

# **St. Caimin's Community School**

## **POLICY ON SUBSTANCE USE**

### **1. Statement of the School's Views on Substance Abuse**

For the purposes of this policy substance use refers to:

- a) Alcohol and tobacco,
- b) Illegal drugs.
- c) Illicit use of other substances e.g. sprays, solvents, chemicals, medicines and many other substances in daily use.

### **2. Scope of Policy**

This policy applies:

- a) to the whole school community during school time
- b) during school related activities
- c) to school users during school time

### **3. Morals and Values Framework**

School Mission Statement:

- a) In St. Caimin's Community School every person is valued equally in accordance with our Christian Tradition.
- b) Each person within the school community can enjoy developing to the fullest while feeling cared for and safe
- c) Our educational structures are ordered, based on tolerance, fairness and respect while sensitive to our changing world.

This philosophy is central to this policy document so that the aims of the mission statement can be fulfilled.

#### **4. Aims and Objectives of the Policy**

St. Caimin's has a role in the process of enabling individuals to increase control over and improve their health. The school endeavours to promote the well being of individuals by:

- a) Providing a policy with fair and transparent procedures for dealing with substance use issues and complying with our statutory requirements.
- b) Facilitating a safe and healthy environment.
- c) Promoting positive health behaviours through:
  - i. Increasing knowledge about health
  - ii. Promoting the self esteem of individuals
  - iii. Working with parents, students, teachers and outside agencies

#### **5. Consultation Process**

The following were represented in the committee, which drafted this policy:

Parents Association

Board of Management

Students

Staff

Mid-Western Health Board /SPHE Support Services (Facilitator)

#### **6. Substance Use Education**

##### **a) Students**

Education around substance use is best carried out within the overall context of a healthy living programme - Social Personal Health Education (SPHE).

A minimum of 12 SPHE periods during Junior Cycle will be dedicated to substance use education

Substance use education is a module in the Senior Cycle Programmes in this school

##### **b) Parents**

The Parents Association will organise substance education meetings as deemed appropriate. Parents/guardians concerned about substance use are invited to contact the school and will be referred to outside agencies as appropriate

##### **c) Teachers**

Teachers involved in SPHE are given the opportunity to avail of training in group facilitation skills and personal development where available. School

management will respond positively where requests are made by teachers for training in this area

### **7. Procedures for dealing with Substance Use Incidents**

- a) Definition of substance use incidents:
  - (i) Emergencies where the person may be unconscious
  - (ii) Intoxication/Unusual Behaviour.
  - (iii) Suspicion/rumour of substance use, possession or dealing
  - (iv) Disclosure of a person involved in substance by a third party.
  - (v) Possession of substances on the school premises or on a school related activity.
  - (vi) Selling/supplying legal or illegal substances.
  - (vii) Drug paraphernalia found on school property.
  
- b) Exceptions are:
  - (i) The correct and supervised use of cleaning agents and curriculum related materials or ingredients as specified by the staff member involved
  - (ii) Alcohol may be provided for adult use at special school events or occasions with the prior consent of school management.

### **8. Assessing and Managing Substance Use Incident**

- a) Where there is no immediate danger to the person(s), it is important to take time to assess the situation before responding.
- b) Complete a Substance Use Incident Form
- c) All cases of suspected or confirmed substance use /possession/supply incidents must be reported to Senior Management. The details relating to the incident will be recorded by the member of staff investigating it and acted upon by the Principal/Deputy Principal. The Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head will retain the documentation confidentially.
- d) People will be informed on a need to know basis.
- e) All cases will be handled sensitively and support will be offered.
- f) Where an individual with a substance use problem has been identified the school will encourage, arrange and facilitate counselling both internally and externally.

- g) The voluntary disclosure by a school member about his or her own problematic substance use will be treated as an approach for help and will not necessarily be subject to disciplinary procedures.
- h) If a person has a serious substance use problem, referral to a substance treatment centre will be recommended. The school may insist that the individual engages in treatment or rehabilitation as a condition of their continuing in the school.
- i) Where school rules regarding substance use are broken, sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. These are outlined below:

### **9.Sanctions for Substance Use**

- a) In line with the code of discipline of this school a graded system of firm and consistent sanctions up to and including exclusion will apply to students involved in substance use incidents.
- b) Students may also be required to enter into a behaviour contract guaranteeing compliance with school requirements and possibly attending for counselling.
- c) Pupils found with cigarettes will have them confiscated.
- d) If substances as defined in this policy aside from tobacco are found on the school premises two staff members will lock them away and the Gardaí may be contacted to dispose of them. An investigation by a designated teacher will be made into the origin of illicit drugs or alcohol found.
- e) Where the school suspects trafficking and/or supply of these substances as defined in this policy, the Principal/Deputy Principal/Designated Teacher will carry out an investigation. Parents/guardians of any student involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer/Community Garda will be sought.
- f) The school management will expect parents/guardians to inform the Principal or Year Head if they suspect their child of taking these substances.
- g) The Principal/Deputy Principal/Designated Teacher will monitor individuals suspected of taking these substances.

## **10. Confidentiality**

While every effort will be made to respect confidentiality, it is not possible to guarantee confidentiality to individuals in relation to substance use incidents, including disclosure of their own use.

Information may need to be shared, for example, with certain staff members, the parents/guardians of those involved, or with an appropriate external agency.

The limits of confidentiality should be explained to the individual prior to disclosure where possible.

Individuals who wish to speak to someone in confidence may ask a member of staff to put them in touch with an appropriate external agency.

## **11. Informing parents**

It will be standard practice to inform parents/guardians if their child is involved in a substance use incident.

Parent/guardian involvement and support is seen as essential in the resolution of these difficulties. Parents/guardians will be invited to the school to discuss what has happened and the student will be informed that their parents/guardians are being notified.

Parents/guardians may ask the school Principal or a member of staff to refer them to an appropriate agency should they wish to seek further support and information about external services

## **12. Informing Gardai**

Garda advice may be sought about incidents that are illegal and constitute a breach of this policy. This decision will rest with the Principal and other key staff.

## **13. Searches**

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. Two members of staff must be present during any form of search. Students will be given the option to handover any substance prior to a search. If a student refuses to co-operate, their parent/guardian will be called in and a Garda may be called to conduct a search of any school member should illegal activity be suspected.

*A teacher cannot carry out a personal physical search*

## **14. Disposal**

If substances in contravention of this policy are found on the school premises they will be locked away by two members of staff and the Gardai maybe contacted to dispose of them.

In the case of school tours the teacher in charge is responsible for the implementation of this policy and the Principal/Deputy Principal should be informed as soon as possible.

## **15. Dissemination**

All parents/guardians will receive a final copy of the policy by post. They are encouraged to discuss the policy with their son/daughter. In future years the policy will be added to the list of those available for parents to request. Students will be made aware of the policy through the substance use education programme. Parents of incoming students will be given a copy of the policy on registration. Staff will be aware of the policy through a special staff meeting, and thereafter through the staff handbook.

## **16. Procedure for Review, Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor and the staff delivering the S.P.H.E. programme assume the responsibility for monitoring the effective implementation of this policy.

Review and evaluation will be consistent with the whole school planning process

## **17. Implementation**

This policy is operational from \_\_\_\_\_ (DATE)

**Ratified by the Board of Management on**

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# Substance Use Incident Form

Name of Pupil\_\_\_\_\_

Class\_\_\_\_\_ Year\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_ Time\_\_\_\_\_

Teacher\_\_\_\_\_

Names of other Students involved\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Details of incident (brief)\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken:(*Warning, Sanctions, Counselling, Referral, Other*),

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed Student\_\_\_\_\_

Teacher\_\_\_\_\_

Parent\_\_\_\_\_

Suggestions for follow up:\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

