

St. Peter Apostle Junior National School



Substance Use Policy

Policy Summary Details

Policy Title:	Substance Use Policy
Written/Reviewed:	January 2024
Ratified by the BOM	February 8 th 2024

Introduction

The staff in St. Peter Apostle JNS are committed to enhancing to the best of their abilities the safety and welfare of our whole school community by striving to create a safe and happy environment in which to learn and work. In this document we set out our substance use policy which serves to assist use reaching our safety and welfare goals. The policy applies to the whole school community, including teachers, parents, ancillary staff, children, and any visitors of the school building. The policy relates to all school activities including those that take place on the school premises as well as on school trips. For the purposes of clarity, a drug is considered to be 'Any substance which changes the way the body functions – mentally, physically or emotionally'; 'A drug is any chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels'.

Rationale

It is necessary to devise a policy on substance use at this time in consideration of the following:

- The National Drugs Strategy, 'Building on Experience', is now Government Policy and it requires schools to have a drugs policy in place (Action 43)
- The report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drug Use Prevention underlines the importance of schools developing drugs policies.
- To develop a shared understanding of the term 'drugs' and to define the school's agreed position in relation to drug related issues.
- To equip the school to deal with issues relating to substance misuse in a planned and considered way and in accordance with their statutory responsibilities
- To assist teachers in their classroom experience

1. Vision and mission statement

We in St. Peter Apostle Junior school believe in the potential of each child. As a staff we seek to ensure that all children in our care have equality of opportunity to derive positive outcomes from their educational experience. In doing so, we endeavour to create a safe, happy, respectful, and inclusive learning environment, where the diverse needs of all different types of learners are catered for. It is envisioned that by providing an all-inclusive approach to education that the children in our school shall reach their academic potential whilst developing the confidence and courage to be fair, kind, moral, tolerant and respectful when acting in the world.

We strive to realise vision by seeking to:

- Craft a caring, supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment in which children's social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual development is catered for,
- Develop children's interests, talents and hobbies by providing a wide range of learning experiences,
- Harness the collective talents of all staff to ensure that all children, irrespective of their medical status and/or special educational needs feel cherished and thrive in in dynamic educational settings,
- Provide tailored learning experiences for children who present with special educational needs (gifted or otherwise) by meeting children where they are at and building upon their strengths,

- Collaborate with colleagues and outside agencies to ensure focused and effective supports are in place to advance the social, emotional, and cognitive development of all the children in our care,
- Build strong and collaborative relationships with parents with a view to fine tuning and augmenting the supports that children receive in both the home and school,
- Promote a culture of inclusivity by ensuring that children across the school settings integrate as appropriate during tuition time, yard breaks and school events,
- Create an environment where all have freedom and opportunity to reach their full potential.

2 Linkage of the substance use policy to the vision for the school

We see St Peter Apostle Junior National school as a place where pupils enjoy learning in an atmosphere of contentment, fulfilment, respect and positive affirmation. We encourage curiosity, cooperation, and active participation so that pupils will appreciate their own worth as physical and spiritual beings and of their potential contribution to society. Central to this philosophy must be the creation of a secure and safe environment for learning and the provision of support for those experiencing difficulties.

3 Aims of the policy

Through the implementation of this policy we seek as far as possible to:

- Ensure the welfare, care and protection of every young person as provided for in the Education Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.
- Ensure compliance with legislative requirements and principles of good practice.
- Provide children with age-appropriate knowledge about drugs
- To develop age-appropriate decision making
- We wish to manage drug related incidents in a planned manner
- We wish to support parents and pupils in addressing drug misuse.

4 Education concerning substance use

4.1 Social personal and Health Education

Education concerning substance use will be provided – through specific modules, and integration with existing subjects across the curriculum. Where relevant, such education will also be dealt with through specific programmes such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall and the R.S.E. programmes. Allocated time as set out by the Department of Education is dedicated to the delivery of the S.P.H.E. programme each week.

Through our SPHE programme we are striving to:

- Develop children's self-confidence, thus enabling them to be good decision-makers
- Help children develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- Encourage children to develop health promoting practices and to take care of their bodies
- Teach children the dangers around smoking, drug and alcohol abuse in an age appropriate manner

4.2 A focus on well-being

We in St. Peter Apostle JNS place a great emphasis on physical as well as mental well-being. A voluntary committee, led by an Assistant Principal with responsibility for well-being organise activities, education and events to enhance the well-being of the school community. Below are activities/programmes that are aimed at increasing the well-being of the school community

- The delivery of Health awareness programmes in SPHE, PE
- Self-esteem programmes
- Fun Friends
- Dina School
- Nurture groups
- Outside visitors/speakers will be invited to enhance the work done in class in the context of the full SPHE programme.
- Outside visitors may give staff talks
- Care team committee
- Well-being week
- Creative Schools
- Walking Wednesdays (Children)
- Operation transformation (Parents)

4.3 Parent programmes

The HSCL works closely with parents in the school. The HSCL will act to support parents who wish to avail of education regarding drug use or wish to be put in contact with services relating to drug misuse.

4.4 Medicines

The following are practices within the school for the administration of medicines

- Care plan is written up in collaboration with the child's parents
- Medicines to be minded in the office in a locked press that is out of reach of the children
- Inhalers allowed with parental permission
- Parents arriving to administer medicine should inform school staff
- Red folders with key information regarding children's medicinal needs are available when the regular class teacher is absent

5 The management of substance related incidents

There is a common understanding among staff in St. Peter Apostle JNS that a drug is considered to be 'Any substance which changes the way the body functions – mentally, physically or emotionally'; 'A drug is any chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels'.

5.1 Examples of substance-related incidents and appropriate responses

5.1.1 A person bringing illegal drugs into the school premises

- Inform the principal/deputy principal immediately
- Ask the person to leave the ground if appropriate/safe
- Inform the Gardaí
- Take notes on the incident on official form incident book

- Inform the BOM

5.1.2 A person coming onto the school premises under the influence of drugs/alcohol

- Inform the principal/deputy principal immediately
- Ask the person to leave the ground if appropriate/safe
- Inform the Gardaí
- Take notes on the incident on official form incident book
- Inform the BOM

5.1.3 A child bringing a substance into the school for personal use or with intent to supply others

- Confiscate substance and store appropriately
- Inform the principal and deputy principal
- Inform parents
- Record incident and report to Tusla

5.1.4 Parents/ Guardians arriving at school under the influence of a substance to collect children:

- Assess the situation and if necessary get the principal
- Principal upon assessing the situation may deny access/ ring Tusla/Gardaí for advice
- Record incident and report to Tusla
- Follow advice provided by Tusla

5.1.5 Drugs or drug paraphernalia found on the school grounds

- Removal and safe disposal of items
- Record details of the find
- Inform Gardaí

5.1.6 Attempts to sell around the school environment (e.g. school gate)

- Inform the Gardaí

5.1.7 Alcohol or tobacco or vape related incidents in the school

- Smoking on the school grounds is forbidden by law – parents, staff and others are reminded of this by signage.
- Inform parents if a child is found smoking or with alcohol taken
- Get advice from Tusla re above and follow advice re making a referral
- Inform parents

5.1.8 Emergencies where a person maybe unconscious

- Call and ambulance
- Apply First Aid if appropriate and available
- Inform the principal/deputy principal
- Inform child's parents
- Get and follow advice from Tusla re referral

6 Training and Staff Development

- As far as possible staff will avail of training and information on drug misuse when opportunities for such events (such as guest speakers) are offered to the school.
- There is a shared understanding of the contribution that an SPHE programme can make to the prevention of drug misuse.

- All staff are aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of drug misuse within their own classrooms (e.g. by developing a supportive class/school environment).
- It is the responsibility of all staff to make themselves aware of all policies including the substance abuse prevention policy of the school. These policies are available for inspection in the principal's office.

7 Parental Involvement

- As with other aspects of the Curriculum Parents/Guardians are to be made aware of and informed of what is happening in the school with regard Substance use policy – it is available on the school website and a hard copy can be requested any time from the office
- From time to time, the HSCL may organise events that provide education and information on issues relating to drug misuse.

8 Success criteria

- Awareness by the pupils of the consequences of substance, alcohol abuse and tobacco consumption for their physical and emotional health of themselves and others.
- Reduction of incidents relating to substance misuse
- Efficient and sensitive dealing with any incidents, which arise.

9 Roles and Responsibility

The school wishes to make clear that the primary role of substance misuse prevention rests with parents. In the school context the responsibility for the development, implementation and evaluation of this policy rests with the teaching staff, under the guidance of the B.O.M. and supported by the Parents' Association.

10 Timetable for Review

The operation of the new procedures will be reviewed every two years or before then, if deemed necessary by changes in information, legislation, or feedback from parents/guardians/pupils/teachers/community/ Gardai/ Health Boards.

11 Ratified by the BOM

Ratified on 8/2/24

Vivion Powney
(Chairperson)

Date:

Orla Healy
(Principal)

Date:

