



SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

Background

- Patrician Academy is committed to promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of every student in its care and it seeks to enable students fulfil their intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, cultural and personal potential by providing them with a holistic education in fulfilment of the Academy's mission.
- The Academy recognizes that drugs, including lawful and controlled substances are accessible within the local community and as part of that community, it has a role to play in the education, prevention, support and management of drug related and substance abuse incidents.
- The Academy seeks to create an environment that fosters a responsible understanding of and attitude towards the risks and dangers of substance abuse for the benefit and wellbeing of all members of the Academy community.
- The Academy is dedicated to working together with parents and staff in implementing this policy for the benefit and welfare of all students.

Scope

- This Policy is concerned with the abuse and misuse of any substance, controlled or otherwise, drugs, solvents, alcohol and tobacco which has the effect of damaging and/or altering the way in which the human body functions, whether at a physical, psychological or emotional level and it includes the abuse of substances that may not, in themselves, be unlawful.
- The policy reflects the school's ethos and mission statement which is committed to the pursuit of excellence, encouraging students to develop their full academic and intellectual potential and to enhancing each student's sense of dignity and self-worth.
- The policy applies to all members of the school community.
- The terms of this policy are without prejudice to the use of prescribed medications taken by a student under medical supervision for the purposes of the management or treatment of a medical condition. Where students are

required to take prescribed medication notice must be given thereof to the Academy.

- The Patrician Academy is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school, including the needs of the individual, in relation to substance use. The policy has been drawn up and accepted by the Staff, Parents/Guardians, Board of Management and Students. It is essential 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.
- In this policy 'staff' means teachers, SNAs, office staff and caretakers.
- The school recognises that Parents/Guardians have the primary responsibility in all areas of health education and as such play a pivotal role in implementing and supporting this policy.
- The School does not accept the illegal possession, use or supply of any substance, whether controlled or prescribed, in the school, adjacent to the school, on outside activities or in school related activities, by any member of the school community. This includes the possession, use and supply of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes or hallucinogenic substances.
- A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine.
- Chemicals in school laboratories are controlled substances and will only be handled under teachers' supervision. All chemicals will be stored securely.

Rationale

This policy is necessary to:

- Reflect societal change
- Comply with Circular 33/91 Discipline in Schools, Guidelines towards Positive Policy for School Behaviour.
- Comply with the Education Act 1998 which provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- Comply with Children First 2011 which emphasises that the welfare and protection of children is of paramount importance.
- Clarify procedures.
- Provide a reference point for parents, students and staff and the wider community.

Goals/objectives

This policy aims to:

- To provide a safe and secure environment that promotes the welfare and

development of students as members of the Academy community.

- To protect students from the actual and potential harmful effects of substance abuse through education and the provision of accurate information.
- To recall the responsibilities of all students, staff and parents in relation to the protection of students from substance abuse.
- Set out the Academy's procedures for dealing with substance use incidents.
- To clarify the consequences of any breach of the Academy's prohibition on substance abuse as outlined in this policy.
- Provide educational and preventative programmes to students on a cross curricular basis and from outside agencies.

Implementation/procedures

- All members of the school community will be aware of the policy and will be expected to adhere to it.
- The School is committed to providing a programme on Substance Use for all students. The programme aims to :
 - Increase the self-esteem and confidence of students.
 - Equip students with personal and social skills.
 - Enable students to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions.
 - Provide clear and age appropriate information on substance use including information on services available locally to support students.
- Avoid and minimise the harm caused by substance abuse by offering supportive interventions.

To achieve these aims:

- Staff are offered Drug Awareness training, SPHE training or any other relevant training.
- Guest speakers are used where appropriate to support and reinforce the work done in class.
- Parents/Guardians will be consulted regarding drug education programmes and will be informed of what is happening in the School.
- The programme on substance use will be delivered to students on a cross curricular basis where all teachers will use opportunities in their subject area to reinforce school policy and deal with relevant substance use issues. Teachers of SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) and of RE (Religious Education) will teach modules on substance use.

Assessing a substance abuse incident

- An incidence of substance abuse may come to the attention of the Academy in any number of ways, including, through the manifestation of unusual or intoxicated behaviour, disclosure by a third party, the presence of drug related material on the person of a student, the discovery of evidence on the Academy premises or through the occurrence of an emergency or a critical incident.
- Whenever such an incident of substance abuse occurs, it is assessed as a serious incident.
- Take time to listen and assess before responding.
- In situations of confirmed use or possession, act in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Complete a substance abuse incident report.

Managing a substance abuse incident

- The Patrician Academy views all instances of substance abuse in a serious light. An incidence of substance abuse involves any circumstance in which a student uses, possesses, distributes or supplies drugs, solvents, alcohol or tobacco at any time whether on or off the Academy premises.
- An incident of substance abuse may give rise to personal, pastoral, disciplinary, legal and other considerations. The Academy will at all times discharge its moral and legal obligations to report matters to the relevant authorities, as appropriate and necessary.
- Whereas information concerning an incident of substance abuse is treated as confidential, the Academy does not and cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality of the information relating thereto.
- Information is communicated on a 'need to know' basis, including, where necessary to the relevant authorities. The limits of confidentiality are discussed with students before any disclosure is made.
- Parents are informed, they will be informed sensitively and support offered to them.
- All written records will be held confidentially by the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- The Principal or Deputy Principal will handle all media enquiries. They will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and procedures in place.
- Where a student presents with a substance abuse problem a referral to the appropriate support services will be made.

Disciplinary Procedures

Substance use incidents may be complex and in situations where there is a breach of the schools Code of Behaviour sanctions and punishments will be implemented in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff:

- Comply with, support and implement the policy
- Inform the Principal/Deputy Principal if there are concerns.
- Complete an incident report when appropriate with reference to school's Code of Behaviour and Child Protection Procedures

Students:

- Comply with and support the policy
- Report any concerns regarding substance use in the school

Principal/Deputy Principal:

- Oversee the implementation of the policy.
- Create and foster links with external agencies.
- Be available for staff and students.

Parents/Guardians:

- Support the school policy
- Inform the school if their son is taking prescribed medication.
- Report any concerns regarding substance use in the school.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

- Bearing in mind that students and staff needs are of paramount importance in the Substance Use Policy, the Principal/Deputy Principal will monitor the implementation of the policy.
- The policy will be monitored, formally and informally, in staff meetings, by the Pastoral Care Committee and at Year Head meetings.
- The policy will be reviewed on a periodic basis by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor and two Year Heads in consultation with the Parents Association, Staff and the Student Council.
- The monitoring and review procedure shall seek to ensure that best practice in relation to the prevention and management of substance abuse is observed.