



# Scoil San Treasa Board of Management

The Rise, Mount Merrion, Co. Dublin A94EK75



## Substance Use Policy

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## 1. Introduction

This policy addresses the potential misuse of illegal or inappropriate substances in our school. The policy was reviewed in Term 2 2024/2025 as part of the School Self Evaluation processes relating to wellbeing.

### 1.1 Rationale

It is necessary to formulate a policy on Substance Use because:

- The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which 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 pupil cohort and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.
- 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, 2001-2008 sets out a detailed programme of action to be implemented by Government Departments and agencies to combat the very serious problem of drug misuse in our society. The strategy, which is Government policy, highlights the important contribution that schools can make in the area of education and prevention, and requires them to have Substance Use policies in place (Action 43). Scoil San Treasa has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.

Our school acknowledges that parents/guardians/carers have the primary role in the social, personal and health education of their children and our school also acknowledges its central role in the process. Our approach will be guided and underpinned by our Mission Statement:

*At Scoil San Treasa, our mission is the provision of primary education of the highest quality for all our pupils in a happy, safe, Christian environment. While we value high academic achievement, the social, personal and moral development of our pupils is of primary importance and we view the school as a learning organisation which is open to change and innovation while it cherishes the best educational, cultural and religious traditions of our society. Acknowledging that their parents are the primary educators of our children, we are inspired by a shared vision of excellence and we espouse a partnership approach in its pursuit.*

### 1.2 Aims of the Policy

The aim of the Substance Use policy of Scoil San Treasa is primary prevention and to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of Substance Use. We aim to:

- Provide a safe and healthy environment
- Promote positive health behaviours
- Develop in our pupils' better self-esteem, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils age appropriate information from educational programmes
- Support students in making informed and responsible decisions
- Equip the school to deal with issues relating to Substance Use in a planned and considered way and in accordance with its statutory responsibilities
- Reinforce the role of the school in contributing to local and national strategies in relation to Substance Use education and prevention
- Manage any incidents of Substance Use in a clear and consistent manner
- Working in partnership with the parents in understanding and addressing Substance Use
- Ensure compliance with legal and national policy requirements

## 2. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all in our school - pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the school grounds. 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

### 2.1 Definition of a substance

The term substance will be interpreted in the widest possible sense to include the following: *(not an exhaustive list)*

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- E-cigarettes
- Vapes
- Legal and/or illegal drugs
- Other dangerous substances that alter mental or physical states
- Other substances that are deemed inappropriate for children.

### 2.2 Timeframe

This policy was developed and reviewed by staff, parents and the Board of Management in March 2025, and it will be reviewed and updated as necessary. Updates will reflect emerging trends, best practices, and legal developments.

### 2.3 Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to adhere to this school policy.

### 2.4 Success Criteria

Parents and children are aware of the Substance Use Policy. Awareness by staff and students of signs and symptoms of substance use

### 2.5 Links to Other Policies and Curriculum Delivery

The following policies are relevant in the context of substance abuse

- Code of Behaviour
- Administration of Medication
- Health and Safety Statement
- Critical Incident Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

### 3. Policy Content

#### 3.1 Education concerning Substance Use

In Scoil San Treasa we fully acknowledge that education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs is most effective if provided in the broader context of a Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme, which is developmental and delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment. In this regard, Substance Use prevention will be taught through the SPHE and 'Walk Tall' Programmes. SPHE is a two year programme and is taught using active learning processes. It is school policy to occasionally invite external speakers e: Garda, public Health representatives.

#### 3.2 Management of substance related incidents

It is our policy to respond accordingly to the following scenarios as they may arise:

- Use/suspected use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco on the school premises *or* during a school-related activity
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour
- Disclosure about use
- Finding these substances and/or related paraphernalia
- Possession and/or supply on the school premises *or* during a school-related activity
- Other

The school will respond to the above in a planned and considered way. In certain cases, it may be necessary to seek legal advice, liaise with the Gardaí and/or seek medical intervention. We realise that due care will be important in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response and that an appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use may include referral to a support agency. Incidents relating to Substance Use are addressed in the context of the school's Code of Behaviour.

The following reporting procedures will be followed:

1. The witness to the Substance Use related event informs teacher/staff member who in turn informs the principal
2. The principal informs parents/guardians (*if it relates to a pupil in the school*) and will liaise with the relevant personnel for an appropriate response
3. Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management
4. Seek legal advice or liaise with the Gardaí and/or HSE as necessary

Other courses of action that will be considered may include the following:

- Seek advice from external agencies - TúsIa; Drug Task Force;
- Referral to the Chairperson of the Board of Management
- Convene an emergency meeting of the Board of Management
- Provide medical or First Aid response if required.
- Liaise with the media - per the Critical Incident policy.

#### 3.3 Provision for training and staff development

An effective Substance Use policy needs to be supported by an ongoing commitment from the Board of Management to training and staff development. In this regard, advice may be sought from Oide advisers in the 'Health and Wellbeing Team' regarding the delivery of the SPHE curriculum within the school or similar external resources to assist in staff professional development in this area. All staff members will be familiar with the Substance Use Policy and, from time to time, attend courses relevant to this policy. Parental talks will be arranged to inform parents of SPHE programmes such as Walk Tall.

Signed: Eoin O'Neill - Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 18th March 2025

## **Appendix 1: Management of Persons in the Workplace - Under The Influence of Drugs and/or Alcohol**

The Board of Management shall ensure, 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, with the Board’s approval, and both within and away from the school premises. Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that they are not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by S 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

- Should the Principal (or a member of staff) have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy 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.
- Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of any contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask 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 report their belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace.
- 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 and/or Deputy 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 or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove themselves from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact a relevant support service.

The Board of Management also acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all other staff members. In the event that substance use appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the non-teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to seek counselling or other professional intervention.

All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded and reported as soon as possible to the Board of Management. The Board of Management shall consider all such reports and decide on the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.