

St Vincent's Castleknock College

Substance Use Policy

1 Introductory Statement

This Substance Use Policy is an expanded expression of the policies contained in the Code of Behaviour of St Vincent's Castleknock College and should be read in conjunction with that document.

Within this policy statement the term 'substance' means anything introduced into the body which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally, for example tobacco, alcohol or drugs.

2 Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to the whole school community in their relationships with students – students, teachers, management, Board of Management, parents, office and ancillary staff. While this policy addresses issues related to substance use by students, the policy applies to teaching and other school staff, parents/guardians, and others insofar as measures under the policy relate to them.

3 Rationale for this Policy

3.1 The Trustees have a statutory obligation to ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the principles and values of the religious and educational philosophy of the school.

3.2 The Department of Education and Skills requires schools to have a written policy on substance use.

3.3 Involving and encouraging all members of the school community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on substance use promotes partnership, ownership and implementation of a living policy.

4 Relationship of this Policy to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

The Mission Statement of St Vincent's Castleknock College is set out as follows:

To have a College which is concerned with the development of the whole person in a Christian atmosphere which encourages involvement in a balance of religious, intellectual, cultural and sporting activities and which promotes the growth of self-worth and respect for others in the spirit of St Vincent de Paul.

This Mission Statement necessitates the creation and maintenance of an environment whereby the using, possession and dealing of substances is forbidden in order that the full potential of our students may be achieved. The school is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to the use and misuse of substances.

The College's Mission Statement guides the College's focus on health and safety and the College Substance Use Policy:

4.1 The College does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the school, or on outside activities or in non school time by any member of the school community.

4.2 The College does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco in the school or on school activities by any student.

4.3 The College does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances. Students may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only.

4.4 Students who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school long term must inform the school, with a note signed by parents on file.

4.5 The College must be informed if a student has a medical condition and relevant teachers, e.g. P.E. teacher must be informed also.

4.6 A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine.

4.7 Dangerous chemicals in school laboratories will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher's supervision.

5 Goals/Objectives of this Policy

5.1 To fulfil our mission commitment of fostering an atmosphere of respect, understanding, and encouragement between all who teach, work and learn in the school, so that the development and contribution of every individual can be acknowledged, and all can work together to benefit personal growth and the common good.

5.2 To ensure each student's right to enjoy his learning and leisure free from substance use, both in the school and while engaged in school-related activities.

5.3 To enable students and staff alike to support each other by reporting all instances of substance abuse. We will be a school where responsible reporting is the norm.

5.4 To confront those who abuse substances and give them realistic, firm and consistent guidelines to help control their behaviour.

5.5 To work with, and through, the various local agencies in countering all forms of substance abuse and anti-social behaviour.

This policy applies during school time (including break times), going to and from school, on school tours/trips and when participating in extra-curricular activities.

6 Key Measures

This policy is focused in four key areas:

- Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents
- Training and Staff Development
- Monitoring, Review and Evaluation.

7 Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes

7.1 The College Position

Castleknock College is committed to providing a comprehensive drug education

programme for all students.

7.2 Our educational aims in relation to Drug Education are:

- To increase the self-esteem and confidence of our students.
- To equip our students with personal and social skills.
- To enable young people to make informed, healthy and responsible choices.
- To provide honest and age appropriate information on drugs.
- To minimise the harm caused by drug abuse by offering supportive interventions.

7.3 These aims will be met through the following actions:

- All teachers involved in SPHE will be given the opportunity to avail of training in group facilitation skills and personal development.
- A Drug Co-ordinator will be appointed.
- Staff teaching the Drug Education Programmes will be given the opportunity to avail of training in The Substance Abuse Prevention Pack (SAPP).
- All teachers will be offered Drug Information and Drug Awareness training through regular in- service training.

7.4 Outside Speakers

While teachers are in the best position to carry out drug education sometimes it may be appropriate to use an outside speaker to supplement or reinforce the work done in class.

7.5 Parents

Parents are to be made aware and informed of what is happening in the college with regard to drug education. This will happen on a “yearly” basis. Parents will also be made aware on the position of the college regarding any student who is found in possession or to be using legal/illegal substances.

8 Managing Drug Related Incidents

8.1 The College approach

- We acknowledge that in all situations involving drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the young person, the needs of the school community, the reputation of the school and legal considerations.
- Listening, separating fact from myth and support is our initial approach to any situation. Disciplinary procedures will be followed if school rules are broken. The usual range of sanctions, including suspension and/or expulsion, will be available.

8.2 Drug incidents

The following are examples of a drug incident:

- Emergencies when the person may be unconscious
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour
- Suspicion/rumour of drug use, possession or dealing
- Disclosure by another person
- Possession of a legal/illegal drug on college grounds or on a college related activity
- Selling/supplying legal/illegal drugs
- College grounds being used for drug activity
- Drug paraphernalia found on college property

8.3 Assessing a drug incident

In all cases where there is no immediate danger to the student(s), it is important to take time to assess the situation before responding. All incidents should be recorded accurately using a report form. (An example of the Report Form for recording incidents involving Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use is included at the end of this document.)

8.4 Recording Procedure

- All staff members need to be aware of the signs of drug use and alert for changes in behaviour. Adolescence is a period of great change and rumour must not be taken as evidence of drug use.
- In situations of confirmed use/possession or supply then all the details will be recorded and acted upon.
- A written procedure will be used. This procedure will ensure that a fair process of challenging the student about behaviour of concern is in place. This recording procedure will take place using the report form.

8.5 Confidential Management

It is important in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents that a limited number of people are involved in managing the incident. People will be informed on a “need to know” basis. The Headmaster, Guidance Counsellor and person/s directly involved in the case will be informed and all documentation held confidentially.

8.6 Parents

In all cases the college will inform parents/guardians. This needs to be handled sensitively and wherever possible or necessary, support offered to them. In the first instance, this support will be offered by the Guidance Counsellor.

8.7 Gardai

Where appropriate, the Headmaster or a designated person will contact the Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) in the event of a confirmed drug incident and any drugs found on the premises will be dealt with by the JLO.

8.8 Counselling/Pastoral Care

The pastoral care system is the college’s first response to a drug incident. For some young people their involvement with drugs may be masking some underlying difficulties and for others it may be a phase of experimentation, which they will pass through safely. In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered. If the student has a serious drug problem then referral to an appropriate service will be recommended. Parents and staff involved in the incident will be offered support.

8.9 Disciplinary Procedures

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the college rules regarding drugs are broken, the sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature and severity of the offence. These will be consistent with school rules regarding other breaches of conduct.

8.10 Confidentiality

Teachers cannot offer total confidentiality to a young person who discloses drug involvement. It is recognised that care is needed in this area as the student may be coming to the teacher because they trust him/her and need help. How this situation is

handled will have an important bearing on the outcome. Information must remain private and only disclosed on a strict “need to know” basis. The student must be informed about what is happening and why.

8.11 Media

The headmaster or a nominated spokesperson will handle all media queries. The college will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the college policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.

9 Training and Staff Development

The College will provide training and staff development as follows:

9.1 Staff

The college will make available training to staff involved in delivering Social, Personal and Health Education Programmes. All staff will be offered drug information and awareness training. Detailed and specific training will be made available to key staff in relation to managing drug related incidents.

9.2 Parents and Board of Management

The college will provide opportunities to attend information evenings and workshops on issues relating to drugs and the college policy.

9.3 Students

The college will offer all its students drug education programmes.

10 Monitoring the Policy

The three aspects of this responsibility are: provision of drug education programmes, management of drug related incidents and provision of parent and staff training

10.1 Review of Policy

The policy will be reviewed regularly following normal review procedures, or more often if required by changing information.

10.2 Evaluation

Teachers, Parents, Students, Board of Management and other relevant groups will be involved in the evaluation of this policy and any changes incorporated into the amended policy. There will be evaluation of all Drug Education Programmes, the Management of Drug Related Incidents and Parent and Staff Training Courses offered to the college community

10.3 Dissemination of Policy

Copies of this policy will be disseminated to all in the college community. It will also be freely available and will be given to all new staff and parents of new students as part of their induction into Castleknock College. The students of Castleknock College will be made aware of the policy as part of their drugs education.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of St Vincent’s Castleknock College at the meeting held on March 19th 2013

**Report Form for recording Incidents
involving Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use**

Name of Student:

Date:

Name of Teacher:

What happened? Include only the facts. What was seen? What was said? Who was involved?

What are your concerns? Is this incident related to others? Do you have suspicions aroused by the incident?

Who has been informed?

What action has been taken?

What further action is necessary?

Signed:

Date: