



Substance Abuse Policy

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

2021/22

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 appropriate to the nature of the issue 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 positive and informed choices in any given situation that they may encounter related to illegal/harmful substances and potential misuse of those substances.
 - To enable students to identify sources of appropriate personal support and information.
 - Cross curricular opportunities are provided across a range of subjects and in extracurricular activities to reinforce learning.
- **Junior Cycle** receives information through the Wellbeing programme which permeates all aspects of the Junior Cycle Framework. Wellbeing focuses on the development of wellbeing indicators for all students. S.P.H.E offers opportunities for learning in this area. Substance abuse is a component of the scheme of work for each year in the SPHE programme at Junior cycle.
 - **Transition Years** follow a Substance Abuse Programme, as well as having a class of wellbeing each week.
 - **5th years, 6th years, LCA 1 and LCA2** receive substance use education in many ways, which may include guest speakers, information leaflets, Parent/Guardians' information evenings and dedicated class time. This list is not exhaustive.

School Policy

For the purpose of this document, the term 'substance' refers to 'any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally' and includes alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, performance enhancing drugs, non-validated prescription medication, solvents, hallucinogenic substances or stimulants and controlled drugs such as cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, heroin, crack/cocaine, LSD, ketamine, khat, etc. as well as synthetic cannabinoids in any form, so called 'legal highs' and any other 'mind altering' substances. This list is not exhaustive. 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.

Within the scope of this policy 'drug use' refers to the possession, use and supply of all banned or prohibited substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act (Amended 2016), or substances intended to resemble drugs, or drug-associated paraphernalia. It also refers to the use of performance enhancing substances, anabolic steroids, glue and other substances held or supplied for the purpose of misuse. It also concerns itself with the misuse of prescription drugs. Drug misuse / abuse is drug-taking which leads a person to experience social, psychological, physical or legal problems related to intoxication or regular excessive consumption and/or dependence. It may be part of a wider spectrum of problematic or harmful behaviour and require specific interventions, including discussion with Parents/Guardians on how best to proceed.

- 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 buildings, 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.

Medical Awareness Form

- Parent/Guardian must complete a **Medical Awareness1 Form** if their child has any medical condition or is using prescribed medication for medical reasons when they enrol in First Year and the **Medical Awareness Form** must be updated as required and at least at the start of every academic year. It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to update the **M.A.1 Form** immediately if a medical condition arises or if there is a change in their existing medical condition. This procedure must be followed to ensure the health and safety and welfare of your child.
- It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to complete this **M.A.1 Form** in accordance with the Admissions and Health and Safety policies.
- If the medical condition stated on the **M.A.1 Form** is deemed a chronic medical condition e.g., epilepsy, diabetes, then a more detailed **Medical Care Plan** form must be completed by the Parent/Guardian. The school must be notified immediately of any changes to the care plan.
- In the case where the student's medication is a controlled drug / restricted medicine, this medication cannot be on their person but must be kept in a locked cabinet in a locked medical room. Administration of said used drugs must be under supervision.

If a student develops a medical condition that requires the taking of conventional medicine, prescribed or non-prescriptive, during the school time, it is the responsibility of the Parents/Guardians to inform the school immediately to discuss the details of self-administration.

- It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to make sure that all medicines are in date when sent into the school and the Parent/Guardian must alert the school two weeks prior to the expiry date and furnish a new supply of medication to the school before expiration date has been reached or supplies have diminished. This is to ensure continuity of administration of the medication to the student.

When and to whom does this Policy Apply?

- This policy applies to all students and other users of the school premises including the walkway, sports facilities and bus bay (including parents/guardians, staff, contract workers, visitors, and those attending evening classes)
- This policy is enforced at all times on the school premises, and during all 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 the school grounds or during school related activities.
- The accepted use of alcohol at school functions is subject to Board of Management approval.

Use of Visiting Speakers

Speakers may be used to complement 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 must 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 maybe 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 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 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.

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 health, safety and welfare of the individual/s involved, with the protection of other students of this school, the good reputation of the school, and the wider school community. The school will endeavour to handle any such incidents in a discreet and sensitive manner, and to fulfil any legal obligations that apply. The school management reserves the right to determine whether a specific incident constitutes a substance 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 must be reported to Senior Management* who will inform the Year Head and other staff members as appropriate in a sensitive and discreet manner.

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

Recording of Incidents

Smoking

The incident is recorded in the Student Journal/VShare and reported to the Year Head or a Senior member of management. Contact will be made with Parent/Guardian if the student is found smoking or in possession of cigarettes/vaping devices etc. The action taken and the sanction imposed, up to and including suspension, is recorded on the Year Head report or VShare.

Alcohol or Illicit Substance Incidents

A report of the incident is to be written up by the staff member(s) involved. This is to be kept by the Principal in the appropriate file for substance related incidents and the student is informed of same. Contact will be made with Parent/Guardian. The action taken and the sanction imposed, up to and including suspension or expulsion, is recorded on the appropriate files.

The incident is not recorded in the student's Vshare record/school journal, however, reference should be made in their Vshare file/school journal pointing to further information available from the Principal or Year Head. 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. It is important that the limits of confidentiality are discussed with students before any disclosure is made. 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. Discretion within these limits however will be observed, at all times being mindful of the reputation of the individual involved and Health, Safety and welfare concerns. (Please refer to the Data Protection policy)

Managing Substance Related Incidents

We acknowledge that in all situations involving substance use, 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 substance related incident:

- If it is an emergency, the school emergency procedures will be followed including contacting the emergency services if required. (Please refer to the Health and Safety Policy)
- If an incident occurs that does not require an emergency response:
 - Take time to listen and assess before responding
 - Establish the facts through dialogue with the concerned parties. Notes may be taken.

If a substance (see above for definition) or what is believed or perceived to be a substance is found in the possession of a student with any intent to use, sell, trade or share, sanctions will be imposed. Appropriate actions will follow.

In situations of use, possession or supply of illicit or perceived illicit substances, all details must be investigated, recorded and acted upon in accordance with this policy.

A limited number of people are involved in suspected or confirmed substance use 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 if appropriate. They will be informed sensitively, and recommendations regarding further support may be suggested to them. In the case of illegal substances, the Principal or Deputy Principal will contact the Gardaí, and any illegal substances will be dealt with by the Gardaí. In response to all incidents, support will be offered as necessary and deemed appropriate.

If there is concern regarding an addiction and/or welfare issue, then referral will be recommended to appropriate authorities. Parents/Guardians, staff and other students involved in the incident will be offered support if appropriate. Confidentiality is a complex issue. It is important that the limits of confidentiality are discussed with students before any disclosure is made and with the welfare of the whole school community in mind. The wellbeing and welfare of the whole school community including those involved in the incident is paramount.

The Principal or Deputy Principal will handle all media enquiries. They will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and procedures in place to manage any substance related incident. (See below)

(Please refer to Mobile Phone and Personal Electronic Devices Policy for more information on Social Media)

Informing/Involving Parents/Guardians

Smoking

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

Other Substance Use Incidents

It is 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 concerns 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 incident on a case-by-case basis. This will rest with the Principal and other members of senior management.

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 illicit substances 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 and smoking related incidents. Sanctions including suspension and up to and including 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.

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

The Involvement and Roles of MEDIA in an Incident/Investigation:

The school advises that all parties should refrain from commenting on social media, to protect all involved. The Principal is the point of contact in relation to all media enquiries.

The school will not comment on individuals or individual cases whilst an investigation is underway other than to outline the school's policy in relation to managing such incidents.

The Board of Management may clarify the school's position regarding an incident when the investigation has concluded, and its findings have been reviewed.

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 them 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 of their choice.

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.

The Right to 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 the 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 without warning, but they may be present during the search.

Health and Safety

First Aid

Should a student encounter a medical emergency, the student 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 and emergency services will be contacted, as outlined in the Health and Safety Policy. This complies with normal school procedure in the case of a sick student.

If a student is thought to be under the influence Parents/Guardians will be contacted and medical intervention sought where necessary.

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 remain 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 several staff have attended training.

Two members of staff have up-to-date training on the administration of an epipen. This training is updated annually. A wider 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.

A draft of this policy has been distributed to all staff members, the Student Council and the Parents Association to invite them to suggest amendments before ratification by the Board of Management.

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

Parents/Guardians can access this policy online on the school website and copies may be requested from the principal.

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.

Students can access this policy on the school website and reference may be made across many curricular areas in class.

Getting Help

If any member of the school community has concerns in regard 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 inter-active 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 / (01) 8783624
- 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, Mungret Street, Limerick.
 - Tel: 061 469140 Fax: 061 469143
 - Slainte Drug & Alcohol Counselling Services, Corporate House, Mungret 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

*** This list is not exhaustive**

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 21st 2009.
- Following this review, two successive meetings were held to further discuss the policy involving Mrs. Mary Jones and Ms. Ita Browne on April 28th and May 5th 2009.
- The reviewed policy was presented to the Board of Management on September 21st 2009.
- This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on October 20th 2009.
- A review of this Policy took place Thursday 6th of February 2014 by Assistant Principals
- Consultation with the Garda Sandra Heelan took place in 2017 to ensure best practice and the policy was reviewed in 2017 by Assistant Principals.
- A review of this Policy took place in September 2020.
- The policy was reviewed in 2022 by Assistant Principals and deputy Principal.

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:

**Chairperson
Board of Management**

Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: 2023/2024



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: