

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

Scope of Policy

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

It applies where staff are meeting in the school on official school business ie: planning days. Any exceptions must be discussed with the principal/ and or the Board of Management.

Substances in question include alcohol, tobacco (and any smoking related products, i.e. vaping products), solvents, aerosol deodorants, illegal drugs and prescribed drugs.

Aims of Policy

The aim of the substance use policy of Enable Ireland Sandymount School is primary prevention. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents and illegal substances. We aim to develop in our pupils' better self-esteem, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils age appropriate information from educational programmes.

Aims and Objectives

- To protect pupils
- To assist and provide guidance to the school personnel and management in protecting pupils, and in dealing with allegations/suspicions of substance abuse/misuse.
- To highlight procedure to be followed in the event of a drug related incident.
- To inform the school community with regard to substance abuse/misuse.
- To implement the Department of Education guidelines in formulating this policy.

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. The most important consideration taken into account in this policy is the protection of our students. 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 recent report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drug Use Prevention' (November 2017) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.



The BOM of Enable Ireland Sandymount School has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.

Our School

The Board of Management is fully aware of the specialist nature of our special school. It is aware that many of our pupils cannot access illegal substance. It is most unlikely that pupils could access illegal substances without assistance from other adults. The school, however, has established this policy to deal with most situations which may arise now or with the change of enrolment.

Implementation Procedures

Copies of the policy were distributed to Board of Management members for ratification in February 2022. When ratified, copies will be available on the school server for staff consultation and on our school website. Any member of the school community is welcome to ask for a paper copy of this policy.

- All staff members
- Parents' Association
- School Community on request

Monitoring and Review Procedures

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. A copy of this policy will be issued to all staff members and a reminder of its contents will be given at the first staff meeting of each year.

Policy Content

Education concerning substance abuse

Education concerning substance abuse will be provided within the context of the two-year school curriculum plan for Social, personal and Health Education.

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

Alcohol

The school is an alcohol free zone.

- Students are not permitted to drink or possess alcohol on the school premises or on any school related activity.
- Permission to serve alcohol for a school related activity (such as School Graduation) can be sought from the Board of Management if necessary.
- Members of staff who present for work in an intoxicated state will be asked to excuse themselves from work for the day and the Chairperson of the Board of Management informed. He/She will act in accordance with the Rules for National Schools with regard to this issue.
- Any parents collecting a child while clearly under the influence of alcohol and intending to drive home, will be advised that the school will seek the other parent or guardian listed on the school enrolment form, to drive the child home.

Tobacco

- The school is a non smoking zone.
- Students are not permitted to smoke or possess tobacco products on the premises or on any school related activity.
- Staff and visitors are not permitted to smoke on the premises or in the school grounds.



- Tobacco products (any smoking related products, i.e. vaping products) will not be used as prizes in school raffles.

Illegal Drugs/Solvents/Food/ Beverages

- Illicit drugs, solvents, certain food and certain beverages which affect the behaviour of students are not allowed on the premises.

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

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

Should a member of staff think that a pupil is under the influence of an illegal substance, the principal should be informed immediately and further action will then be decided.

Members of staff who present for work (in school or as a bus escort) under the influence of illegal substances will be asked to excuse themselves from work and the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed.

If any staff member or visitor to the school continuously violates the rules, the Board of Management and all relevant external authorities will be informed.

The Gardaí will be informed if it is suspected that any member of the school community is dealing in illegal drugs within the school campus.

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 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 Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers.

An Employee Assistance Service is available to teachers and SNAs.

- Freephone 1800 411 057
- SMS text 'Hi' to 087 145 2056
- Whatsapp 087 369 0010
- For information on services available follow link <https://vimeo.com/1011014143/2b4997b94e>

In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the school 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 counselling 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.

Procedures

Incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use are addressed in the school's Code of Behaviour and pupils may be suspended or expelled if involved in any drug related incident.

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: Gardaí informed depending on seriousness of incident



Step 5: Area Health Board informed for disposal of items

Parents will be involved by accepting the school's Code of Behaviour and Enrolment Policies. They will be informed of an incident involving their own child and will be asked to accept responsibility, co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardaí if necessary. The Gardaí will always be notified if any adult assists a pupil to obtain or use an illegal substance.

If parents are aware that another child is involved in drug-related incidents under the scope of this policy they should inform the teacher or Principal.

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Ratify and Implement the policy
- Monitor and evaluate it
- To provide training for staff members
- Make decisions involving critical incidents
- To deal with the media in the event of a critical incident.

This policy puts the following procedures in place to deal with an incident requiring medical intervention:

- 'Universal Precautions' will be applied; e.g. wearing of appropriate PPE etc., washing and making safe an area after an incident; provision of a yellow bin to dispose of needles or other unsuitable appliances
- The school nurses will respond to any medical emergency in the school
- Copies of all relevant phone numbers are listed in Appendix 1

The school has established an excellent rapport with the local community Garda and will invite representatives from the local Garda station to speak with senior pupils if appropriate. Whether or not to inform the Gardai of minor incidents will be at the discretion of the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management, but they will be involved in any serious substance abuse incidents.

At local level the following support agencies are available to which students involved in substance misuse might be referred:

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| National Drug and Alcohol helpline | 1800 459459 |
| Community Garda | 01 6669600 |
| Drug Education Officer | 016669600 |
| Juvenile Liaison Officer | 016669600 |

In the event of media interest in relation to a 'drug related incident', the matter will be referred to the Board of Management and the Chairperson will issue a prepared statement to the media.

Provision for Staff Training and Staff Development

There is ongoing commitment from the Board of Management to training and staff development. At present, the school is assisted in this at post-primary level by the SPHE Support Service and our local education centres such as Blackrock; and at primary level, by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme. Staff are encouraged to attend any available training in SPHE programmes such as the



“Walk Tall” programme. Following this training staff members are sufficiently aware of the laws relating to alcohol and to the pupils. New staff members are directed towards familiarisation with all policies relating to them school.

Provision of Parent Education

Parents will be made aware of the policy and it will be available on our school website.

Review and Ratification

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed:



Sé Goulding, Chairperson of Board of Management



Jennifer Doyle, Principal

Date: 4 July 2025



Appendix 1

Important Contact Numbers

The HSE National Drug and Treatment Centre 01 6488600
Trinity Court
30/31 Pearse Street
Dublin 2

Email: nationaldrugtreatmentcentre@healthmail.ie

Drugs/Alcohol/ AIDS Services: 1800 459 459
South Western Area Health Board
Bridge House
Ballyfermot
Dublin 10

helpline@hse.ie

