

ST. PETER'S COLLEGE, WEXFORD

SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

DRAFT: Oct 2004

Introduction to the Policy

The School Position

St. Peter's College Wexford is a health promoting school and is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs.

We believe that students, teachers, parents and the Board of Management need to work together and that co-operation is essential to the acceptance and implementation of this policy.

In drawing up this policy, representatives, randomly chosen, of all the partners in this community were consulted.

For the purposes of this policy a drug is:

**ANY SUBSTANCE WHICH CHANGES
THE WAY THE BODY FUNCTIONS, MENTALLY, PHYSICALLY, OR
EMOTIONALLY**

As well as the whole range of illegal substances this includes over the counter and prescribed medicines, tobacco, alcohol and solvents.

The school acknowledges that it has an important role to play in drugs education especially in terms of prevention. This school also recognises that drugs – both legal and illegal – are available in the local community and that the school being part of this community may have drug incidents. These will be handled in a sensitive and consistent manner with the welfare, care and protection of the students and the school community as its central concern.

This policy applies to students, teachers, parents, the Board of Management and all visitors to the school.

The Ethos of St. Peter's College

Mission Statement

St. Peter's College is a community working together to promote and develop a learning environment where students can reach their full potential by participating in a person centred, holistic and Christian education, that will equip them to serve society as good citizens.

School Ethos

St. Peter's College is a Diocesan Secondary School dedicated to the education of boys. It is central to the purpose of St. Peter's College to promote Christian values. It provides a catholic education where truth, honesty and justice are promoted among the school community. The pursuit of academic excellence is integrated with the personal, social, emotional, physical and spiritual development of the child. The school works in close liaison with parents in providing a well-balanced integrated person-centred education.

Parents/Guardians subscribe to the Christian/Catholic philosophy of the school when they freely choose to send their children to the college. In St. Peter's College there is a genuine attempt on the part of all to create a school community, of equality, fairness and care which is the hallmark of the true follower of Christ.

This philosophy underpins and informs all the work we do and is central to this policy document.

The Use of Drugs in St. Peter's College

St. Peter's College does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the school, or on school related activities. The school must be informed where a student needs to use drugs for legitimate medical purposes.

This policy is focused on four key areas:-

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes
2. Managing Drug Related Incidents
3. Training and Staff Development
4. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes

The Position of St. Peter's College

This school is committed to providing a drug education programme for all students, which at Junior Cycle level will be incorporated into the Social, Personal Health Education Programme (SPHE). At Senior Cycle level this will be incorporated into the Religious Education programme for the present, informal Guest Speakers and Talks.

Our education aims in relation to Drug Education are:

- To increase the self esteem and confidence of our students
- To enable our students to make informed, healthy and responsible choices
- To provide honest and age-appropriate information on drugs
- To minimise any harm which might be caused by involvement in a drug incident by offering supportive interventions

These aims will be met through the following actions:

- Teaching S.P.H.E. R.E. Classes and through cross-curricular activities e.g. Science Classes. .
- Teachers will be offered Drug Information and Drug Awareness training through Seminars, Staff Days and In-Service.

Outside Speakers

We believe that trained teachers are in the best position to carry out drug education but sometimes it may be appropriate to use an outside speaker to supplement or reinforce the work done in class.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians who attend the year group meetings will be made aware and informed of what is happening in the school with regard to drug education. Parents/Guardians will be informed on a yearly basis on the need for drug education.

2. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

The Approach in St. Peter's College

We acknowledge that in all situations involving drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the student, the needs of the school community and the reputation of the school.

As with all situations, listening, separating fact from perception will be the school's initial approach. Disciplinary procedures detailed below will be enforced and expulsion will be considered as an option where school rules are broken. Procedures are in place and outlined below to handle specific drug incidents.

Drug Incidents

The following are examples of a drug incident:

- Intoxication/unusual behaviour
- Suspicion/rumour of drug use, possession or dealing
- Disclosure by another person

- Failure to disclose knowledge of a drug incident to the appropriate authorities
- Possession of a legal/illegal drug on the school premises or on a school related activity
- Selling/Supplying legal/illegal drugs
- Person seeking help from a member of staff
- School grounds being used for drug activity
- Drug paraphernalia found on school property
- Misuse of aerosols, including spray deodorants
- Possession of Tippex thinners, petrol, lighters, or any other solvent.
- Possession of steroids, stimulants, etc.

Assessing a Drug Incident

Where there is an immediate danger the Emergency Services will be contacted without hesitation - (Phone 999 and request an ambulance) and the **Principal/Deputy Principal /Year Head** informed. **Parents/Guardians** should be informed as soon as possible. In all cases where there is no immediate danger to the student(s), it is important to assess the situation thoroughly.

Incident Report Forms should be completed and given to the Principal/Deputy Principal where applicable.

Do Not Panic!
Assess the situation, is acute medical intervention necessary?
Deal only with the facts!

Confidentiality

The prime focus in any incident is the well being of the students, the teacher and the reputation of the school. Teachers can never offer total confidentiality. The need for care in this area is recognised as the student may approach a teacher because they trust her/him and need help. How this situation is handled will have an important bearing on the outcome. Information will remain private and only disclosed strictly on a “need to know” basis. The student will be informed about what is happening and why.

St. Peter’s College recognises that the issue of confidentiality is complex. It is preferable that confidentiality and its limits are discussed before an incident arises and this issue will be introduced in SPHE.

Recording Procedures

All staff will receive training so as to be aware of the signs of drug use. Insofar as possible staff is always alert to changes in behaviour. Adolescence is a period of great change and rumour will not be taken as evidence of drug use.

In situations of confirmed possession/use/distribution, all details will be recorded and acted upon. A written recording procedure will be used to ensure that a fair process of challenging the student about behaviour of concern is in place.

Contd...../

Managing a Drug Incident

It is important that in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents that a limited number of people are involved in managing the incident. People will be informed on a “Need to Know” basis.

The Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head and person(s) directly involved in the case will be informed and all written documentation will be held confidentially by the Principal.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians will always be involved if there is a substance misuse incident in the school. In the case of tobacco the parents/guardians will be involved after a preliminary investigation. In all other cases involvement will be immediate. This will be handled in a sensitive manner and whenever possible support will be offered. The School Chaplain may be involved in a pastoral role.

Gardai

It is agreed that the Principal or a designated person will contact the Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) in the event of a confirmed incident involving illicit substances (drugs) and any drugs found on the premises will be dealt with by the JLO.

Counselling and Pastoral Care

The pastoral care of all - students, parents/guardians, staff – involved with a drug incident must be a primary concern. In response to all incidents pastoral support will be offered and in some cases referral to a substance misuse counsellor may be required.

The Media

A drug incident in a school can draw adverse media attention. The Principal or his / her representative will act as spokesperson. No comment will be offered on individual cases but clarification where necessary will be given, for example: ***“The school has a policy in place to deal with any substance misuse related incidents and in all cases the appropriate support services will be provided or accessed”.***

Disciplinary Procedures

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding substance misuse are broken, the following sanctions and punishments may be implemented.

Any student found **smoking/drinking/using illicit substances** or in **possession** of cigarettes/alcohol/illicit substances, will be dealt with under the School's Code of Behaviour.

More serious sanctions, up to and including expulsion will be considered for repeated offences.

The school may ask that other agencies be involved once confirmation of an incident has taken place. i.e. drug testing, counselling, Health Board, G.P.

Administration of Medicines

An increasing number of students are being prescribed a range of medications during the school day. It is the parents/guardians responsibility to inform the school authorities and make the necessary arrangements for any administration of medicines. All asthma sufferers are expected to be independent inhaler users.

3 Information

The Board of Management of St. Peter's College will provide ongoing information through Staff Days and Seminars. Up to date information will be made available to the whole school community.

Staff

- Designated teachers will receive information
- First-Aid training will be made available to designated staff.

Parents/Guardians and Board of Management

- The school will continue to provide opportunities to attend information evenings and Talks on issues relating to drugs and the school policy. As part of the induction for parents/guardians of students new to the school this policy will be examined in detail.

Students

- St. Peter's College will continue to offer all its students drug education programmes within the context of their SPHE classes and other classes.

4. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation of this Substance Misuse Policy

Monitoring

Monitoring this drug policy is an ongoing process, which will take place on a regular basis. The School Authorities will monitor the policy annually to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the school.

Contd...../

The three areas are:

- Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents
- Parent, Staff and Management Training

The results of the monitoring will be recorded and made available in the school office.

Review

The Working Group has equal representation of Staff, Students, Parents, and Board of Management, and is chaired by the Principal. Review will take place in consultation with the wider school community.

Evaluation

Teachers, Parents, Students and Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for one year. Any changes will be incorporated into the amended policy.

Three main areas of the policy to be evaluated are:

- Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents
- Parents, Staff, Management Training and Speakers

Dissemination of Policy

Copies of this policy will be disseminated to all in the school community. It will also be freely available from the Principal or Secretary's Offices. It will be given to all new staff and parents/guardians of new children as part of their induction to the school. Students will be made aware of this policy as part of their drugs education within the context of the SPHE Programme.

Passed by the B.O.M December 2004