



## **Scoil San Carlo S.N.S.**

### **SUBSTANCE USE POLICY**

#### **Introduction**

A drug can be defined as a chemical, which causes changes in the way the human body functions mentally, physically or emotionally. For the purpose of this policy we are concerned with drugs which have the power to affect a person's thoughts, behaviour or actions and drugs to which the taker may become physically or psychologically dependent.

#### **To whom does the Policy apply?**

This policy applies to students, teachers, auxiliary staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the building. It is applicable during school-time – including breaks and to ALL school related activities. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place, e.g. School Tour.

The school sees itself as having a role in the process of enabling students to increase control over and improve their health. We endeavour to promote the well being of students by: -

- 1. Providing a safe and healthy environment.**
- 2. Promoting positive health behaviours.**
- 3. Increasing knowledge about health.**
- 4. Promoting the self-esteem and self-awareness of students.**
- 5. Working in partnership with the parents and pupils.**

#### **Rationale**

##### **Why is this policy necessary?**

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which affect their health and well-being. 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 student cohort and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.

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 '*Building on Experience*' is now government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.

The school authority in Scoil San Carlo S.N.S has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.

## Prevention

### The Policy focuses on:

1. Strategies for prevention of substance misuse problems i.e. implementation of the Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) curriculum especially the "Walk Tall" programme.
2. Procedures for dealing with drug incidences in the school, should one arise.
3. Guidelines and information for teachers to improve their response to the problem of substance misuse.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour/Discipline policy of the school. Incidents relating to tobacco, alcohol and drug use or supply may result in suspension or expulsion of pupils.

## Implementation

### *The primary role of substance misuse prevention rests with the parents.*

Enrolment of pupils will be conditional on acceptance of this and other school policies by parents/guardians.

The school's shared understanding of a 'drug related incident' is:

- Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, or illegal drugs
- The sale or passing on of any illegal substance
- The possession of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs on school grounds or at school related activities
- Disposal of drugs or related items (e.g. syringes) found on school property.

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

**Step 1:** Witness to drug related incident informs teacher/staff member/Principal

**Step 2:** Principal inform parents/guardians

**Step 3:** Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management

**Step 4:** Health Service Executive (H.S.E.) referral made (please see Child Protection Policy)

**Step 5:** Gardai informed depending on seriousness of incident

**Step 6:** H.S.E informed for disposal of items.

## Smoking/Vaping

- The school is a non-smoking area. This applies to cigarettes and vaping devices.
- Students are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on the school premises or on school related activities.
- Visitors will comply with the no smoking policy.
- Pupils found smoking or in possession of cigarettes on school premises will be reported to the Principal and parents will be immediately informed. Students breaking these rules will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary procedure.
- Tobacco will not be permitted as a prize for school raffles.

## Alcohol

- The school is an alcohol free area.
- Pupils will not be allowed to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school activities.

- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of alcohol, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Where a student comes to school under the influence of alcohol, their parents will be called in to take them home.
- Students breaking these rules will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary procedure.

If alcohol is required for an adult only school function, permission shall be sought from the B.O.M.

#### **Illicit Drugs and Solvents**

- Students are forbidden to possess or use illicit drugs or solvents on the school premises.
- Illicit drugs found on school premises shall be locked away and the Gardaí contacted to dispose of them. Teachers are advised not to transport illicit substances at any time.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken. Parents/Guardians will be called to come immediately.
- Where the school suspects trafficking of illicit drugs, an investigation will be carried out. Parents of any student involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer will be sought and an investigation will be carried out.
- The school B.O.M. will expect parents to inform the Principal or teacher if they suspect their child of drug taking.

### **Management of Persons in the Workplace Under the Influence of Drugs and/or Alcohol**

The Board of Management shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that pupils and other persons in the workplace are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare from persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The term "in the workplace", in the preceding sentence includes all school related activities taking place under the supervision of a teacher, with the Board's approval, and both within and away from the school premises.

Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and of others. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of any contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a parent or adult collecting a pupil from school or presenting themselves on the premises for another reason is unfit to be on the premises or to take care of the said pupil, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal will be informed and the duty of care will apply to the pupil. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the pupil and safeguard their best interests.

In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove him/herself from the premises, the Gardaí may be called to remove the person in question.

The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers. An Employee Assistance Service (telephone: 1800 817 433 or [www.inspirewellbeing.org](http://www.inspirewellbeing.org)) is available to teaching staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service.

The Board of Management also acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all other staff members. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the non teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to seek counseling or other professional intervention.

All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded and reported as soon as possible to the Board of Management. The Board of Management shall consider all such reports and decide on the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

The final draft of the policy was circulated to staff members, Parent Association, and the general parent body for comment before being approved by the Board of Management.

It will be made available to parents/guardians and the wider community on the school website [www.scoilsancarlo.ie](http://www.scoilsancarlo.ie)

Ratified by the Board of Management on:

11/3/2024

Signed:

Tony B. O'Connell  
Chairperson Board of Management

Clare MacCarthy  
Principal