

Newpark Comprehensive School

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY



1. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Newpark Comprehensive School's 'Substance Use Policy' covers the use of substances potentially harmful to health. The underlying emphasis is one of concern and caring for the students of the school.

2. SCOPE

2.1. This Substance Use Policy applies to:

- a. Alcohol
- b. Illegal drugs i.e. all substances prohibited by current legislation.
- c. Solvents
- d. Prescribed medication
- e. Non-prescribed medication
- f. All other intoxicants and psychoactive substances

(Note: The term 'substance' is used throughout the policy in reference to the above)

2.2. Tobacco related incidents: refer to Relationship and Behaviour Policy.

2.3. This policy applies to students on all school-related activities both on and off the campus, students in the vicinity of the school and when travelling to or from school.

2.4. Reports of information pertaining to the possible supply, possession or use of drugs or any other breach of the substance use policy by students on the school campus or when on school-related activities off the school premises will be communicated to parents/guardians.

3. RATIONALE

3.1. The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of this reality. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their student cohort and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.

3.2. The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.

3.3. Government policy requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.

4. RELATIONSHIP TO THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1. An agreed policy governing substance use enhances the vision of a health promoting approach.

4.2. The staff of Newpark School values each individual. A warm and friendly relationship exists between teachers and students. There is ample provision for Pastoral Care to ensure that each individual is valued. Support services include Guidance Counsellors, form teachers, the School Chaplains and Nurses, as well as Year Leaders who monitor the progress and care of students.

- 4.3. The senior students and staff elect a group of prefects who carry out supervision and pastoral care responsibilities. The democratically elected Student Council ensures that issues concerning the students at large are being addressed.

5. GOALS/OBJECTIVES

- 5.1. To provide a safe and secure environment within which the development of the school community can take place.
- 5.2. To provide a comprehensive programme of education for all students in substance use issues.
- 5.3. To support staff, parents and students in understanding and addressing substance misuse.
- 5.4. To place clear, transparent and fair procedures in place for dealing with incidents relating to substance use.

6. KEY MEASURES

6.1. Education

- a. All Junior Cycle students have Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as part of their curriculum. Substance Use is one module of this course.
- b. Outside speakers can be used to supplement substance use education in Transition Year.
- c. Senior Cycle students are timetabled for a double class of Life-Skills.
- d. Students of the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) complete a module on substance use within the Social Education course.

6.2. Provision for Training and Staff Development

- a. The Board of Management fully supports staff attending SPHE in-service training programmes.
- b. The SPHE support services provide on-going in-service where resources are distributed and shared.

6.3. Management of Substance Use

a: **Where it is suspected that substances may be affecting a student's behaviour**

A staff member who is concerned that a student's behaviour is affected by substance use should refer the matter to the Principal or Deputy Principal and the Student Support team will be consulted. Casual discussion about the student in any other forum is inappropriate and unhelpful.

After consultation with the student, a member of the Student Support team should give appropriate feedback to the referring member of staff. Parents/Guardians may be involved and the student may be referred for external support.

b: Where a student is suspected of presenting to school while under the influence of a substance

If a staff member feels that a student presents to school but is unfit to attend, the nurse should be informed immediately. In a classroom situation, another student should be sent to ask the nurse to come and escort the student to the nurse's office. The nurse will contact the Principal or Deputy Principal and if deemed there is a possibility that the student may be under the influence of a substance, the Parents/Guardians will be contacted and asked to collect the student immediately. Where a student presents to a school activity and is suspected of being under the influence of a substance, the Principal or Deputy Principal will be informed and the parents/guardians will be contacted and asked to collect the student immediately. If it is ascertained that the student has indulged in substance use, a suspension is the recommended consequence. Each incident will be considered on a case by case basis in line with the school's Relationships and Behaviour Policy. Additional supports and consequences will also apply (see Section 7 below).

c: Any student discovered negotiating the sale or purchase of a prohibited or illegal substance with other students (including online activity)

The school, where appropriate, will inform An Garda Síochána by contacting the Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO). The student will be suspended in line with the school's Suspension and Exclusion Policy and exclusion procedures may be considered. Each incident will be considered on a case by case basis in line with the school's Relationships and Behaviour Policy. Additional supports and consequences will also apply (see Section 7 below).

d: Possession or use of Prohibited Substances in school or on school related activities

Where a student is discovered in possession of or using a prohibited substance, the student will be suspended in line with the school's Suspension and Exclusion Policy and exclusion procedures may be considered. The case will be referred to the JLO where appropriate. Each incident will be considered on a case by case basis in line with the school's Relationships and Behaviour Policy. Additional supports and consequences will also apply (see Section 7 below).

e: Selling or supply of Prohibited Substances

Where a student is discovered selling or supplying any of the mentioned substances, the JLO will be informed, if appropriate. The implementation of exclusion procedures is the recommended course of action. The student will be suspended in line with the school's Suspension and Exclusion Policy.

7. ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS AND CONSEQUENCES

In the cases of **b** to **d** above, where appropriate, the following consequences may also apply:

- A Guidance Counsellor will be available to offer support
- Students may be asked to source appropriate support from external agencies
- A period of voluntary work may be undertaken by the student, either in school or with a suitable agency
- Students and Parents/Guardians to sign an agreement
- Restrictions placed on participation with any school trips for a specified period
- Medical evidence to verify that a student is no longer involved in substance misuse

8. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND TO CURRICULUM DELIVERY

- a. This Substance Use Policy links to the Relationships and Behaviour Policy and the Suspension and Exclusion Policy.
- b. The policy links with the SPHE, Science, CSPE and Social Education within the broad Junior and Senior Cycle Curricula.
- c. Administration of medications within the school is referred to in the Nurse's Policy and Protocol.

9. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1. The Principal has the day-to-day responsibility for implementation of the policy, for ensuring that In-Service training takes place and that all staff are adequately informed to implement the policy.

9.2. All staff are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Substance Use Policy and its implementation in their own areas of responsibility and bringing any incidents to the attention of the designated person (s). Any incident of Substance Use reported to a member of staff should be investigated in a fair, confidential and professional manner.

9.3. Newpark believes that values are formed primarily in the home, and that Parents/Guardians, by their own actions and attitudes, have the main responsibility for the behaviour and attitudes of their children with regard to illegal substances.

Parents/Guardians should familiarize themselves with the Policy and should take all reasonable measures to support the school in the implementation of this Policy.

9.4. Students should familiarize themselves with the Policy and co-operate in its implementation. Students are encouraged to report suspected and/or actual Substance Use to a member of staff.

10. RECORDS

The school will maintain a written record of all stages of any investigation involving substance misuse. This will include records of any communication with students, Parents/Guardians and other people or agencies involved with the matter. See Data Protection Policy for further information.

11. RATIFICATION

11.1 This policy will be passed to the Board of Management after consultation with the staff, parents (PTA) and the Student Council.

11.2 Once the policy has been approved by the Board of Management, the policy will be communicated in the following ways:

- a) The policy will be available on the website.
- b) A full copy of the policy will remain in the staffroom.
- c) New members of staff will be given a copy of the policy.

This policy will be reviewed in the academic year 2019/2020 or earlier if required.

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Newpark Comprehensive School at its meeting in June 2016

Signed:

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed:

Secretary, Board of Management