



Stonepark NS  
Longford  
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November 2016

## **Substance Use Policy.**

### **Introductory Statement.**

This policy was drawn up by the Staff of Stonepark NS.  
It was discussed by the Board of Management and its views and contributions are incorporated in the final draft of the policy.

### **What is a Substance Use Policy?**

A Substance Use Policy sets out in writing the framework within which the whole school community manages issues relating to substance use.

### **Rationale.**

- The school authority has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.
- The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges which affect their health and well being. The school has a role to play in providing for the needs of its pupils and in fostering in them the skills they may need to cope with these challenges.
- The Social Personal and Health Education curriculum, of which substance misuse prevention education is an integral part, is a mandatory subject on the primary curriculum and must be taught to all primary pupils from junior infants to sixth class (DES Circular 022/2010).
- The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- The National Drug Strategy “Building on Experience” is now Government policy and it requires schools to have a Substance Use policy in place.
- Action 21 of the National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 mandates the Department of Education and Skills to monitor the implementation of substance use policies in schools through the whole school evaluation process as operated by the Inspectorate. It is also mandated to ensure that best practice is disseminated to all schools
- Studies highlight the seriousness of the problem among sixteen year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 29 ESPAD countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug misused in Ireland whilst the use of tobacco and other drugs was above the ESPAD average.



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## **Vision**

This Substance Use policy as devised seeks to reflect the Christian ethos, which guides our school and community. See mission Statement

## **Scope of Policy.**

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

## **Aims.**

The policy is intended to:

- Equip the pupils of Stonepark NS with skills necessary to cope with societal pressures they may encounter.
- Promote an awareness of substances – mainly alcohol and tobacco – and in the Senior Classes, drugs both prescription and illegal and to foster positive values and attitudes.
- Create a safe environment for all our pupils.
- Develop safe practice and a structure for managing critical incidents.
- Involve parents and the wider community.

## **Definition of a Drug**

A drug is any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. This description includes many substances we normally think of as drugs as well as substances we might not usually consider to be drugs such as coffee, tea, alcohol, solvents and tobacco (Corrigan, 2003 cited in Best Practice Guidelines in Substance Misuse Prevention Education 2010).

## **Content.**

### **1) Education.**

It is envisaged that the role of the teaching staff will primarily be one of educating pupils in this area. There is an emphasis on the promotion of self esteem, assertiveness, respect for self and others and a healthy respect for medicine/drugs. The primary resource used for the delivery is Substance Misuse Prevention Education at all class levels is the 'Walk Tall' Programme.



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Currently the following programmes are being followed and the issues associated with Substance use will be dealt with within these parameters:

SPHE → Walk Tall.  
Stay Safe.  
R.S.E.  
Alive O.

Parents are informed of talks and seminars held locally.

The school ensures compliance with the Best Practice guidelines in the delivery of Substance Misuse Prevention Education in line with DES Circular 0022/2010

## **2) Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents.**

The issue of safety is being addressed within the Code of Behaviour  
The school also has a policy on the Administration of Medicine.

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

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

## **3) 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

## **4) The following strategies will be employed:**

- Information is collated through observation, investigation, recording and/or appropriate reporting of an incident.
- Appropriate action is taken in line with agreed procedures in the Code of Behaviour.
- Safety will be the primary concern governing all actions in these cases. Due consideration will be taken of the need to achieve a balance between a disciplinary and pastoral/restorative approach. A pastoral response may include referral to an appropriate agency. While taking into account issues



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relating to confidentiality in some instances it may be necessary to liaise with and seek the advice of outside agencies.

**5) How will parents be involved in incidents involving their own child?**

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.

**6) How will parents be involved in incidents relating to another child?**

Parents will be involved in incidents involving another child only if deemed necessary by the school authorities; if parents are aware that another child is involved in drug-related incidents under the scope of this policy they should inform the teacher, Principal or a Board member.

**7) 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 proper protective gloves etc., washing and making safe an area after an incident.
- Copies of all relevant phone numbers are centrally available.
- Contact details for all relevant medical contacts are centrally available.
- The school has a Critical Incident Policy.

**Monitoring and Review Procedures.**

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents.

**Staff Training and Development.**

All staff members are informed and updated as regards the contents of the policy and on-going training is availed of in the light of curricular needs. Staff members have been made sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse. The school will endeavour to facilitate training for all staff, as deemed necessary or requested, in the following areas:

The Stay Safe Programme.

Walk Tall.

Relationships and Sexuality.

**Roles and Responsibilities.**

The School Safety Officer is the Principal

The School Safety Representative is the Deputy Principal



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The role of the Board of Management is to:

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

Action considered appropriate by the Board of Management will be taken – advice, support and referral to the relevant agencies, namely Garda Síochána and HSE personnel. The family G.P. will also have a strong role to play.

### **Success and Monitoring.**

The completed policy will be circulated on November 2016

The policy will come into force on November 2016

This process will be supported by all staff members.

The teaching Staff will monitor the efficacy of the policy taking into account the responses of the wider school community. On-going review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information, legislation, developments in the school-based programme and feedback from parents/guardians, teachers and students.

Ratified on : \_\_\_\_\_

Implemented by : \_\_\_\_\_

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_

Review date set for : \_\_\_\_\_

*It is recommended that the policy is reviewed annually, in the light of changing information/legislation, subsequent to a drug related incident and in consultation with the wider school community.*