




St Augustine's Catholic High School and Sixth Form

Misuse of Drugs, Alcohol or other Substance Abuse Policy

Approved		Date
Principal G T O'Connor		16.11.20
Cycle of Review: 3 years		
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ST AUGUSTINE'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM

DEVELOPING THE WHOLE PERSON

Misuse of Drugs, Alcohol or Other Substance Abuse Policy

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8

Please note that for the purpose of this policy, the term 'medical condition' also refers to mental health conditions.

Introduction

The School acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people and the centrality of our mission as a Catholic school to create a caring community. The School is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safeguard their well-being. The School commits to educate students regarding all issues relating to drugs and alcohol, including their misuse and illegal supply.

Aims of the Drugs and Substances Education in the School

- To help young people develop positive attitudes towards living healthy lives.
- To educate young people to the risks of substance misuse and the impact on their health.
- To give young people the means to make informed choices.
- To give young people the skills to resist drug-taking.
- To enable young people to identify sources of appropriate personal support.
- To help staff recognise and respond appropriately to substance-related incidents.

Context

Education can play a key role in ensuring that young people know the risks of drug-taking and have the knowledge and skills to resist. The school works in partnership with parents, health and social services, the police, specialist drug prevention workers in delivering drugs education and responding to any substance related incidents.

Drugs

The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, states that it is illegal to possess or supply a drug covered by the Act, unless authorised (e.g. possessing drugs prescribed for personal medical use). Solvents are dangerous substances as well. Under the Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1965, it is illegal for anyone to supply or offer to supply a substance if they know or believe that the substance being supplied will be inhaled by a person under 18 for the purpose of intoxication. Paradoxically it is not actually an offence to inhale solvents for the purpose of intoxication. However, the police are normally able to deal with such offences under public order provision.

Tobacco, E-Cigarettes and Vaping

Smoking is the single most preventable cause of premature death and ill-health in our society. The school policy on smoking aims to give students the message that the habit creates health problems for smokers and non-smokers alike, that non-smoking represents the norm in society and that it receives support from the School and staff. It is an offence for children under 18 years to be sold tobacco products and this includes E-cigarettes and vapes.

Alcohol

Alcohol is a depressant drug, particularly when taken in large quantities. Even at low levels, the potential for serious accidents arises. The Licensing Act of 1964 makes it generally illegal for alcohol to be sold to anyone under the age of 18, or for a person under 18 to buy alcohol.

Dealing with Incidents

Teachers and support staff should be alert to the warning signs which may indicate that a student is misusing drugs or has other drug paraphernalia present in school; any concerns should be recorded on MyConcerns. In the event that a student appears to be suffering from acute intoxication or physical collapse, staff should call for a first-aider and medical help should be sought. The Principal must always be notified of any drugs-related incident. Students under the influence of alcohol or drugs must be removed from the premises by their parents. A written report must be made of any incident and placed on file.

If a student discloses to a teacher that he or she is taking drugs, the teacher should make clear that he or she can offer no guarantee of confidentiality. All teachers should be aware of their position on 'confidentiality':

1. Staff must not make promises of absolute confidentiality and must inform the student of the possible need to involve others.
2. If the disclosure involves immediate danger to the student or others confidentiality should not be maintained.
3. If a student's disclosure is connected with a criminal offence, any promise of confidentiality is inadmissible in a court of law.
4. However open relationships are between students and teachers, and teachers and the Principal, one still has authority over the other.

Where a student has been identified as being at risk because of experimentation with drugs, appropriate support and counselling will be given within the school's pastoral system. Support of parents and outside agencies will normally also be sought. Although there is no statutory requirements to do so, it would normally be expected that the school inform the police when illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia are found on a pupil or on school premises. Students on prescribed medication should only bring to school the required dose to be taken during school hours.

Staff are entitled to search a student's bag or locker where there is reasonable cause to believe it contains illegal items. Staff are entitled to take temporary possession of a substance suspected of being a controlled drug. It should then be handed to the police. Cigarettes or alcohol should be confiscated and may be returned only to parent(s) in person.

Intimate physical searches should never be made by a teacher. Where substances open to abuse are legally held within school (eg: duplication fluid, glues, aerosols, etc) they should be strictly controlled and stored in a secure cabinet with careful supervision of their use.

Any instances of possession (including drug paraphernalia) use of supply of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia on school premises, on school events, on any activities or on any journey to and from school will be regarded with the utmost seriousness. Where a student is considered to place the health and safety of other students at risk, this could lead up to and include a permanent exclusion.