



St. Raphael's College Substance Use Policy

Scope of Policy: The policy applies to all teaching and non-teaching staff (including contract and occasional workers) students, parents/guardians and other users of the school building. Visiting speakers are to be made aware of this policy by their invitees.
SIGNS TO BE PUT UP IN RELEVANT AREAS.

Relationship to School's Philosophy of Education:

The policy is in keeping with the School's Mission Statement

Rationale for Substance Use Policy:

- (a) Significant increase in Drugs, Smoking and Alcohol consumption makes it necessary for Development of Policies in these areas.
- (b) Schools are obliged to have a substance use policy by the Government's National Drug Strategy 2001-2008.

Consultation Process:

This policy was drafted with input from the Parents Association, Board of Management, the Student Council and Staff and Management of St. Raphael's College

Considerable effort was made to ensure all partners had a genuine input in to the content of this policy.

Goals/Objectives:

- ◆ To formalise a drug substance education programme for students.
- ◆ Ensure all students are informed of the risks associated with drugs, vaping, tobacco and alcohol so they can make informed decisions around this issue.
- ◆ Offer every support where possible to students and other members of the school who require assistance.
- ◆ To provide clear management procedures for dealing with Substance related incidents to support both B.O.M., Staff, Parents and Students.

Definition of 'Substance':

For the purpose of this policy, substance refers to tobacco, alcohol, vaping (and associated items) and all illegal and illicit drugs (all illegal drugs together with the improper use of medication, solvents, magic mushrooms. This list is not exhaustive).

POLICY CONTENT

I. Substance Use Education:

Aim of student substance use education programme:

The aim of our programme is to give young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes to appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and relate these to their choices about substance use, both now and in their future lives.

Implementation:

- ◆ Junior cycle students receive Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) which includes a substance use module. A minimum of 4 class periods per year will be dedicated to issues of substance use for these students.
- ◆ Staff delivering other subjects where opportunities arise to examine drug-related issues (e.g. Religion, Science subjects, P.E. Home Economics, etc.) are invited to use these opportunities to support the drug education programme.
- ◆ In senior cycle, Religious Education teachers will deliver drug input as they may believe appropriate.

Visiting Speakers:

- ◆ Speakers may be invited to support the programme from time to time.
- ◆ It should be properly planned and part of overall programme.
- ◆ Teachers should always be present and involved particularly in liaising beforehand with speaker with reference to the content.

Parents and Drug Education:

'Parents and people at home have the most influence on the lives of children, and are, therefore, crucial in any prevention strategy'.

The Parents Association are invited to liaise with Principal to jointly arrange drug awareness evenings for parents as the need arises.

II. Management of Substance-Related Incidents:

Introductory Statement:

St. Raphael's College will endeavour to handle any alcohol, tobacco or illegal or illicit drug incidents in a firm but fair manner, with due regard for the safety and welfare of the individual(s) involved and of other members of the school and to fulfil any legal obligations that apply.

Scope of Policy:

- ◆ This school strives to be a tobacco, alcohol, vaping products and illegal or illicit drug-free environment (with the exceptions as outlined below)
- ◆ These procedures apply to students, other than the exceptions outlined below.
- ◆ It is in force at all times on school premises, during school time and during all school-related activities.

Exceptions are:

- ◆ The correct and supervised use of cleaning agents and curriculum-related materials/ingredients as specified by the staff member involved.
- ◆ Alcohol may be provided for non-student use at special school events/occasions with the prior consent of school management.

Definition of alcohol, tobacco, vaping and illicit drug-related incident:

Since society faces major problems arising from the abuse of tobacco, alcohol, vaping and drugs, restrictions in these areas are essential.

- ◆ The school is a no smoking premises for all school users. This refers to tobacco smoking and vaping.
- ◆ Tobacco, Smoking and the possession or consumption of any vaping materials or alcoholic drink are forbidden in the School and its grounds. No student may smoke or consume alcoholic drink while in school uniform or on educational outings organised by the school. Alcohol, vaping or tobacco products may not be purchased by students on these tours.
- ◆ The possession or use of illegal or unprescribed drugs is most strictly forbidden at all times.
- ◆ Presenting under the influence of these substances is also forbidden.
- ◆ The finding of illegal drugs is also a drug-related incident, as is the voluntary disclosure by a school member about their own problematic drug or alcohol use.
- ◆ However, where voluntary and where a breach of policy has not occurred, such a disclosure will be treated as an approach for help and will not normally be subject to disciplinary procedures (although other provisions, such as Confidentiality Policy, will apply).

The Substance Use Committee recommend that sanctions incurred by smoking incidents be reviewed and that a pilot smoking cessation group for students also be considered.

Internal lines of reporting and Recording:

- ◆ All smoking, vaping, alcohol and illegal and illicit drug incidents will be reported to the Principal and /or deputy principals who will inform the Year Head and/ other staff if appropriate.
- ◆ Students themselves are encouraged to inform a member of the teaching staff if they are aware of an incident.
- ◆ While on excursions, the teacher in charge will be responsible for the implementation of this policy. However, guidance should be sought from the Principal at the earliest opportunity in particular if an illegal drug incident occurs.

Smoking/alcohol/vaping incidences will be recorded as per Code of Discipline.

A separate illicit and illegal drug-related confidential file will be written, recorded and stored by Principal. Reference to the file will be at the Principal's discretion. In the case of a suspected incident, any file should remain anonymous until or unless the involvement of the person is confirmed. File will be retained for the duration of the student's time in this school.

Confidentiality:

Students sometimes request confidentiality. The teacher must attempt to retain the respect and confidence of the student, while ensuring that the information is acted on, so confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Information may need to be shared, for example, with the Principal, with B.O.M., with certain staff members, with the parents of those involved, or with an appropriate external agency. However, discretion within these limits will be observed.

Informing Parents:

It will be standard practice to inform parents/guardians if their son/daughter has been involved in a tobacco or alcohol or illicit drug incident in breach of the policy. Procedures will be as per Code of Discipline. Parents may ask the School Principal or Counsellor to put them in contact with an appropriate external agency if they wish to seek further support for themselves.

Informing Gardai:

This school has a positive working relationship with local Gardai and together we have the welfare of the individual student, other students and the wider school community to consider. Garda advice may be sought about incidents that are illegal and constitute a breach of this policy. This decision will rest with the Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads and School Counsellor.

Sanctions/Disciplinary Issues:

- ◆ As per the Code of Discipline of this school a graded system of firm and consistent sanctions up to and including expulsion will apply to students involved in alcohol or illicit drug incidents.
- ◆ Students may also be required to enter in to a behaviour contract guaranteeing compliance with school requirements and possibly attending for counselling.
- ◆ Smoking or possession of cigarettes – one day suspension
- ◆ Vaping or possession of vaping equipment – 2 weeks suspension and referral to B.O.M.
- ◆ Consumption/possession of alcohol – one-week suspension & referral to B.O.M.
- ◆ Possession or suspected consumption /appearing under the influence of illicit substances – Immediate removal from school & immediate suspension pending consideration by B.O.M.

Support / Pastoral Issues:

Students directly involved in illicit drug incidents will be referred by school management and Guidance Counsellor to external agencies if necessary in association with parents/guardians for further support.

Students or other members of the school who wish to speak to someone about their own misuse of alcohol or illicit drugs, or that of a person about whom they are concerned, are invited to approach the Principal, Deputy Principals or Guidance Counsellor. They will be offered support and information about external services.

Procedure for Disposal of Illegal Drugs:

If an illegal drug (or suspected illegal drug) is found on school property or during school activity, it should be brought to the attention of the Principal or person in charge. It should be stored securely in the presence of at least two staff members, if possible, while Gardai are called to come and collect it. The substance should be handled as little as possible in the interim and no attempt should be made to analyse it.

Two staff members should be present during any procedures involving handling of illegal substances.

Search:

This school retains the right to search any part of school property if there is reasonable cause to believe a substance in breach of this policy may be contained therein. Two staff members must be present during any form of search. Students will be given the option to volunteer the substance prior to search. If a student refuses, their parents/guardians may be called in and Gardai may be called to conduct a search of any school member should illegal activity be suspected.

Health and Safety:

Should a medical emergency arise from suspected substance use, normal Health and Safety/Emergency procedures of the school will be followed. It is also the role of students to notify a staff member should they believe a school member to be in need of medical attention. The Substance Use Committee would like the Health and Safety Committee to review first aid procedures in view of requirement for current certification for those who administer first aid.

III. Provision for Staff Training and Development:

Any training needs arising out of the implementation of this policy will be met. Staff are invited to monitor their training needs on an ongoing basis and bring these to the attention of school management.

Success Criteria:

The monitoring, review and evaluation processes set out below will focus mainly on whether provisions of this policy have been implemented and whether they have been deemed appropriate and effective by those involved.

Monitoring:

The Principal, Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellor and appropriate staff assume responsibility for monitoring the effective implementation of this policy.

Review and Evaluation:

It will be subject to review and evaluation in keeping with the Whole School Planning Process. Review and evaluation will be conducted by original committee after one year.

Implementation Programme:

All parents/guardians will be invited to a Parents Association meeting to discuss the draft policy. All parents/guardians will receive a final copy of the policy by post. They are encouraged to discuss the policy with their son/daughter. In future years, the policy will be added to the list of those available for parents to request.

Students will be made aware of the policy through the substance use education programme.

Staff will be made aware of the policy by being given a copy of the draft document, through discussion of same and thereafter through the staff induction pack.

Date from which the policy is operational: 2023

Ratified by the Board of Management on ____/____/_20____

Due for Review: ____/____/_20____

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Chairperson, Board of Management.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Principal.

