, this policy applies to all students and other users of the school premises (including parents/guardians, staff, contract workers, visitors, and those attending evening classes)
- It is in force at all times on the school premises including the Bus Bay, during school time, and during school-related activities (including school tours)
- Staff are not permitted to be under the influence of alcohol or other illicit substances or to smoke/vape or consume alcohol while on duty
- The accepted use of alcohol at school functions is subject to Board of Management approval.

### **Use of Visiting Speakers**

Speakers may be used to compliment our Drug Education Programme. However, the following points must be noted:

- The Principal/Deputy Principal must be informed at the planning stage and usual procedures for speakers put in place, including possible costs.
- The teacher involved may remain present throughout the talk - to offer support to the speaker as well as enabling the teacher to be clear on the issues that need to be followed up in subsequent classes.
- The content of the talk should be discussed with the speaker before addressing the students
- For one week after the talk, Helpline Numbers of the Associated Organisations are to be made available on the notice board and TV screen.

## **Parental Involvement**

For the purposes of the Policy, Parents are defined to include natural Parents, Foster Parents, Step-Parents, or Guardian of the Student concerned as applicable, or any person acting in loco parentis, either on a temporary or permanent basis on the date of an abuse incident. The School acknowledges that parents/guardians are the primary educators and encourage them to inform children of the dangers that exist in the area of substance use. Support is offered through the Parents Association and is hugely appreciated.

Individual Parents/guardians or the Parent Association are encouraged to liaise with the school management when substance use awareness is required for parents/guardians and every effort will be made to facilitate the request.

## **Management of Substance Use Issues**

The possession, use, or supply of substances that come under the scope of this policy (including finding paraphernalia associated with same), are viewed as unacceptable by this school. Should an incident relating to any of these substances occur, it is the policy of this school to respond in a firm but fair manner, with due regard for the safety and welfare of the individual/s involved, other students of this school, the good name of the school, and the wider school community. The school will endeavour to handle any such incident in a discreet and sensitive manner, and to fulfil any legal obligations that apply. The school also reserves the right to determine whether a specific incident constitutes an abuse incident to be dealt with under the policy.

## **Smoking**

There are Health and Safety implications associated with smoking which affect every member of the School Community. We are obliged by law to provide a smoking free environment for all. **Therefore smoking is prohibited on the school premises/grounds. This includes the use of electronic cigarettes, vaping and associated materials.**

## **Internal lines of Reporting**

All substance use related incidents to be reported to Senior Management\* who will inform the year head and other staff members as appropriate, at all times being mindful of the reputation of the individual involved

**\* Principal/Deputy Principal or persons acting on their behalf**

## **Recording of Incidents**

### **Smoking**

The reporting teacher will record the incident in the Student Journal and report to the Yearhead or a Senior member of management. Contact may be made with home. The action taken and the sanction imposed is recorded

## **Alcohol or Illicit Drug Incidents**

A report of the incident is to be written up by the staff member involved. This is to be kept by the Principal in a separate file for substance related incidents. The student is informed of same. Concerns or incidents around substance use are kept in a Concerns File but no discipline action is taken on foot of same, until proven, at which time a report is put on file

***The incident is not recorded in the student's normal file. However reference should be made in the normal file pointing to further information available from the Principal. The Student is informed of same.***

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to students regarding information relating to incidents in breach of this policy, with due regard given to data protection legislation. Information may need to be shared, for example, with one or more other staff members, with parents/guardians, of those involved in the incident, or with an appropriate external agency. However, discretion within these limits will be observed, at all times being mindful of the reputation of the individual involved and Health and Safety concerns.

## **Informing/Involving Parents/Guardians**

### **Smoking**

Should a student be found smoking or in possession of lighters, matches, electronic cigarettes or cigarettes, his/her journal will be signed by the teacher/staff member. A phone call will be made home informing parents/guardians of such. Parents/guardians should check student journal weekly.

## **Other Substance Use Incidents**

It will be standard practice that parents/guardians be notified at the earliest opportunity if their child is involved in a substance use related incident. Parents/guardians with concerns about the actual or possible substance use by their child are invited to discuss these with Senior Management, Guidance Counsellor or other Counsellors.

## **Consulting with/Involving Gardaí**

This school has a positive working relationship with the local Gardaí, and together they have the welfare of the individual student, other students and the wider school community to consider.

In incidents involving the supply\* of substances for illicit use it is the policy of this school to consult Gardaí. Garda advice may also be sought about the other incidents on a case by case basis. This will rest with the Principal and other key staff.

In the event of a substance use incident occurring off the school grounds, outside of school time, where it impinges on the school community, the school may consult the Gardaí and reserve the right to take action

**\*Sharing drugs may be seen as supply. It is not necessary for money to change hands**

## **Sanctions and Disciplinary Issues**

As per the Code of Behaviour of this school, sanctions will apply to those involved in substance use related incidents. Sanctions including suspension or exclusion may be imposed depending on the seriousness of the incident

If suspected substance use leads to indiscipline resulting in suspension, it may be suggested to have a student drug tested before return to school. The school can, at its discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstances

**If an infringement of code occurs while on school outing/tour, teachers should consult with the Principal at the earliest possible convenience and then appropriate steps will be taken. Infringements of code by staff will be dealt with under the agreed Management Union discipline procedures**

In consultation with Management, Staff and the Student Council, the following sanctions are in place for smoking. These include:

- a. When a student is found to be smoking appropriate sanctions will apply. A note will also be entered in the journal
- b. All smoking offences will be recorded by the Yearhead in the student's file.

## **Counselling/Support of those involved**

Students directly involved in substance use incidents, with the exception of smoking, will be seen by the school Principal/Deputy Principal or designated staff member, who may refer to specialist external agencies if deemed appropriate.

Students or other members of the school community who wish to speak to someone about their own drug use, or that of a person they are concerned about, are invited to approach a member of staff.

Where voluntary, such disclosures will normally be seen as a desire to seek help and may therefore not be subject to disciplinary consequences, but will be subject to the Confidentiality Policy outlined previously.

## **Search:**

This school retains the right to search any part of school property if there is reasonable cause to believe a substance in breach of this policy may be contained therein. This includes school lockers and desks. Students will be given the option to volunteer the substance prior to search.

Where there is reasonable cause to believe a student has on their person or in their possession a substance in breach of this policy, they will be asked to volunteer the substance or invited to empty bag, pocket, locker, etc. If they refuse the school bag may be confiscated and kept in a monitored environment or a section of lockers put out of bounds and access denied until the Gardaí are consulted about conducting a search.

The school locker remains at all times the property of the school as students rent such lockers for a period of a school year. Students should be aware that these can be subject to inspection and examination at any point.

## **Health and Safety**

### **First Aid**

Should a student encounter a medical emergency, he/she is urged to go to the nearest adult who will then contact Senior Management. If necessary procedures laid out for the use of the defibrillator will be followed, as outlined in the Health and Safety Policy. If further medical assistance is required a doctor will be contacted immediately. If thought to be under the influence of a substance, medical intervention may be sought.

This complies with normal school procedure in the case of a sick student.

### **Disposal of Illegal Substances**

If any illegal drug is found it should be stored securely by staff member/s while Gardaí are called to come and collect it. The substance should be handled as little as possible, and no attempt should be made to taste or analyse the substance. Two staff members should be present during any procedures involving handling of illegal substances.

Where the substance is being delivered to the Gardaí by staff members, the station must be notified before departure and the estimated time of arrival stated.

### **Solvents**

The use and storage of solvents is covered under Health and Safety Policy.

The school endeavours to ensure that any solvents are stored appropriately and used only under supervision

Due to Health and Safety concerns such as asthma and other breathing problems, as well as possible misuse, the use of aerosols is also discouraged on the school premises.

### **Prescribed Medication**

Parents/guardians should inform school in writing if a student is on prescribed medication for the wellbeing of the student. It is the responsibility of the parent to update the school of any changes. Such information will be kept confidential and only shared with the knowledge of the student and their parents/guardians, and only if needed to ensure the health and wellbeing of the individual.

Only a supply of the medication **sufficient for the day and for the student's individual use** should be brought into school.

A special record of students with medical issues will be held in the school.

## **Staff Training and Support Issues**

All staff will have access to a basic level of information through in-house training events. When the need arises additional training opportunities will be made available to the relevant staff in order to enable them to implement the provisions of this policy (substance use education programme).

The school will develop a library of drug information and education resources to which all staff will have access and a number of staff have attended training.

One member of staff is also scheduled to attend training in the administration of an epipen in February 2018. A wide team of individuals within the school have received various levels of training in terms of First Aid, First Response (Cardiac - Defibrillator) and Pre Hospital Response procedures (see Health and Safety Policy)./

## **Dissemination of Policy**

The school will endeavour to ensure that all existing and incoming students, their parents/guardians, and all, teaching and non-teaching staff are informed about this policy, and that they understand the implications of the policy for themselves and for the school community.

The policy was introduced to the staff at a staff meeting taking place on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2001. They received a copy of the first draft of the policy to suggest amendments.

**New Staff** will be informed of the policy during their induction day.

**The Parents Council** were given the first draft of the policy to comment on at a meeting in the school year 2001/2002

**Parents/guardians in general** have received details of the policy when reports were sent home and copies of policy may be requested from the Principal. The policy can be accessed online on the school website.

**Parents/guardians of incoming first years** can view all school policies by contacting the school. They will be made aware of this before their child enters the school

**The Students' Council** were given a copy of the first draft to allow feedback and discussion.

**Students** were informed of the policy once ratified through their Drug Education classes and Religious Education classes as with reviewed policy.

**The Board of Management** received the final draft of the policy at the February 2002 meeting

## **Getting Help**

If any member of the school community have concerns in regards to substance abuse, a number of supports are available:

- Bruff Garda Station (061) 382 940
- HSE National Drug & Alcohol Helpline Tel: 1800 459 459
- Drugs.ie – a drugs and alcohol information and online support service that provides live interactive help.
- Al-Anon & Alateen – a support service for relatives and friends of problem drinkers. Alateen offers understanding and support specifically for children of problem drinkers. Call 01 8732699
- Alcoholics Anonymous – through mutual support, the AA aims to help its members achieve and maintain sobriety. There are no membership fees. Call 01 8420700.
- Mid-West Addiction Services
  - Regional Drug Co-ordination Unit(R.D.C.U.) , Corporate House, Munget Street, Limerick.
  - Tel: 061 469140 Fax: 061 469143
  - Slainte Drug & Alcohol Counselling Services, Corporate House, Munget Street, Limerick.
  - Tel: 061 469140 Fax: 061 469143
  - Limerick County Drug and Alcohol Services, Newcastlewest Tel: (069) 61430
  - North Tipperary Drug and Alcohol Service , Kenyon Street, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary Tel: 067 46512
  - Primary Care Drug Assessment Unit, 57 O'Connell Street Tel: (061) 318 633

Please note the above list is not exhaustive and will be posted on the Student Wellbeing notice board.

### **Monitoring, Review and Evaluation of Policy**

All staff are responsible for the effective implementation of this policy. The policy will be monitored by management and by the Principal to ensure it is implemented and is effective. The policy will be subject to ongoing review in line with the programme of Subject Department Planning.

- A review of the existing policy took place in the school year 2004/2005, after in-service in the Limerick Education Centre given by Ms. O'Grady and Mr. Keane.
- The Substance Use Policy was reviewed in April 2009 in John the Baptist Community School.
- The review of the policy was facilitated by Ms. Nollaig O'Grady in consultation with Mrs. Mary Jones (Vice Principal) and Ms. Ita Browne (acting head of SPHE)
- The initial review took place from 2-4pm on April 21<sup>st</sup> 2009.
- Following this review, two successive meetings were held to further discuss the policy involving Mrs. Mary Jones and Ms. Ita Browne on April 28<sup>th</sup> and May 5<sup>th</sup> 2009.
- The reviewed policy was presented to the Board of Management on September 21<sup>st</sup> 2009.
- This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on October 20<sup>th</sup> 2009.
- A review of this Policy took place Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2014 by Assistant Principals

- Consultation with the Garda Sandra Heelan took place in 2017 to ensure best practice.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

This policy has been made available to school personnel and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patrons of John the Baptist Community School if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and will be readily accessible to parents and students on request and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department OF Education and Skills.

**Signed:**

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**Chairperson  
Board of Management**

**Principal**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of next review: September 2019**



## **Substance Abuse Policy**

**Reviewed by:**

- Assistant Principals
- Parent Association
- Teachers
- Student Council Members
- Presented to the Parent Association

**Ratified by the B.O.M on:**

**Review Date:** September 2019