

ST. JAMES' SCHOOL
CAPPAGH



School Substance Use Policy

Introduction

This policy was developed by the staff, Board of Management and Parents Association of St James' School in consultation with the Executive Health Service.

St James' School is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to substance use, noting that a drug is 'any substance that changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally'.

St James' School acknowledges that the school has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and handling drug related incidents and proposes to work closely with parents/guardians to implement this policy, to ensure their child's health and safety. It is emphasised that the primary role of substance misuse and prevention rests with the pupils' parents/guardians.

St James' School is committed to enabling students to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, cultural and physical potential and in fostering the development of personal responsibility in an atmosphere of tolerance, fairness and support.

St James' School endeavours to promote the well-being of students by:

- providing a safe and healthy environment
- promoting positive healthy behaviour
- increasing knowledge about health
- promoting self-esteem and self-awareness of students
- working in partnership with parents and pupils

Implementation

Copies of this policy will be available in the school, on request.
This policy will be regularly evaluated and updated where necessary.

Contents

The policy will focus on:

- Statement of school position on substance use
- Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug, Alcohol, Tobacco and Substance related incidents
- Training and staff development
- Monitoring, review and evaluation

This document should be read in conjunction with the St James' School Administration of Medication Policy and the Code of Behaviour and Discipline.

Statement of School Position on Substance Use

- **Smoking and Tobacco**

St James' School is a no-smoking school.

Students are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on school premises, on school activities or on school tours.

All persons on the school premises are required to comply with the restricted smoking policy.

- **Alcohol**

The school is an alcohol free zone.

Students are not permitted to possess or consume alcohol on school premises, on school activities or on school trips.

- **Illicit Drugs**

Students are prohibited from possession, use or supply of illicit drugs on school premises, on school activities or on school tours.

- **Solvents**

The school does not accept the misuse of solvent-based substances.

All chemicals on the school premises are locked away and prohibited for student use unless under direct teacher supervision.

- **Medication**

All use of medication on school premises, on school activities or on school trips should comply with St James' School policy on Administration of Medication.

No student may give another student any prescribed or over the counter medication.

Breaches of these rules

All breaches of the rules shall be considered to be serious misconduct.

Pupils found in breach of these rules will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures set out in section 3 and in accordance with the St James' School Code of Behaviour and Discipline.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes

This school is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programme incorporated into our Social and Personal Health Education Programme. We will also draw on the expertise available within our community, with the support of the Garda and Health Executive Service.

Our educational aims in relation to Drug Education are:

- To increase self-esteem and confidence of our students
- To equip our students with personal and social skills
- To enable our students to make informed, healthy and responsible choices
- To provide clear and appropriate information on drugs
- To minimise harm

These aims will be achieved through:

- Staff

Participation in Drug awareness training, SPHE training or any other relevant training through regular in-service courses.

- Students

SPHE programme, incorporating Stay Safe and Walk Tall

Grow In Love

SESE programme, incorporating science

A health promoting environment

- Parents

Drug information and awareness sessions to be organised for parents on a biannual basis.

- Whole School Community

Outside speakers on relevant topics for staff, students and parents as appropriate.

Managing alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents in St James' School

What is a drug incident?

When a student is alleged or found to be in possession of, or suspected of being in possession of, alcohol, tobacco, solvents and illegal drugs as well as a whole range of over the counter and prescribed medicines on school property or school related activities either for personal use or distribution or sale without the permission of school staff and parents will be deemed an incident in St James' School.

The following are examples of drug related incidents:

Emergencies when the person may be unconscious

Intoxication/unusual behaviour

Suspicion/rumour of drug use, possession or dealing

Disclosure by another person

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 member of staff
School grounds being used for drug activity
Drug paraphernalia found on school property

Course of action to be followed

We, in St James' School, acknowledge that in all situations involving drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the young person, the needs of the school community and the reputation of the school.

In all cases where there is no immediate danger to the young person/s, it is important to assess the situation. Listening, separating fact from myth and support will be our initial approach to the situation. Disciplinary procedures will be used if school rules are broken and expulsion will only be an option when all else has failed. A Drug Incident Form will need to be completed. (See Incident Report Form).

Sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature and severity of the offence.

Who needs to be informed?

In St James' School, the principal and person/s directly involved in the case will be informed.

In most cases the school will want to involve the parents/carers from the outset and offer support which will be provided by outside agencies e.g. The Health Service Executive, GP, and Gardaí. The Chairperson of the B.O.M. also needs to be informed.

It is at the discretion of the Board of Management where to report next but could include Department of Education and Science and the Gardaí.

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

If the person involved in the incident has a serious drug habit then referral to a treatment centre will be recommended.

Confidentiality

Teachers in St James' School cannot offer total confidentiality to a young person who discloses drug involvement. Information must remain private and only disclosed on a 'need to know basis' as the young person may need help and the outcome may depend on how this situation is handled. The young person must be informed about what is happening and why. All written documentation will be held confidentially by the principal.

Administration of Medication

See School policy on 'The Administration of Medicines in St James' School'

Media

The principal will handle all media enquiries. The school will not comment on individual cases but will refer generally to the school policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.

Training and Staff Development

This policy will only be effective if there is a strong commitment made to ongoing training of the whole school community. St James' School undertakes to provide the following:

- Staff

Facilitation of training for the SPHE programme, First Aid course or any other relevant course. Regular drug information and awareness training on at least a once every three year basis.

- Parents/Guardians

St James' School, in conjunction with the Parents Association, Health Service and Gardaí, will provide all parents/guardians with the opportunity to attend drug awareness and information sessions. Regular drug information and awareness training will hereafter be provided on at least a once every three year basis.

- Students

St James' School will offer all its students Substance Use education within the context of their SPHE programme, and other relevant programmes.

Monitoring the Policy, Review and Evaluation

The working committee drafting this policy will be involved in its evaluation when it has been in place for one school year.

The areas of school position on Substance Use, Drug Education Programmes, incident management and whole school community training will be reviewed in light of need, experience and best practise.