

Draft SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

SCOPE

- This document sets out the substance use policy of the school.
- The policy reflects the school's ethos and mission statement which is committed to the pursuit of excellence, encouraging students to develop their full academic and intellectual potential and to enhancing each student's sense of dignity and self-worth.
- The policy covers all aspects of substance use.
- The policy applies to all members of the school community.

Introduction

- The Patrician Academy is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school, including the needs of the individual, in relation to substance use. The policy has been drawn up and accepted by the Staff, Parents/Guardians, Board of Management and Students. It is essential 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 "Substance" means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally.
- In this policy "Staff" means teachers, Office staff and caretakers.
- The school recognises that Parents/Guardians have the primary responsibility in all areas of health education and as such play a pivotal role in implementing and supporting this policy.
- The School recognises that substances 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 substance related incidents.
- The School does not accept the illegal possession, use or supply of any substance, whether controlled or prescribed, in the school, adjacent to the school, on outside activities or in school related activities, by any member of the school community. This includes the possession, use and supply of alcohol, tobacco, ecigarettes or hallucinogenic substances.
- The School does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances.
- Students may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal appropriate use only as long as this does not contravene the school policy on substance use.
- Parents must inform the school if their son is taking prescribed medical drugs during the school day. Relevant staff will be informed.
- A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine.
- Chemicals in school laboratories are controlled substances and will only be handled under teachers' supervision. All chemicals will be stored securely.

RATIONALE

This policy is necessary to:

- Reflect societal change
- Comply with Circular 33/91 Discipline in Schools, Guidelines towards Positive Policy for School Behaviour.
- Comply with the Education Act 1998 which provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- Comply with Children First 2011 which emphasises that the welfare and protection of children is of paramount importance.
- Clarify procedures.
- Provide a reference point for parents, students and staff and the wider community.

GOALS / OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to:

- Set out strategies aimed at fostering a safe and healthy environment in the school including liaison and cooperation with outside agencies such as the Gardaí, Juvenile Liaison Officer, Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (C.A.M.H.S.) and National Educational Psychological Service (N.E.P.S.).
- Set out the procedures for dealing with substance use incidents.
- Provide educational and preventative programmes to students on a cross curricular basis and from outside agencies.
- Avoid and reduce substance misuse for the benefit of all.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

- All members of the school community will be aware of the policy and will be expected to adhere to it.
- The School is committed to providing a programme on Substance Use for all students. The programme aims to :
 - Increase the self-esteem and confidence of students.
 - Equip students with personal and social skills.
 - Enable students to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions.
 - Provide clear and age appropriate information on substance use including information on services available locally to support students.
 - Avoid and minimise the harm caused by substance abuse by offering supportive interventions.

To achieve these aims:

- Teachers are offered Drug Awareness training, SPHE training or any other relevant training.

- Guest speakers are used where appropriate to support and reinforce the work done in class.
- Parents/Guardians will be consulted regarding drug education programmes and will be informed of what is happening in the School.
- The programme on substance use will be delivered to students on a cross curricular basis where all teachers will use opportunities in their subject area to reinforce school policy and deal with relevant substance use issues. Teachers of SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) and of RE (Religious Education) will teach modules on substance use.

Managing a Substance Use Incident

It is acknowledge that in all situations involving substances, 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:

- Take time to listen and assess before responding.
- Separate fact from rumour. In situations of confirmed use or possession, act in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Complete a drug incident report.

Managing a drug incident

- A limited number of people are involved in all 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. They will be informed sensitively and support offered to them.
- In the case of illegal substances or suspected illegal substances the Principal or Deputy Principal will report the matter to the Gardaí for investigation.
- In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered.
- 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.
- 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 use related incident.

Disciplinary Procedures

Substance use incidents may be complex and in situations where there is a breach of the schools Code of Behaviour sanctions and punishments will be implemented in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff

- Comply with, support and implement the policy
- Inform the Principal/Deputy Principal if there are concerns.
- Complete an incident report when appropriate with reference to school's Code of Behaviour and Child Protection Procedures

Students

- Comply with and support the policy
- Report any concerns regarding substance use in the school

Principal/Deputy Principal

- Oversee the implementation of the policy.
- Create and foster links with external agencies.
- Be available for staff and students.

Parents/Guardians

- Support the school policy
- Inform the school if their son is taking prescribed medication.
- Report any concerns regarding substance use in the school.

4. Monitoring the Policy, Review and Evaluation

Bearing in mind that students' and staff needs are of paramount importance in the Substance Use Policy, The Principal/Deputy Principal will monitor the implementation of the policy.

The policy will be monitored, formally and informally, in staff meetings, by the Pastoral Care Committee and at Year Head meetings.

REVIEW PROCEDURE

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor and two Year Heads in consultation with the Parents Association, Staff and the Student Council.

Adopted by the Board of Management, May 26th 2015