

St. Aidan's C.B.S. Substance Use Policy

Our school Mission Statement

St. Aidan's C.B.S. promotes the Edmund Rice Charter through nurturing *faith*, promoting *partnership*, excelling in *teaching*, creating *community* and inspiring *leadership*.



Our school

St. Aidan's C.B.S. is a voluntary secondary school for boys. We are located in north Dublin and we currently have an enrolment of over 700 students. Our school is a Catholic school operating under the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (E.R.S.T.). The characteristic spirit of our school is based on the vision and values of the E.R.S.T. Charter as outlined above in our mission statement. This is reflected in the operations of our school and in our school policies. In St. Aidan's C.B.S. we believe that effective communication structures are essential for the proper functioning of our school.

Rationale

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges that 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 students in this regard and how they might respond to issues appropriately that can be both sensitive and emotive.

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 2001-2008 and the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 set out a detailed programme of action to combat the problem of substance misuse in society in Ireland. These strategy documents, which are government policy, highlight the important contribution that schools can make in the area of education and prevention and require that a substance use policy be put in place.

St. Aidan's C.B.S., considering the above requirements, has designed a policy and a programme for substance use and misuse that suits the needs of our school with a particular focus on our own mission statement and school ethos.

Scope of this policy

To what will the policy apply?

The term 'substance' will be interpreted in a broad sense to include alcohol, tobacco, legal/illegal drugs and any other dangerous substances. Note: medication, which has been prescribed by a medical person for a student, should only be taken by that student.

To whom will the policy apply?

This policy addresses substance use issues mainly in respect of students. However, it also applies to all people employed by the school.

When will the policy apply?

This policy is in effect during school time (including break times), and at all school related events such as team training, sporting events, international/national school tours, and day trips.

What are the aims of our post-primary policy?

- To provide a programme of education for all students in substance use issues.
- To equip our school to deal with issues relating to substance use.
- To meet statutory responsibilities in the area of substance use.
- To reinforce the role of our school in contributing to local and national issues of substance use.
- To minimise the dangers caused to young people by substance misuse within schools/communities.
- To manage incidents of substance misuse in a consistent manner.
- To provide a framework of support for the stakeholders of our school.

Educational measures relating to substance use

Issues of substance use are addressed in the following ways:

1. Subject-based learning in a classroom setting:

- Social Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.).
- Relationship and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.)
- Leaving Certificate Applied (L.C.A.) Social Education module.
- Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (L.C.V.P.) Link Modules.
- The school's Religious Education (R.E.) programme at senior cycle.
- Leaving Certificate French and Irish in preparation for oral examinations and opinion questions.
- Leaving Certificate Economics in understanding the social and economic effects of substance abuse on the state.
- Classroom rules for subjects using certain dangerous substances such as Construction Studies, Science, Chemistry, Art etc.
- Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme.

2. Visiting speakers:

All guest speakers/external agencies to the school are approved by the principal and are undertaken in the presence of a teacher. Guest speakers and/or external agencies are made aware of the school ethos and are asked to ensure that the material is age appropriate. The programme must be provided in line with this ethos.

From time to time, the school, a subject department, and/or an individual teacher may invite a group or guest speaker to address issues relating to substance use. Such groups will deliver a talk or will organise an activity to support the school and its students in creating awareness of the dangers of substance use. Some examples of external agencies/guest speakers are listed below:

- An Garda Síochána
- Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland
- Rutland Centre
- Ballymun Drugs Project
- Accord

Visiting speakers on national curricula

Guest speakers and/or external agencies may be invited in to the school to support learning in specific areas of the national curricula that have or may have a substance use component. For example:

- S.P.H.E.
To provide extra information and to support classroom learning.
- L.C.V.P. Link Modules
To provide a personal and in-depth understanding to students in preparation for writing documents such as the Summary Report.
- R.S.E.
To enable students to understand more fully the effects that substance use can have on relationships.

Visiting speakers to support learning

Guest speakers and/or external agencies can also be invited in to the school to support further learning in the area of substance use. For example:

- Transition Year (T.Y.)
- School's R.E. programme at senior cycle

3. Pastoral care at school

Communication and/or support via:

- Monthly assemblies
- Year Head and Tutor system
- Guidance and counselling services
- Extra-curricular programme: sports coaching

Management of substance use related incidents

The school offers a range of educational and preventative measures relating to substance use/misuse. From time to time, incidents of substance use/misuse may occur. A student who is found to be engaging in substance use/misuse will be referred to a relevant staff member (for example, Year Head, Senior Management, school counselling personnel).

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use might include:

- Use or suspected use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco or other dangerous substances on the school premises or during a school related activity.
- Possession or supply of the above substances and/or associated paraphernalia on the school premises or during a school related activity.
- Disclosure about the use of the above substances.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Behaviour in its entirety. Specifically related to this topic it states that:

- students will agree not to smoke
- students will agree not to bring any prohibited substances into the school
- smoking on the school premises is illegal
- smoking seriously damages health
- banned/prohibited substances pose a risk to the safety of all

Incidents may require the use of sanctions. Sanctions are used not solely to punish a student, but more importantly to help the student to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable and help them to take responsibility for that behaviour. Sanctions are scaled so as to take account of the nature of the incident. For serious incidents of substance use, sanctions up to and including expulsion may be considered. (Please refer to our School Code of Behaviour for more detailed information on sanctions, the ladder of referral, suspensions, expulsions, and appeals).

The school may, when appropriate, apply sanctions in response to behaviour that occurs outside the school grounds and/or the school day.

Confidentiality

If a teacher becomes aware that a student is (or may be) at risk, the school's Designated Liaison Person (D.L.P) should be notified immediately. It is important that students are made aware of the limits of confidentiality. The wellbeing and welfare of the teacher and of the student must be the primary focus.

Agencies

Substance misuse issues are dealt with through the multi-agency approach. Among our contacts are:

- C.A.H.M.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Tusla (Child and Family Agency)
- Meitheal (Tusla support)
- N.E.P.S. (National Educational Psychological Service)
- Temple Street Children's Hospital
- The Strengthening Families Programme
- Y.A.P. (Youth Advocate Programmes)

Training and staff development relating to substance use

The school facilitates (P.D.S.T. or other approved organisations) training for staff involved in the teaching of S.P.H.E. Management are committed to upholding our Child Protection responsibilities and the appropriate training and certification is offered to staff. Fetac Level 5 First Aid training courses and updates are also offered to staff regularly.

Other relevant policies

Our School Code of Behaviour and Child Protection Safeguarding Statement may also contain important information regarding this policy. Please also familiarise yourself with these school policies.

Communication, involvement and dissemination

This policy was written by the Policy Co-ordinator. A shared document was created to gather information on this issue at the beginning of the process. A consultation process took place including communication with a 'working group' of teachers, and also the Principal and Deputy Principals. It was then shared with the rest of the staff (including S.P.H.E. teaching staff, the school Care Team, Programmes Co-ordinator, sports coaches, and the school Guidance Counsellor) Finally, it was shared with the Parents' Association and Students' Council.

Evaluation

We are committed to evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. Specifically important to that process is:

- Pupil feedback
- Staff feedback
- Parental feedback

Ratification

The Board of Management ratified this policy on 7th March 2019.

Review and Development

We are committed to the review and development of our school policies. As part of our ongoing review process, this policy will be examined to reflect feedback from our evaluation practices and to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.