



Substance Abuse Policy



St. Joseph's, Fairview

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students all members of staff and personnel within Scoil Iósiáf, its lands and its environs. Students will be governed by this policy throughout the school day, when representing the school or involved in any school activity both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time and including going to and coming from school or when wearing the school uniform . It also applies to all those using the premises.

Scoil Iósiáf mission statement

The school aspires to create an environment where quality teaching and learning can take place. This environment managed with fairness and firmness promotes the growth and development of the whole person allowing each person in our care to develop personally, educationally, socially and spiritually. In keeping with this, the Substance Use Policy is part of our pastoral approach to providing a caring and supportive learning environment. The substance use policy is one among many that serve to endorse the school's ethos. Scoil Iósiáf asserts its right to protect and promote its particular ethos by requiring certain standards of behaviour and prohibiting certain practices.

Rationale

This policy has been formulated to protect all the pupils and staff in the school. Many issues outside our school have an impact on our school community. The prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and drug misuse pose challenges for the school as a social partner. The Board of Management of Scoil Iósiáf recognises that the issue of substance abuse is very serious and can impact on staff and students. In arriving at a policy to deal with the possession of, distribution of, the use of and the abuse of substances, the school is conscious that each situation is unique and so a flexible response is required.

When referring to substances the Board of Management of Scoil Iósiáf defines them as follows:

All substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non validated prescription medication, the misuse of solvents, the use and misuse of matches, lighters and fireworks, bangers all alcohol and tobaccos used contrary to the law of the land. Scoil Iósiáf also reserves the right to determine that a substance found at the school qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance. The school policy aims to cooperate fully with the strategic plan adopted by the government under the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 and made mandatory for school in DES circular 18/02. The Education Act 1998 provides that schools promote the social and personal education of students and provide health education for them.

School policy

The school does not accept or tolerate the possession, use, or supply of banned or prohibited substances and or drug paraphernalia by any student, staff or visitor in the school on school trips and outings, during any school related activity or going to and coming from school, when wearing the school uniform or wherever our school Code of Behaviour applies.

PRESCRIBED MEDICATION

Parents of students taking prescribed medication should inform the school in writing of that fact. Staff is 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. However, 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.

Education in relation to substance use for students.

Education about the use of drugs and the consequences of the misuse of substances will be provided as part of a broad developmental SPHE programme. This will be delivered through specific modules that are age appropriate. Substance abuse programmes may also form part of other school subjects such as R.E., PE, and CSPE. Services outside the school include Gardai, ISPCC and the HSE. Expert speakers may be invited from time to time to speak to students and parents' groups.

Role of Parents

Parents are expected to acknowledge the importance of all school programmes that the school provides for the students. They should attend where possible talks and courses provided for parents in relation to substance use/ abuse. They should recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing their children in regard to substance abuse. They should assist and cooperate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise. To assist the parents in their role the school may: Provide them with information on what is happening in the school regarding education programmes, encourage and welcome consultation with parents on the best use of available resources in the community to support the school in its programme and policy implementation. In the event of an incident of substance abuse, Scoil Iósiaf will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student or students involved and the welfare of the school community.

CONCERN RE STUDENTS AND ILLEGAL SUBSTANCE USE OUTSIDE SCHOOL

When the school authorities are made aware that a real concern exists where a student may be involved in illegal substance use outside school, the following procedure is followed. The parents of the student will be informed in writing or by phone by the Principal about the concern. It will be stressed that the school is not accusing the student of using illegal substances, but is relaying its concern that this

might be the case. The parents may be invited in to the school to meet with the Principal and discuss the concern. The Principal will make them aware of any support services in the school, and the need to make contact with their GP or the Drug Awareness Unit (which may offer testing for illegal substances and follow up counselling).

PROCEDURES IN MANAGING AND INVESTIGATING AN INCIDENT OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE

1. Scoil Íosiaf reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school, any student involved in a suspected abuse incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident. This applies particularly where there is a threat to Health and Safety of students or the school community.

2. An Abuse Incident Report will be completed.

3. School personnel will then fully investigate and assess any abuse incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this.

4. School personnel will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances or paraphernalia associated with the abuse incident, and carefully record all such items. They will retain them pending completion of the investigation, unless otherwise instructed by appropriate outside agencies.

5. In the event of an incident, the school will seek statements from all persons involved in, and concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident. They will record this statement as part of the investigation.

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

7 Scoil Íosiaf, at its own discretion will liaise with any appropriate outside authority and seek advice or assistance, as it deems appropriate in relation to its investigation of an incident.

8 If circumstances merit and an investigation is continuing the school will put the full particulars of the incident to the students concerned and their parents/guardians in the following manner.

(a) Copies of all records deemed relevant to the position of 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/ guardians at the discretion of the school. This will be done in time to permit the student a reasonable opportunity to make his own reply to the matters at issue and any representation that he/she would wish to make or have made on his/her behalf.

(b) The school will allow the student concerned and his parents/guardians 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.

(c) The school shall shortly thereafter inform the student and his parents of the school's findings and their reasons for these. If the school finds that the student has been guilty of or has been involved in/or implicated in an incident, it shall indicate the penalty or sanctions that it intends to impose in the circumstances.

9 In relation to a verified and investigated incident, the school and/or the Board of Management may implement disciplinary actions or sanctions, including but not limited to: an oral warning, a written warning, detention, a suspension of three days duration, a suspension of more than three days duration other sanctions short of expulsion and expulsion.

10 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.

11 The school should also ensure that pastoral supports are offered to the student/students and parents affected by an incident of substance abuse. These incidents can be sometimes traumatic for those involved and the services of a Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, School Completion Programme etc. will be made available. External sources of support may also be recommended. Return to school may depend on participation in an appropriate counselling /addiction programme. Parental involvement and guarantees may also be required.

THE INVOLVEMENT AND ROLES OF VARIOUS PARTIES IN AN INCIDENT INVESTIGATION.

The Principal or Principal's nominated person, the Deputy Principal or nominated staff member is the person responsible for all matters in this area.

The Principal/or nominated person will have the following duties and responsibilities:

1 The Principal is responsible for dealing with abuse incidents arising at the school.

2 All reports of abuse or suspected incidents must be reported to the Principal.

3 The Principal makes all decisions regarding investigation of an incident: communication with, liaison with and reporting to relevant parties; and disclosure of information regarding an investigation.

4 The Principal is responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed regarding investigation documents.

5 The Principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any written documentation and records associated with an incident.

6 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.

7 The principal may seek the assistance of the deputy principal, year head, and or school guidance counsellor in conducting an incident investigation.

8 Communication with the student and parents will be as per the procedures laid down in the previous section.

9 The Principal will decide on the appropriate sanction, suspension, or referral to the Board of Management for a longer suspension or expulsion.

DUTY OF STAFF

The Board of Management requires all staff to report immediately, via the incident report form, any incidents where pupils/employees/visitors

Encounter the use /suspected use of alcohol drugs on the school premises in the school grounds or during a school related activity

Exhibit symptoms/behaviour that may suggest the use of alcohol/drugs

Are involved or suspected of being involved in the distribution, purchase or use of alcohol/drugs.

Discover suspect substances /paraphernalia in the school.

The school personnel will seek to establish the facts and to be clear about the nature of the incident before deciding on a course of action. There will be no assumption of guilt at this stage

The student should not be confronted openly before his/her peers. There should be no assumption of guilt regarding substance misuse/ abuse, as there are a variety of conditions, which might mimic the suspected misuse of substances .The possession of tablets might be for medicinal use.

The teacher is entitled to request the surrender of a suspicious substance or paraphernalia.

This should be handed over without fuss. The teacher should not seek to search the pupil or his/her possessions. Where there is a refusal to co-operate the pupil should be brought to the Deputy principal/Principal whose responsibility it is to proceed with the matter.

On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal can request the

student in question to surrender the suspicious substance and to cooperate in revealing the contents of bags clothing and personal possessions if necessary

In the case of lack of cooperation from the student, the parents should be informed of the situation and that the Gardai may also have to be notified. The student's bags, and personal property should be isolated until the parents/Gardai arrive.

Scoil Iósiáf reserves the right to search school property including lockers and toilets at any time.

The Principal /Deputy Principal will recognise that the Health and Safety and the wellbeing of the student/students are paramount and will seek medical aid if deemed necessary. The student will be provided with the appropriate guidance and support they need.

A student may be asked to provide a medical certificate to indicate they are drugs free and are not a threat to Health and Safety before they return to school.

Suspected Substance Abuse

In the case of a suspected abuse incident the school will immediately inform parents /guardians. This will be done without prejudice to the school's separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage any abuse incident.

STAFF / PASTORAL CARE TEAM

The relevant support systems of the school will be mobilised: Guidance Counsellors, Year Head, Class teachers SPHE coordinator Care Support Teams and School Completion. Where considered necessary, legal advice will be sought. If illegal drugs/paraphernalia are found on the school premises, the school will/may contact the Gardai about its safe disposal. It is the responsibility of the Principal/Deputy Principal to summon such persons as may be helpful to the issue. Teachers in their pastoral role may encounter changes in a student's behaviour and attitude on occasion or over a period of time. This may be for a variety of reasons and may not necessarily be indicative of substance misuse. The role of the teacher carries a duty of care towards the pupil, which involves a degree of confidentiality. However this does not preclude reporting a genuine suspicion or concern. The quality of the relationship between teacher and the pupil is central to noticing change in behaviour. Teachers should always discuss any significant altered behaviour or performance of a pupil with the Year Head. This student may then be referred to the Care Support Team or the Counsellors.

The Principal may decide to inform the parents, involve the Board of Management, and recommend addiction counselling and parental involvement in this. Scoil Iósiáf also retains the right to seek a medical certificate at any time, to indicate that they are drugs free and are not a threat to Health and Safety

CONFIDENTIALITY AND MEDIA INQUIRIES

While confidentiality will be maintained as far as is practicable, the duty 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 in a given situation to contact as appropriate such authorities as, the Gardai, HSE, 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.

In the event of a media enquiry arising from an alleged substance abuse incident in the school, the school will undertake not to comment on any individual matter while an investigation is in progress other than to outline policy.

However, in the interests of the school's reputation, The Board of Management may clarify the schools position regarding an incident after the investigation has been completely concluded.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In relation to STAFF: Scoil Íosiaf will deliver training in delivering education programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs as is deemed necessary; maintain policies on the role of staff in relation to the management and investigation of a substance incident.

In relation to PARENTS: the Board of Management of Scoil Íosiaf will provide opportunities to attend information sessions and workshops in relation to drugs and the Policy; Will seek and provide appropriate information, guidance and support to the board regarding issues relating to investigation of and adjudication on incident investigations.

In relation to STUDENTS: Scoil Íosiaf will offer all student programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco misuse and Drug education within the context of the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate.

TOBACCO

Smoking is prohibited on the school premises both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time. It applies to all those using the premises. Students are also governed by this policy when representing the school or involved in any school activity both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time and including going to and coming from school or when wearing the school uniform and where ever our school Code of Behaviour applies.

STUDENT FOUND SMOKING

Cigarettes will be confiscated.

Communication will be made with home

Sanctions may be applied in line with the school Code of Behaviour

Selling / supplying Tobacco

Tobacco confiscated

Communication with home

Gardai may be notified.

On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender any suspicious substance and any paraphernalia associated with smoking and to cooperate in revealing the contents of bags lockers, clothing and personal possessions and request the support of the parents if necessary Any substances found, will be confiscated, sealed in a container in the presence of a witness, handed over to the Gardai or destroyed.

Sanction may be applied in line with the school Code of Behaviour.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

A Where a student is suspected of taking a drug type substance the matter must be reported to the Principal (or in her absence the Deputy Principal) immediately. The Principal will make immediate contact with the Parents and where necessary furnish a report. If it is proven that the students has taken a drug type substance then procedures and sanctions will be as for B below.

B Where a pupil presents displaying apparent effects of alcohol or drugs, the Principal will be informed immediately. The parents will be notified and may be asked to collect the pupil from school. A drug test may be requested on the grounds of Health and Safety. Sanctions may be applied with a three day suspension and referral to the BOM for further action where necessary. The student may also be referred to Counsellors in the school.

C On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender any suspicious substance and to cooperate in revealing the contents of bags, lockers, clothing and personal possessions and request the support of the parents where necessary.

D Any substances found, will be confiscated, sealed in a container in the presence of a witness, handed over to the Gardai or destroyed. Where a student brings an illegal substance or alcohol on to the school premises or is found in possession of same, the parents, the Gardai and the Social Services may be informed. There will be an immediate three day suspension and the matter will be referred to the BOM for further action up to and including extension of suspension and possible expulsion.

E On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender the suspicious substance and to cooperate in revealing the contents of bags, lockers, clothing and personal possessions and request the support of the parents if necessary. Any substances found will be confiscated sealed in a container in the presence of a witness, handed over to the Gardai or destroyed.

F Where a student is suspected of supplying illegal substances or alcohol to other students the Parents/Guardians will be informed, where found to be true or where circumstantial evidence indicates same, the Gardai will be informed. There will be a 3 day suspension and referral to the BOM for further action up to and including extension of suspension and possible expulsion.

On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender the suspicious substance/paraphernalia and to cooperate in revealing the contents of bags lockers, clothing and personal possessions and request the support of the parents if necessary.

Any substances/paraphernalia etc. found will be confiscated sealed in a container in the presence of a witness handed over to the Gardai or destroyed.

Where a student is found promoting or glorifying a drugs culture in word or deed or the use of drug paraphernalia the matter must be reported to the Principal/Deputy. The student will be interviewed and advised. The parents will be informed. The students may be referred for counselling. Sanctions may be applied up to and including suspension and referral to the BOM for further action.

On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender the suspicious paraphernalia and to cooperate in revealing the contents of bags lockers, clothing and personal possessions and request the support of the parents where necessary. Any paraphernalia found will be confiscated sealed in a container in the presence of a witness, handed over to the Gardai or destroyed. Scoil Íosiaf reserves the right to determine that a said behaviour or action is in breach of our policy and has the right to apply sanctions that are fair and in keeping with the gravity of the offence.

ADULTS

A staff member presenting under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be allowed take part in his /her normal duties. The matter will be reported to the chairperson of the BOM. Such an incident would be regarded as professional misconduct and a breach of contract. (In relation to social events, staff are expected to abide within the law of the land on substance use, and adhere to the school dignity in the workplace policy.)

A parent or other adult presenting under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be afforded an interview with any member of staff. He/she will be asked to leave the premises by the Principal/Deputy. Failure to do so will result in Gardai being called.

A formal letter of complaint will be issued by the BOM in such instances and where necessary a legal injunction will be sought to prevent a re-occurrence of such an incident.

The school operates a NO SMOKING POLICY in accordance with the present national legislation. STAFF SHOULD NOT SMOKE IN VIEW OF STUDENTS OR ON OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES INCLUDING SPORTING EVENTS AND SCHOOL TOURS.

A student may be asked to provide a medical certificate at any stage that they are drugs free and are not a threat to Health and Safety.

REVIEW

Scoil Íosiaf will monitor, review and evaluate this policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practises.

Scoil Íosiaf reserves the right to alter this policy document in the light of any new developments before a full review takes place.

Appendix definitions

The following definitions apply in this policy.

SCHOOL

The School includes all Scoil Íosiaf school buildings, grounds, play areas, public areas where students congregate going to and coming from school, school related activities and where ever our school Code of Behaviour applies.

BANNED OR PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES

Banned or Prohibited Substances includes all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non validated prescription medication, the misuse of solvents, use of matches, lighters and fireworks, bangers, all alcohol and tobaccos used contrary to the law of the land. Scoil Íosiaf also reserves the right to determine that a substance found at the school qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance.

DRUG PARAPHERNALIA

Drug Paraphernalia includes any banned or prohibited substance as defined above, any items that may be used in the taking of illegal substances and any written printed or graphic material promoting the use of illicit substances.

AN ABUSE

An Abuse incident is any incident relating to banned or prohibited substances that occurs in the school or during school functions or outings or any such incident that may be deemed damaging to the health and welfare of Scoil Íosiaf. Scoil Íosiaf reserves the right to determine whether a specific incident constitutes an abuse incident to be addressed under the terms of Drugs policy.

PARENTS

In this policy Parents include natural parents, foster parents, step parents, or guardian of the student concerned or any person acting in loco parentis either on a temporary or permanent capacity on the date of the abuse incident.

PRINCIPAL

Principal. In this policy the Principal means the Principal at the time 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.