



St Gerald's DLS College
Policy on Substance Abuse

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1.0: Introduction by the Board of Management

This policy was devised in consultation with all the teaching staff in our school. It was submitted to the Board of Management. It is being reviewed as part of the School Development Planning Process.

In devising this policy, we have given great consideration to the democratic and child-centered principles of this school. The establishment of a sound learning environment at school and classroom level is critical to effective learning and teaching.

2.0: School Ethos

“St Gerald’s DLS College is a Lasallian Centre and the mission of the school is to give a human and Christian Education to the young, with special concern for the disadvantaged”.

3.0: Rationale

- Drugs and their misuse is an area of concern for parents, teachers, and students.
- The prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and drug misuse in modern society and its growth among young people pose challenges and opportunities for the school community as an important social partner in providing drug awareness and education.
- As a Le Chéile school we are constantly striving to realise the ideal of Education in line with the Le Chéile
- Charter and the De La Salle Ethos. St. Gerald’s DLS College is a place where students feel safe and cared for, where the individual is respected both as a person in his/her own right but also as an integral part of a larger learning community, where justice and fairness are mediated in its structures and procedures.
- This holistic approach to education and the communal context in which it takes place underpins our policy on Substance Abuse. This policy sets out the framework within which the whole school community – teachers, parents, students and Board of Management – manages issues relating to substance abuse. The formulation of this policy has involved and included the whole school community
- The Education Act 1998 requires schools to promote the social and personal education of students and provide health education for them.



4.0: Scope and Objectives

The Substance Use Policy applies to the entire school community including teachers, students, parents/guardians and users of the school building

1. The policy is designed primarily to educate and protect and is seen as part of a larger pastoral effort by the school to ensure the wellbeing and Christian formation of our students.
2. The welfare, care and protection of every person in the school in line with the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008.
3. To address education relating to tobacco, alcohol and drug use through a planned and developmental education programme offered to every student and set within the context of the SPHE programme.
4. The use of pastoral principles and practice along with fair and consistent actions and disciplinary procedures in managing drug-related incidents.
5. A commitment to training for staff, parents and the Board of Management and to reviewing the policy on a regular basis.

5.0: Definitions:

5.1: ‘The School’

‘The School’ includes school buildings, grounds, play/sports areas and public areas where students congregate coming to and going from school.

5.2: ‘Banned/Prohibited’

This term includes all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non-validated prescription medication, all alcohol and tobacco substances used contrary to the law of the land. The School reserves the right to determine that a substance found at school qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance.

5.3: ‘Paraphernalia’

This includes any banned or prohibited substance as defined above, any items 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.

5.4: ‘Abuse Incident’

The School reserves the right to determine whether a specific incident constitutes an abuse incident to be addressed under the terms of the policy.

5.5: ‘Parents’

For the purposes of the policy, parents are defined to include natural parents, foster parents, step parents or guardians of the student concerned as applicable, or any person acting in loco parentis, either on a temporary or permanent basis, on the date of the abuse incident.

5.6: Principal

In the policy, reference to the Principal should be taken to mean the Principal for the time being as appointed by the school and defined in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 or the Deputy Principal where the Principal is either unavailable or has delegated to the Deputy Principal.

6.0: School Position on Prohibited Drugs

- St. Gerald’s DLS College does not accept or tolerate the possession, use or supply of banned or prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia by any student in the School, on school trips and outings or during any school-related activity.
- Medically prescribed drugs may be used provided in the following circumstances:
 - Teachers/Staff are not personally obliged to administer medicines. It is recognised that children with long-term recurring health problems such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes etc. be accommodated within the school.
 - Proper procedures for the administration of such medicines must be made. Parents /guardians are to be encouraged to provide maximum support and assistance in helping the school accommodate such students. This would include measures such as self-medication where necessary and only after approval from a GP/consultant or under parental supervision.



- In the case where a student is suffering from a life-threatening illness, parents/guardians should consult with the Principal/Deputy Principal and should outline clearly in writing what may and may not be done in a particular emergency situation with particular reference to what may be at risk to the student. This must be backed up with a letter from the GP/consultant caring for the student. In the case of medical emergencies where staff have been given medication to administer, only the smallest dose possible to ensure recovery, until a medical expert can take over, should be provided for administration. Confirmation of this should be obtained from the GP responsible for the child in question before the school would agree to hold such life-saving medication in its care.
- No member of staff has the authority to administer any other medication or over the shelf painkillers to a student without parental approval and permission from the Principal.

7.0: Education Programmes

- The School will provide, in so far as its resources will allow, appropriate education in the area of health education and substance use for all students.
- This education will be provided in the context of S.P.H.E., Religious Education, Science, C.S.P.E., and other relevant subject areas.
- Contributions from parents, parties with relevant expertise and experience and relevant outside agencies will be encouraged and facilitated by the School, provided that such contributions complement the School's approach, values, and ethos.
- Drug Awareness and other relevant programmes will be offered to parents and teachers of the School when opportunities to do so arise and the School's resources permit.
- Guidelines and agreed procedures for the management of drugs-related incidents will be issued to all staff members.



8.0: Role of Key Stakeholders

8.1: Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Acknowledge the importance of the School's Substance Use Policy.
- Recognise that they are in partnership with the School about informing and educating their children regarding substance use.
- Assist and co-operate fully with the School as it seeks to deal with drugs and alcohol-related incidents.
- Contribute to the formation and review of the School's Substance Policy.

8.2: Students

1. The Student Council should, where possible, be consulted on awareness campaigns that are being organised by school staff/management.
2. The Student Council will endeavour to organise/help in the organisation of one day of Drugs Awareness Campaign each year (in consultation with school management).
3. The Mental Health Helplines will be redesigned by the 2018 / 2019 Student Council, to include Drugs Awareness helplines etc. (Back of toilets / classrooms)
4. The link for this information will be included on the school website page / School Facebook page and the SGC App.

9.0: Managing Drugs and Alcohol-Related Incidents

In the event of a substance abuse incident, the School will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student(s) involved and the welfare of the school community as a whole and the reputation of the School.

9.1: Procedure

- Where it is apparent that there is an immediate danger to students or the school community, the School reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the School any students involved in a suspected abuse incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident.



- An ‘Abuse Incident Report Form’ will be completed.
- The School will take all the steps required to investigate and assess any abuse incident fully and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this.
- The School will take possession of any banned substances and drug paraphernalia associated with an abuse incident, carefully recording all such items and retaining them securely pending completion of the investigation unless otherwise instructed by appropriate outside agencies. Subject to the JMB ‘right to search’ protocols.
- In the event of an incident, the School will seek statements from all persons involved with or concerned with or knowing about the incident and will record these statements.

9.2: Record Keeping

The School will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of the incident, including records referred to in the above steps, communications with other people or agencies involved in or concerned with the matters under investigation, the investigation outcome, decisions taken and the rationale for these decisions, any penalties or disciplinary measures imposed following an investigation and the management and outcome of any appeal that may arise following an investigation.

9.3: Confidentiality

It is the aim of the School to involve, as far as is practicable, only those persons properly concerned with an incident when investigating and managing an abuse incident. It is important that students and parents accept that:

- The duties of teachers and staff to the school community preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any students when they come in contact with an abuse incident or suspected abuse incident.
- The School may be required to contact an appropriate outside authority such as the Gardai, Health Board, Probation Service or officers of the Courts.
- The School may need to engage the expert assistance of an appropriate third party to properly investigate an incident.
- The School may be duty bound to notify certain persons about an incident and/or the



outcome of an incident investigation under statute, regulations or D.E.S. guidelines.

9.4: Keeping Parties Informed

If the circumstances merit and an investigation are continuing, the School will put the full particulars of the incident to the students concerned and their parents in the following manner:

- Copies of all records deemed relevant to the student concerned and to the nature of the complaints or allegations that a student is facing will be made available to the student and his/her parents – at the discretion of the School – in time to permit the student a reasonable opportunity to make his own reply to the matters at issue and any representations that he/she would wish to make or have made on his behalf.
- The School will allow the student concerned and his/her parents reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. The School will take into account any response so made and any other relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.
- The School shall shortly thereafter inform the student and his/her parents of the School's findings and their reasons for these. If the School finds that the student has been guilty of or involved or implicated in an incident, it shall indicate the penalty or sanctions it intends to impose in the circumstances.
- In the case of a suspected abuse incident, the School will inform parents, particularly where there is concern regarding the health and welfare of a student, and share any information that may help parents to attend to the health and well-being of their child/children.
- The School will keep students informed of what is happening and why.
- Such actions will be undertaken without prejudice to the School's separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage any abuse incident.

9.5: Disciplinary Procedures and Sanctions

In relation to a verified and investigated incident, the Board of Management may implement disciplinary actions or sanctions in accordance with the School's code of Conduct. The School can, at its sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of



mitigating circumstances or representations that it considers should be taken into account.

The School will endeavour to offer pastoral supports to the students and parents affected by an incident of substance abuse.

9.6: Media Inquiries

The School will not comment on any individual matter when an investigation is in progress other than to outline its policy and procedures for managing incidents. In the interests of the School's reputation, the Board of management may clarify the School's position regarding an incident after the investigation has been completed.

10.0: The Role of the Principal

The Principal or his/her nominee is responsible for dealing with abuse incidents arising in the School.

- All reports of abuse incidents or suspected incidents must be reported to the Principal.
- The principal makes all decisions regarding investigation of the incident, communication with, liaison with and reporting to relevant parties and disclosure of information regarding investigation.
- The Principal is responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed regarding investigation developments.
- The Principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any written documentation and records associated with an incident.
- The Principal is responsible for taking possession of any banned or prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia and deciding what should be done with same upon appropriate advice.
- The Principal may seek assistance of the Deputy Principal, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor or other relevant school personnel in conducting an incident investigation

11.0: Monitoring

The Principal will liaise with the Deputy Principal and relevant Leadership and Management teachers in monitoring the implementation of the policy.



12.0: Implementation

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on: 15-Jan-2019

The implementation of this policy will be consistent with the whole school planning process.

Signed: *Brendan Forde*

Brendan Forde

Chairperson of BoM

Signed: *Daniel Hyland*

Daniel Hyland

Secretary of BoM

Date of next review: September 2020