



Substance Use Policy

Our Lady of Hope School

Armagh Road Crumlin Dublin 12 D12 V6RK

Rolla: 20555K
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Introduction

Our Lady of Hope School is a special school which caters for pupils with autism and complex needs. The school aims to provide a safe, secure and caring environment in which each pupil and staff member is valued and respected. The school is committed to addressing the needs of the school in relation to alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes and drugs and the procedures for managing incidents relating to these substances. The policy has been developed in line with the Mission Statement.

Rationale

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which affect their health and wellbeing. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes and drugs is part of this reality. The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of pupils and provide health education for them. The National Drugs Strategy '*Building on Experience*' requires schools to have a Substance Use Policy.

Our Lady of Hope School is committed to creating a caring and supportive environment which promotes the wellbeing of the school community. The school seeks to promote positive health behaviours and self-awareness regarding substance use and abuse and to offer support to those who experience difficulties. In addition, the school seeks to develop a shared understanding and agreed procedures among all the school partners and the wider community regarding this policy and to support teachers in the delivery of implementation of the programmes. This policy is consistent with the school's values and ethos.

Aims

The aims of the policy are:

- To ensure the welfare, care and protection of every pupil as provided for in the Education Act, 1998 and the Education Welfare Act, 2000.
- To provide pupils with skills, education and information on the dangers of drug misuse through engagement with the SPHE programme at all class levels.
- To manage the storage, use and administration of any prescribed medication to pupils.
- To establish procedures on dealing with substance abuse or possession incidents.
- To support parents, staff and pupils in addressing substance misuse.
- To ensure compliance with legislation.

Scope

This policy applies to pupils, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff, parents, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the building. Furthermore, the policy applies before, during and after school time including breaks, in the building and on the school grounds, on school trips/outings and at ALL school related activities.

The policy operates within a legislative framework and takes account of the following:

- Education Act 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Equal Status Act 2000
- Equality Act 2004
- Misuse of Drugs Act 1977 and 1984
- Misuse of Drugs Amendment Regulations 2007
- Intoxicating Liquor Act 2008
- Tobacco Smoking (Prohibition) Regulations 2003

Definition

The substance referred to in this policy denotes *'any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally.'* These include:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco/Nicotine/Vaping Products
- Medicines
- Over the counter (OTC) medicines
- Illegal drugs
- Solvents e.g. glue, Tipp-Ex, etc.
- Cleaning agents
- Gases
- Aerosols

The list is not exhaustive

Policy Statement

The school does not tolerate the possession, use of, or supply of banned or prohibited substance(s) drug paraphernalia, non-prescribed, behaviour altering, illegal substances or alcohol either in the school, or on school trips or during any school related activity both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time and including going to and coming from the school.

The only legitimate exception is the use of a prescribed drug in accordance with medical advice and prescription. Parents/guardians hereby agree to inform the school principal **in writing** when their child is on prescribed medicines.

Smoking and vaping is prohibited in the school building, on the school grounds, on school trips and/or any other school related activities. In accordance with the Public Health Tobacco Act 2002, it is **illegal** to smoke in the school building and/or the school grounds.

No member of staff shall give a pupil any prescribed or “over the counter” medication except in exceptional circumstances and with the prior consent of the parent.

Pupils may not give another pupil any prescribed or “over the counter” medication.

The policy focuses on four key areas:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Education Programme
2. Managing Substance Abuse Incidents
3. Training and Staff Development
4. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation Monitoring

1. Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Education Programme

The school promotes the belief that some substances are life-enhancing and life-saving and these are discussed with pupils. Self-respect, respect for others and for life is emphasised. The need to stay away from drugs that destroy is reinforced. Information on tobacco, alcohol and drugs is disseminated in an age-appropriate manner using lessons from the Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) programme.

The content objectives and methodologies used in the delivery of the Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) programme by the teachers in all classes address the areas of self-respect and safety. Within the four Strand Units - Self-Identity, Taking Care of My Body, Growing and Changing and Safety and Protection there are clear and comprehensive lessons appropriate to the different age groups. These lessons explore feelings, emotions and changes pupils might experience; they identify and distinguish between various substances, medicines, pills, solvents and recognise the functions of these; they examine risky behaviours and their consequences; the dangers of tobacco/nicotine/e-cigarettes and alcohol use are examined; substances and drugs that are harmful and illegal are identified and categorised; decision making and peer pressure and the reasons, attitudes, and choices people make are all discussed and explored; the importance of beliefs, values, and maintaining good communication are emphasised. All of these lessons are age-appropriate.

Pastoral Care, Religion, Science and Wellbeing classes will support and build upon the work undertaken in SPHE, Religion, Science, PE and Wellbeing.

As well as a comprehensive substance use programme in the school, there is a role for outside speakers where this is considered appropriate.

Parents/guardians acknowledge that these programmes are essential for the health and wellbeing of their child and that they as parents are in partnership with the school:

1. To inform pupils of the risks arising for them and for others from the abuse of Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs, Vaping, or any other Volatile Substances.
2. To enable pupils to make informed, healthy, and responsible decisions which will avoid the harm to themselves, their families and their communities that can arise from drug use or misuse, or abuse of alcohol or volatile substance abuse.
3. To equip pupils with the necessary personal and social skills to deal with the situations they will be presented or confronted with in relation to the abuse of those various substances.
4. To increase the self-esteem and confidence of the pupil.
5. To minimise the harm caused by the abuse of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs by offering supportive interventions, (where abuse does occur).

Accordingly, parents/guardians agree to support and assist the school with reference to the participation of their child in these educational programmes.

The school agrees that:

Parents/guardians will have access to information regarding these education programmes

The school will encourage and welcome ongoing consultation with parents/legal guardians, in relation to the best use of resources available in the community to support the school with these programmes and this policy.

2. Management of Substance Use Incident(s)

A Substance Use Incident

A substance use incident is defined as any incident relating to a banned or prohibited substances that occur in the school or during school activities or on outings/school trips or any such incident that may be deemed damaging to the health and welfare of the pupil concerned, to other pupils or to the reputation of the school. Our Lady of Hope School reserves the right to determine whether a specific incident constitutes a substance abuse incident to be addressed under the terms of this policy.

Definition of Substance Use Incidents

- Emergencies where the pupil may be unconscious
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour
- Suspicion/rumour of substance use, possession or dealing
- Disclosure of a pupil involved in substance use by a third party

- Possession of substances on school premises or on a school related activity
- Selling/supplying legal or illegal substances
- Drug paraphernalia found on school property

Investigation Procedure involving Pupil(s)

- A pupil considered to be involved a substance use incident, will immediately put into the care of the Principal or the Deputy Principal. The pupil's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be contacted and as a matter of urgency will be required to collect the pupil from the school. If necessary, medical attention will be sought for the pupil. A Substance Abuse Incident Report Form will be completed – **Appendix 1**.
- In any substance abuse incident, where it is apparent that there is a threat to health and safety of pupils or the school community, for example, pupil(s) found in possession of, or providing others with, illegal drugs, the Board of Management reserves the right to temporarily suspend or remove any pupil(s) involved from the school premises and/or from any specific school activities, or take whatever other action is deemed appropriate and necessary to remove the said risk, pending further investigation. A drug test may be requested on the grounds of health and safety.
- Our Lady of Hope School will take all steps necessary to fully investigate and assess any substance use incident. In the event of an incident, the school will seek statements from all persons involved in, concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident and will record these statements.
- The school will take immediate possession of any 'Banned or Prohibited Substances' or any 'drug paraphernalia' found in connection with the incident(s) and will retain same pending advice from the Gardaí regarding the possession of, or the providing of others with, illegal drugs. Where the school authority is to part with the possession of the said items, Our Lady of Hope School will take (and maintain) a record of all items that came into its possession, for the purposes of this investigation.
- The school will inform, liaise and consult with the Gardaí regarding all school incidents involving illegal substances.
- The school will investigate and consider the appropriate sanction(s) in accordance with the Code of Behaviour and disciplinary procedures where there is possession, provision, acquisition, use or consumption of tobacco, e-cigarettes, alcohol, drugs of any kind (not administered in the course of medical treatment) or solvents.
- If the school considers the pupil(s) to be at risk as a result of their involvement with such substances, it may require that the pupil attend for professional assessment and/or counselling.
- The school will retain all records relevant to investigation of any incident(s).

- The school will, at its own discretion, in an appropriate case, liaise with any appropriate outside authorities, such as Gardaí or HSE and may seek their advice or assistance as the school deems appropriate in the circumstances of the specific substance abuse incident(s).
- The school may, at its discretion, seek any professional or expert advice or assistance it deems appropriate and necessary to deal satisfactorily with a specific Substance Abuse Incident(s). If deemed necessary by the Principal, the school will offer pastoral support to the pupil(s) and parents/legal guardians affected by an incident of substance abuse. The school recognises that substance abuse incidents can be sometimes traumatic for those involved and the services of counsellor will be made available. External sources of support may also be recommended.
- The school may require that a pupil who has been suspended following an incident of substance abuse, attend external counselling, attend ongoing testing for drug abuse or attend an addiction programme proposed by the school.
- The Principal is responsible for informing all relevant parties regarding the investigation.

Disciplinary Procedures

Substance use incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions will be imposed in accordance with the Code of Behaviour up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

Managing Substance Related Incidents in the Workplace

- The Board of Management shall ensure, in 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 and special needs assistant with the approval of the board of management, and both within and away from the school premises.
- Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that he/she is not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.
- If the principal has reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the principal shall ask that person to remove themselves 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.
- If the principal has reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of a contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the principal shall request the contractor to remove their 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 make a report to the principal, who will request the person to remove themselves from the school premises.
- 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 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 and/or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove themselves from the premises, the principal will liaise with the Gardaí.
- The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of staff. An Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is available to all staff (*teaching and non-teaching*). 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. **Appendix 4**
- All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded and reported to the Board of Management.
- The Board of Management shall consider all such reports and will decide on the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

4. Training and Staff Development

Staff

The school will make available training to staff, appropriate to their role, including those involved in: delivering alcohol, tobacco and drug education programmes; and the identification, management and investigation of abuse incidents.

Parents/Guardians and prescribed medication

Our Lady of Hope School will provide opportunities to inform parents/legal guardians and Board of Management on issues relating to substance abuse and the school policy on substance use.

The school will endeavour to support parents/legal guardians who find they have an issue in this area.

Parents of pupils taking prescribed medication will inform the school **in writing** and are encouraged assist the school regarding any medical issues.

Staff shall not administer any medication and/or over the over-the-counter medications to a pupil without **parental approval and permission from the Principal.**

It is recognised that in some situations, pupils with long term recurring health problems such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes etc. may be accommodated within the school through the **Administration of Medicine Policy** to pupils by staff members. However, the administration of medicine to pupils in this manner will only be made on an individual basis following consultation with the Principal and written instructions from parents, together with a medical report from the pupil's medical practitioner.

In the case where a pupil is suffering from an illness which may necessitate emergency care at the school, parents should consult with the Principal and should outline clearly in writing what action the school is permitted to take in an emergency situation, and whether the school should hold and administer medication to the pupil. The school will also require a medical report from the pupil's medical practitioner.

Board of Management

The school will also provide at the appropriate stage, information, guidance and professional support (as necessary) for the Board of Management in relation to adjudication on and investigation of Abuse Incidents; and all related matters such as confidentiality, handling of relationships with all relevant outside agencies, dealings with Appeals, the Educational Welfare Officer and compliance with all relevant statutory and regulatory requirements.

Pupils

The school will provide alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug education programmes within the context of the Primary School, Junior Cycle, Transition Year and Senior Cycle programmes.

5. Links to other policies

This policy shall be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Administration of Medication Policy

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Critical Incident Management Plan
- Health and Safety Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Stay Safe Policy

6. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation Monitoring

The school will monitor aspects of the policy to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the school community.

The three areas monitored are:

- Substance Education Programme
- Managing Substance Related Incidents
- Pupil, Parent, Staff and Management Training

Communication of the Policy

Pupils will be made aware of the policy with the context of the SPHE curriculum. Copies of the policy will be circulated to all members of staff, Board of Management, pupils, and their parents/guardians.

Review and Evaluation

The school will monitor, review and evaluate the policy on an ongoing basis. The Board of Management will review the policy every two years.

Signed:



Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 05.03.2024

Next Review: March 2026

Appendix 1: Report Form for recording Substance Use Incidents involving Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs

Date: _____

Name of Teacher(s): _____

Name of Pupil(s): _____

What happened? Include only the facts What was seen? What was said? Who was involved?

What are your concerns? Is this incident related to others? Do you have suspicions aroused by the incident?

Who has been informed?

What actions have been taken?

What further action is necessary?

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix 2 Definitions

The School

The “School” includes the school buildings, grounds, play areas, public areas where pupils congregate coming to and going home from school and any other specific area that might apply.

Banned and Prohibited Substances

A banned or prohibitive substance includes all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1977 and 1984, non-validated prescription medication, all alcohol and tobaccos used contract to the law of the land.

Drugs include: alcohol and tobacco, over the counter medicines such as paracetamol, codeine, prescribed drugs such as antibiotics, tranquillisers, inhalers, Ritalin, volatile substances such as correcting fluids/thinners, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues, petrol, controlled drugs such as cannabis, LSD, ecstasy, amphetamine, sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms (processed), heroin, cocaine, other substances such as amyl/butyl nitrite (poppers) and legal highs as well as performance enhancing drugs. All other substances construed as legal highs under current and future legislation.

Drug Paraphernalia

Drug paraphernalia includes any banned or prohibited substance as defined above, any item that may be deemed to be used in the taking of illicit substances, and any written or printed material promoting the use of illicit substances.

Appendix 3 References and Advice

A parent's guide to young people and drug and alcohol misuse available: www.drugs.ie

Citizens Information: www.citizensinformation.ie

Health Services Executive www.hse.ie

National Smokers Quit line www.quit.ie

Straight Talk: A useful guide for parents on how to deal with teenage alcohol use

Know the Facts About Drugs: www.healthpromotion.ie

Appendix 4 Employee Assistance Services (EAS)

The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) '*Wellbeing Together: Folláine le Chéile*' is available to all staff (teaching and non-teaching) and other employees of the Board of Management.

The EAS provides advice to employees on a range of issues including wellbeing, legal, financial, bereavement, conflict, mediation etc. Where appropriate, short-term counselling is available to employees and their family members.

The EAS also provides advice and support to managers and delivers interventions to help them deal with health and wellbeing issues in the workplace.

The EAS is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The contact details for the Employee Assistance Service is:

- **Freephone:** 180041157
- **SMS and WhatsApp:** text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010