

# Woodbrook College Bray, Co. Wicklow



## Substance Misuse Policy

This policy was drafted in consultation with the education partners at Woodbrook College, Bray, Co. Wicklow and in accordance with relevant legislation, guidelines and the National Drugs Strategy. The policy fully reflects the ethos of the school and embraces fully the guiding principles of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014

## **Introduction**

Woodbrook College is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to substance misuse. The policy has been drawn up and accepted by the Principal, Teachers, Parents/Guardians, Board of Management and Students. It is necessary that all involved work together to implement this policy. It is vital that parents/guardians actively work with the school to implement this policy to ensure their children's health and safety. The School recognises that drugs, both legal and illegal, are available in the local community and that the School, as part of that community, has an important role to play in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents. In this policy "Substance" refers to anything which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally and includes but is not limited to:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Medicines
- Over the counter remedies
- Illegal drugs
- Solvents e.g. glue, tippex etc
- Cleaning agents
- Gases
- Aerosols
- Laboratory chemicals
- Performing enhancing substances
- E-Cigarettes

This policy applies to the whole school community of Woodbrook College and applies during school time (including breaks) plus on all school related activities and trips whether inside or outside school and whether during or outside normal school times.

The Board of Management of Woodbrook College realises that it is one of its responsibilities to reduce the threat that the availability of drugs, alcohol and other substances poses to the academic, social and emotional welfare of its school community and especially its students through:

- 1) The establishment of a clear, comprehensive, prevention-based substance use/misuse programme for the school.
- 2) The provision of a well-articulated set of guidelines, applied uniformly, to address incidents of substance misuse that affect the school environment.
- 3) Having a zero tolerance threshold in terms of substance misuse and related activity.
- 4) Having staff educated in the causes, risk factors, signs and progressive nature of substance misuse so that they can detect problems, counsel, give advice and act as role models for their students.

## **The school Ethos**

As stated in the School's mission statement, Woodbrook College is committed to enabling students to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, cultural and physical potential within the context of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter. It also is committed to fostering the development of personal responsibility. This is the ethos which guides the School Health Policy.

- The School does not accept or tolerate the possession, use or supply of illegal substances in the school, or on outside activities or in non-school time by any member of the school community regardless of the attitude of parents in the home.

- The School does not accept or tolerate the possession of any form of drug paraphernalia by any student in school or on outside activities.
- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco (including e-cigarettes) in the school or on school activities by any student.
- The School does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances. Students may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only.
- Students who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school long term must inform the school.
- The School must be informed if a student has a medical condition and relevant teachers, e.g. P.E. teacher must be informed also.
- A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine.
- Chemicals in school laboratories will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher's supervision.

## Aims

The main aims of this policy are:

- 1) To instil in students a responsible attitude towards the use of drugs, alcohol and other substances.
- 2) To develop, in students, decision-making skills and knowledge of factors, which influence the process of making decisions, including choosing between alternatives and considering long and short-term consequences of decisions for themselves and others.
- 3) To help students appreciate ways in which they can control aspects of their own behaviour and resist negative peer pressure.
- 4) To provide opportunities for students in Woodbrook College to acquire knowledge and understanding about the dangers of drug/alcohol misuse and the effects of solvents, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs on body and mind functions.
- 5) To increase students' understanding of situations in which substances may be offered, both legally and illegally and to develop skills for remaining in control in such situations.
- 6) To make students aware of the law relating to the misuse of drugs/alcohol and tobacco.
- 7) To provide knowledge about how to access agencies external to the school e.g. counselling services, clinics, hospitals etc.
- 8) To set out clear procedures to be followed by staff in Woodbrook College that suspect that substance misuse is taking place or that substances are being brought onto school premises or on school related activities.
- 9) To ensure that all members of the school community understand the very serious view which Woodbrook College takes of all instances of possession, use/misuse or supply of illegal drugs and the misuse of alcohol, tobacco, other substances and legal drugs.
- 10) To set out a clear statement of the disciplinary measures that will be applied in relation to substance misuse related incidents.
- 11) To set out support and counselling structures that will be part of the response to substance misuse related offences in school and on school related activities.
- 12) To ensure that all staff involved in specific substance misuse education have adequate training and/or support as follows:
  - That there is a shared understanding among the staff of the value of SPHE re: prevention of substance misuse.
  - That all staff members are aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of substance misuse within their own subject area.
  - That all staff members are familiar with the signs of substance misuse.
  - That all members of staff are aware of the laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use as they relate to themselves, to the school and to students.

## **Individual Roles**

### **The Principal**

The role of the Principal shall be to:

- a) Have overall responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the policy
- b) Consult with parents and appropriate outside agencies
- c) Appoint a Social, Personal and Health Education co-ordinator within the school who will have oversight of the curricular aspects of the policy.
- d) Ensure that all staff dealing with substance misuse issues are adequately trained and supported, subject to the availability of necessary resources.
- e) Under the overall direction of the chairperson of the Board, make all decisions regarding investigation of an incident, communication with, liaison with and reporting to relevant parties and disclosure of information regarding an incident/investigation.
- f) Provide parents with information on what is happening within the school regarding substance misuse educational programmes.
- g) Encourage parents to support the school in the overall implementation of its substance misuse policies for example by arranging relevant speakers at the Parents' Council AGM.

### **The Board of Management**

The role of the Board of Management shall be to:

- a) Ensure that the school name is not used for or associated with any event or function at which underage drinking and/or illegal activities may take place.
- b) Ensure that this policy is adopted, circulated and implemented and that it is reviewed, at school level, on a regular basis.
- c) Ensure that structured training in this area is provided for all staff, subject to the availability of necessary resources.
- d) Ensure that all information is collected and issued in accordance with all relevant Data Protection legislation.

### **The School Staff**

The role of the school staff shall be to:

- a) Understand the need to warn students who confide in them that certain information cannot be dealt with in total confidence.
- b) Respond sensitively to the needs of individuals to speak and gain advice from adults they trust. In so doing students may confess to some drugs/alcohol involvement and this may require referral to the Principal depending on the seriousness of the involvement and its location.
- c) Act as a positive role model for students generally, and especially in relation to drug/alcohol use.

### **Parents**

The role of parents shall be to:

- a) Acknowledge the importance of education programmes and policies as they relate to issues of substance misuse.
- b) Recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance misuse.
- c) Assist and cooperate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

## Policy Focus

This policy prohibits the possession, use or supply of banned drugs, drugs paraphernalia or alcohol by any student in the school, on school tours or trips or any school related activity. Using, selling, buying or having illegal drugs or alcohol in your possession is prohibited. By law, smoking is forbidden on the school premises. Breaches of rules in relation to illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco will be dealt with in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

This Substance Misuse policy is focused in four key areas:

- 1) Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes
- 2) Managing Substance Misuse Related Incidents
- 3) Training and Staff Development
- 4) Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

The programme of education will be age-appropriate and will seek to build on and complement existing programmes already being taught in the school – SPHE; PE and CSPE. In this regard, parents are asked and expected to:

- Acknowledge the importance of these programmes
- Recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse.
- Assist and co-operate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

### 1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.

The School is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programme for all students. Our educational aims are:

- To create a climate where students and those who work with them feel free to talk openly and honestly.
- To increase the 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 decisions
- To provide clear and age appropriate information on drugs
- To minimise the harm caused by drug abuse by offering supportive interventions

These aims will be achieved through:

- 1) The SPHE co-ordinator
- 2) Teachers are offered Drug Awareness training, SPHE training or any other relevant training.
- 3) Outside speakers are used where appropriate to reinforce the work done in class.
- 4) Parents/Guardians will be consulted on the need for drug education and will be informed of what is happening in the School. Drug information and drug awareness sessions are organised for parents annually.
- 5) Student Drug Education will be achieved through:
  - SPHE Programme
  - Science
  - Transition Year talk
  - Outside speakers/drama workshops where appropriate.
- 6) The availability of the school pastoral and counselling services.
- 7) The organisation of a "Drug Awareness Day" involving the use of outside speakers, workshops, drama groups etc.

## **2. Managing Substance Misuse Related Incidents**

Substance abuse related incidents might involve the following:

- a) Possession of a legal / illegal drug on the school premises, on the way to or from school or on a school related activity.
- b) Use of illegal substances or the misuse of legal substances on the school premises, on the way to or from school or on a school related activity.
- c) Selling or otherwise supplying illegal substances on the school premises, on the way to or from school or on a school related activity.
- d) Suspicion of drug use, possession or dealing.
- e) Intoxication or unusual behaviour.
- f) Drug paraphernalia found on school property

### ***The School Approach***

The whole school community needs to be aware of and alert for the signs of substance misuse and changes in behaviour. All incidents will be assessed individually. Due care will be taken to discern between allegation, suspicion and direct evidence of substance misuse.

We acknowledge that in all situations involving substance misuse, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the student, the needs of the school community, the reputation of the school and legal considerations. Disciplinary procedures will be followed if the Code of Behaviour has been breached (see Code of Behaviour). Serious breaches may result in expulsion.

In the case of a student being allowed to return to school following a drug or alcohol related incident, the school reserves the right to attach whatever conditions it deems necessary to that return. These conditions may include external counselling, on-going testing for drugs use and on-going consultations with external agencies such as Psychologist/Counsellor, Juvenile Liaison Officer, H.S.E. etc.

### ***Confidentiality***

On Health and Safety grounds, total confidentiality cannot always be offered to a person who discloses a substance misuse related incident. However, every effort will be made to protect the identity of the source of information. It is important in all suspected or confirmed substance misuse incidents that a limited number of people are involved in managing the incident. Information will be restricted to the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Year Head and persons directly involved in the case and only disclosed on a strict 'need to know' basis. Parents will be informed of all substance misuse related incidents including intoxication / unusual behaviour / suspicion of drug use etc.

### ***Procedures***

- Where it is apparent that there is immediate danger to students or the school community, the school reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school any student involved in a suspected substance misuse incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident.
- In a situation where a student in school or on a school activity is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, the student will be removed from the situation and will remain with two members of staff until a parent/guardian or other nominated person comes to the school to take the student home. The welfare of the student is of utmost importance and

where deemed necessary, the school will seek medical attention for the student.

- Woodbrook College will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any substance misuse incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this.
- Woodbrook College will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances and drug paraphernalia associated with a substance misuse incident, carefully recording all such items and retaining them pending completion of the investigation, unless otherwise instructed by appropriate outside agencies.
- In the event of an incident, the school will seek statements from all persons involved in, concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident and will record these statements.
- Woodbrook College will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of an incident, including records referred to in the above steps, 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, any penalties or disciplinary measures imposed following an investigation, and the management and outcome of any appeal that may arise following an investigation.
- Woodbrook College, 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. The Gardaí will be informed of all incidents involving illegal drugs.
- A member of staff, having good reason for believing that a student may be in possession of an illegal or dangerous substance, may, in the presence of another teacher or responsible adult, ask that student to empty his/her pockets or bag. If the student refuses, the matter should be referred immediately to a senior member of staff who will repeat the request. In the event of another refusal, the parents shall be contacted to obtain their permission. Where there is good reason for doing so, or where a student attempts to destroy, or otherwise dispose of such substance the Gardaí may be called, and reasonable efforts may be made by staff to preserve evidence.
- If the circumstances merit and the investigation is continuing, Woodbrook College will put the full particulars of the incident to the students concerned and their parents 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 parents (subject at the discretion of Woodbrook College to the removal first of any confidential or other matters pertaining to other persons) – in time to permit the student a reasonable opportunity to make his own reply to the matters at issue and any representations that he would wish to make or have made on his behalf.
  - (b) Woodbrook College will allow the student concerned and his parents' reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. Woodbrook College 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) Woodbrook College shall shortly thereafter inform the student and his parents of their findings and their reasons for these. If the school finds that the student has been guilty of or involved in an incident, it shall dictate the penalty or sanctions that it intends to impose in the circumstances.
- In relation to a verified and investigated incident, the Board of Management may implement disciplinary actions or sanctions, including but not limited to: an oral warning, a written warning, a suspension, other sanctions, and expulsion.
- Woodbrook College 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.

- Woodbrook College will also ensure that pastoral supports are offered to the students and parents affected by an incident of substance misuse. These incidents can be traumatic for those involved and the services of the Pastoral Care team in the school will be made available as appropriate.

### ***Liaison with the Media***

In the interest of confidentiality, no statement should be made to the media in relation to any issue of substance misuse related incidents in the school or on school related activities. The Principal shall be the designated person for dealing with the media. The Principal will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and procedures in place to manage any substance misuse related incident.

## **3. Training & Development**

Woodbrook College will provide training in this area as follows:

### **Staff**

- The School will facilitate training for staff involved in the SPHE programmes.
- All staff will be offered substance misuse information and awareness training.
- Specific training will be made available to the Substance Misuse Co-Ordinator and key staff in relation to managing substance misuse related incidents.
- First Aid training will be made available to all staff regularly.

### **Parents/Guardians**

The School will provide opportunities to attend substance misuse workshops, information evenings and sessions on the School Substance Misuse Policy as part of the induction for parents/guardians of new pupils to the School and as part of Parents Council information meetings

### **Students**

The School will offer all its students substance misuse education programmes within the context of their SPHE classes and other relevant parts of the curriculum. In addition, there may be workshops, seminars or presentations made by outside agencies to selected class groups or the full school cohort.

## **4. Monitoring the Policy, Review and Evaluation**

The Pastoral Care Committee and Principal will monitor the policy once a year to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the School, to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices. The result will be recorded and made available to the Principal.

Each of the following areas will be reviewed:

- Substance Misuse Education Programmes
- Managing Substance Misuse Related Incidents
- Parent, Staff and Management Training

### **Evaluation**

Teachers, Parents/Guardians, Students and the Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for one year. Again the three specified areas above will be evaluated. The Board of Management will review and ratify the amended policy annually.



## **Dissemination of Policy**

Copies of this policy will be available to all the school community to download from the school website on [www.saintbrendans.ie](http://www.saintbrendans.ie). Hard copies are available on request from the school office. Copies will be given to all new staff as part of their induction to the School. Students will be made aware of the policy within the context of the SPHE programme.

## **Definitions**

### **A Substance Misuse Incident**

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 or welfare of the student concerned, to other students or to the reputation of the school. The school reserves the right to determine whether a specific incident constitutes an abuse incident to be addressed under the terms of the policy.

### **Substance Misuse Paraphernalia**

Any banned or prohibited substance, any items that may be used in the taking of illicit substances, and any written or printed material promoting the use of illicit substances.

### **The School**

The school includes school buildings, grounds, play areas, public areas where students congregate coming to and going from school.

### **Banned or Prohibited Substances**

All substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non-validated prescription medication, all alcohol and tobaccos used contrary to the law of the land. The school reserves the right to determine that a substance found at the school qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance.

## **Support Services**

### **Telephone Numbers**

Emergency .....	999
Poisons Information Service – Beaumont Hospital .....	01-8092566/01-8379966
Loughlinstown Hospital .....	01-2825800
Tallaght Hospital.....	01-4142000
St. Vincent’s Hospital .....	01-2694533
St.James’s Hospital .....	01-4103000
Shankill Garda Station .....	01-6665900
HSE – Drugs Information/HIV helpline .....	1800-459459

**Review**

Review Date:..... \_\_\_\_\_