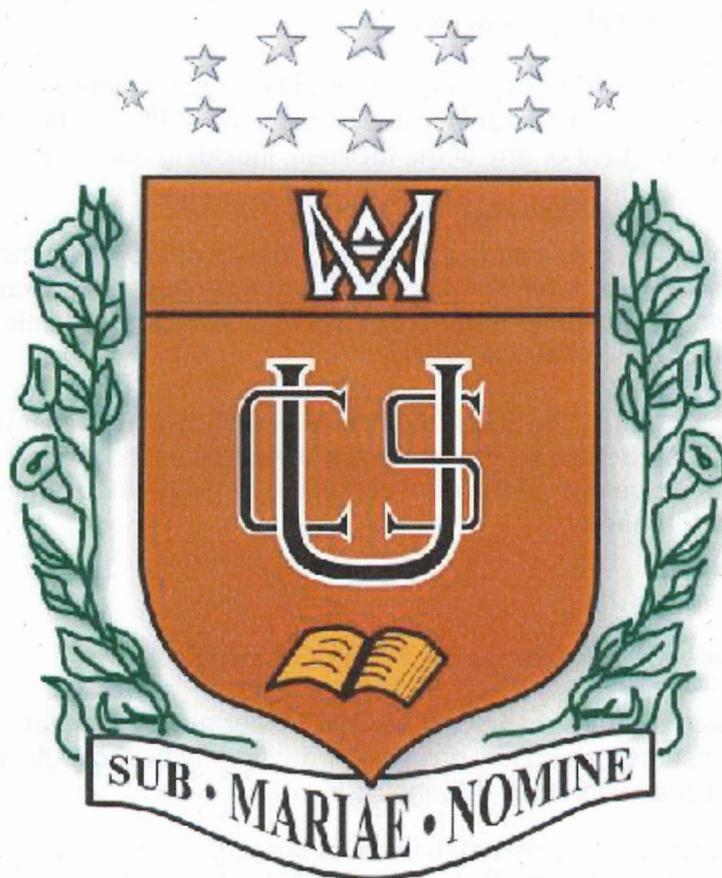


Catholic University School

89 Lower Leeson Street
Dublin 2



Policy on Substance Use/Misuse

Ratified 18 December 2018
For Review: December 2020

Catholic University School

Policy on Substance Use/Misuse

Catholic University School is committed to ensuring that all students, teachers and staff co-exist in a drug-free environment. We will ensure wherever practicable that all stakeholders have responsibility for ensuring that the school and all associated activities are drug free.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to (i) all persons on the school premises and (ii) all students on school-related activities.

It applies (i) during school hours (ii) when the school is being used by others and (iii) on school-related activities, including school tours.

The objective of this policy is to ensure that Catholic University School is a smoke-free, alcohol-free and drugs-free environment for pupils, teaching staff, ancillary staff and all others who use the school itself or any of the facilities, including our sports facilities on Bird Avenue.

This policy covers any substance that is damaging to health and/or alters how the body works, or how a person thinks, feels or behaves. These include vaping, alcohol, un-prescribed drugs, tobacco and other harmful substances, including solvents. The misuse of prescribed drugs also comes under this policy.

Parents/Guardians must inform the school authorities if a student is prescribed prescription drugs that may affect their behaviour. The school will treat as confidential all information relating to prescription drugs and information pertaining to them will be shared on a need-to-know basis agreed beforehand.

The School Rules

The School Rules state the following as per Code of Behaviour:

11.1 Alcohol and other harmful substances may not, under any circumstances be brought into, distributed or consumed on school grounds or during any school outing/event. Please see our School Tour policy and Code of Behaviour.

11.2 Smoking is prohibited in any part of the school building or school grounds, as it is in all public buildings as per Public Health (Tobacco Act 2002) (Commencement order 2003). This includes vaping.

Parents/guardians must inform the school authorities if a student is taking prescribed medication during school hours'. This will also apply to school-related activities, including school tours.

Prevention

The School recognises the importance of education in the prevention of substance abuse and the need to challenge young people to avoid such substances. This responsibility shall lie primarily with the teachers of SPHE, CSPE and RSE in Junior Cycle and the RSE teachers in Senior Cycle. Every effort shall be made to encourage and support the efforts of these teachers in this very important task and, where necessary and feasible, to fund any

initiatives they put in place e.g. Guest Speakers, Poster Competitions, seminars, workshops, etc.

Managing an Incident of Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug-Related or Substance Abuse

An 'incident' may be defined as (i) reasonable grounds for suspicion of the use of any of the substances referred to above or (ii) actual use of such substances.

The health, safety and general wellbeing of the entire student body must underpin the School's pastoral response to any incident.

- Any student smoking (or vaping) in the school, gym, grounds or during school-related activities, **including** school tours, can be suspended. His parents/guardians shall be notified and an interview arranged. A guarantee shall be sought in relation to future conduct. A repeat offender may be required to attend treatment/counselling and the matter may be reported to Tusla.
- Alcohol or un-prescribed drug use or solvent abuse by a student shall result in suspension and may result in expulsion. Parents/guardians shall be contacted immediately to take charge of the situation. Counselling and or regular drug-testing may be offered, and even insisted upon, where judged to be appropriate. Return to school shall be conditional on the School Authorities being convinced that a recurrence is unlikely.
- In the case of alcohol use by any adult person using the school or gym facilities, the person in question shall be cautioned about their behaviour, they will be asked to leave the school premises immediately for the remainder of the day and a recurrence shall result in access being withdrawn. If un-prescribed drugs are involved, the person shall be permanently excluded from the school and/or gym and the Gardaí notified.
- The Gardaí shall be notified of any incident of a person selling or distributing drugs in the school, gym, school grounds, and immediate area of the school and on school related activities, including school tours. If the perpetrator is a student, he shall be suspended immediately pending the Board of Management considering a request for his permanent exclusion.
- A staff member who is under the influence of alcohol or un-prescribed drugs shall not be allowed into a classroom and shall be cautioned as to his/her future behaviour, and will be asked to leave the school premises immediately for the remainder of the day. The incident shall be reported to the Board of Management. The Board shall monitor the situation thereafter and shall take whatever actions it deems appropriate, while complying with natural justice and current employment legislation.

Right of Appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents/guardians (and students who have reached the age of 18) may appeal a decision by the Board of Management to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

Media Involvement

Should any incident come to the attention of the media, the School shall issue a standard response: "We at all times respect the confidentiality and privacy of our students, so we cannot comment except to say that we are dealing with the situation according to our school policies."

Procedures

In the event of an abuse incident, we in Catholic University School will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the individual or individuals involved and the welfare of the school community as a whole and the reputation of the school.

Procedure to be followed in managing and investigating an abuse incident:

1. Where it is obvious 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 abuse incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident.
2. An Abuse Incident Report Form must be filled in (see attached example).
3. The school will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any abuse incident and will take whatever time deemed necessary to do this.
4. Catholic University School will take possession of any banned or prohibited substance and drug paraphernalia associated with an abuse incident, carefully recording all such items and retaining them pending completion of the investigation, unless otherwise instructed by appropriate outside agencies.
5. In the event of an incident, we will seek statements from all persons involved in, concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident and will record these statements.
6. A written record will be maintained of all stages of the investigation of the 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.
7. The school, at our own discretion, will liaise with any appropriate outside authority and seek advice or assistance as we deem appropriate in relation to our investigation of an incident. Gardaí and other agencies may need to be involved.
8. If the circumstances merit and the investigation is continuing, the school 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/her parents – at the discretion of the school – in time to permit the student to a reasonable opportunity to make his/her own reply to the matters at issue and any representations that he/she would wish to make or have made on his/her behalf.
 - (b) The school will allow the student concerned and his/her parents reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. We 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) We shall shortly thereafter inform the student and his/her parents of the school's findings and the reasons for these. If we find that the student has been guilty of or involved or implicated in an incident, we shall indicate the penalty or the sanctions that we intend to impose in the circumstances.
9. 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 of three days' duration, a suspension of more than three days' duration, other sanctions short of expulsion, and expulsion.
10. We, the Board of Management and Staff of Catholic University School, can, at our sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions in order to take account of mitigating circumstances or representations that we consider should be taken into account. The school asserts the right to exercise an appropriate show of mercy.
11. We will also ensure that pastoral supports are offered to the student/students and parents affected by an incident of substance abuse. These incidents can be sometimes traumatic for those involved and we will offer the services of a tutor, counsellor or chaplain in order to demonstrate our Christian Marist commitment in a time of personal crisis.

12. If a member of Staff, be it a teaching or ancillary staff member, should be involved in an incident of abuse, then procedures as have been agreed upon by union bodies and management should be carried out. Non-union workers are subject to the Principal.
13. Visitors to the school are subject to the same strictures as everyone else on the premises.

The Involvement and Roles of Various Parties in an Incident Investigation:

The Principal or his delegate is the person responsible for all matters relating to this area. He/She may nominate the Deputy Principal, or Year Head, or other staff member to act on his/her behalf in the investigation of a substance incident.

The duties and responsibilities of the Principal (hereafter to be understood as meaning the Principal or his/her nominee) in this regard include the following:

1. The Principal is responsible for dealing with abuse incidents arising at the school.
2. All reports of abuse incidents or suspected incidents must be reported to the Principal.
3. The Principal makes all the decisions regarding investigation of an incident; communication with, liaison with, and reporting to relevant parties; and disclosure of information regarding an investigation.
4. The Principal is responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed regarding investigation developments.
5. The Principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storing of any written documentation and records associated with an incident.
6. The Principal is responsible for taking possession of any banned or prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia and deciding what should be done with same, upon appropriate advice.
7. The Principal may seek the assistance of the deputy Principal, year head, and/or school guidance counsellor in conducting an incident investigation.

In the case of a suspected abuse incident, the school will immediately inform parents/guardians – particularly where there is a concern regarding the health and welfare of the child – and share any available information that may help parents/guardians in attending to their child's health and well-being and will keep students informed about what is happening and why. These actions will be taken without prejudice to the school's separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage any abuse incident.

The school recognizes the importance, as far as is practicable, of limiting the number of people involved in investigating and managing an abuse incident and it is the aim of the school only to involve those properly concerned with an incident. Students and parents/guardians must accept that:

The duty of teachers and staff to the whole school community preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any students when they come in contact with an abuse incident or suspected abuse incident.

The school may be required in a given situation to contact, as appropriate, such authorities as the Gardaí, Tusla, Probation Service, Voluntary Services or Officers of the Courts.

The school may need to engage the expert advice of an appropriate third party to properly investigate an incident.

The school may be duty bound to notify certain persons about an incident and/or the outcome of an incident investigation under statute, regulations, or DES guidelines.

As regards to media inquiries into a suspected abuse incident, the school will not comment on any individual matter when an investigation is in progress other than to outline its policy and procedures for managing an incident.

However, in the interests of the school's reputation, the Board of Management may clarify the school's position regarding an incident after the investigation has been completely concluded.

In the case where a Staff member might have concerns about someone being involved in substance abuse they should inform the Principal of their concerns, outlining the specific grounds for their suspicions. The Principal will then decide what action to take.

Training and Development

The school will provide training for the staff, Board of Management, Parents, and Students.

In relation to staff, the school will deliver training in delivering education programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco and drugs, will give specific training on the role of staff in relation to the management and investigation of an abuse incident.

In relation to Parents & the Board of Management the school will provide opportunities to attend information sessions and workshops in relation to drugs and policy, will provide appropriate information, guidance, and support to the board regarding issues relating to investigation of and adjudication on incident investigations.

In relation to the students, the school will offer all student programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco, and will offer drug education within the context of the Junior Cycle, and Leaving Certificate programmes.

Monitoring of the Policy

Review of the Policy

The policy will be reviewed annually, or in the light of changing information. The completed draft of the policy will be circulated among the relevant parties and amended as deemed necessary in January 2021. It will come into force in the 2018-2019 Academic year.

Evaluation

Teachers, Parents, Students, Board of Management and other relevant groups will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for two years and any resulting changes will be incorporated into the amended policy.

Three main areas of the policy we will evaluate are:

- Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents
- Parent, Staff and Management Training and courses offered to the school Community.

Dissemination of Policy

Copies of the policy will be disseminated to all the school community. It will be freely available on the School Website and from the Principal's office.

Young people will be made aware of the policy as part of their drugs education. Parents and students aged over 18 years will be asked to sign a statement to the effect that they have read the policy and agree that they are bound by it.

Signed *Baronnet S. Mervin*
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 18/12/2018

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Appendix 1 – Definitions

The School

This refers to school buildings, grounds, play areas, public areas where students congregate, coming to and going from school, School trips & Tours and any other specific area that may apply.

Banned/Prohibited substances

This refers to all substances banned 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. Vaping is included as a banned substance.

Drug Paraphernalia

This refers to any banned/prohibited substances as defined above, any items that were deemed to have been used in the taking of illicit substances, and any written or printed material promoting the use of illicit substances.

An Abuse Incident

This refers to any incident relating to banned/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 policy or 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.

Parents

This refers to natural parents, foster parents, step-parents, or guardian or the student concerned as applicable, or any person acting in *loco parentis*, either on a temporary or permanent basis, on the date of an abuse incident.

Principal

This refers to the principal for the time being as appointed by the school and defined in the Education Act (Welfare) 2000, or the deputy principal where the principal is either unavailable or has delegated to the deputy principal.

Whole School Community

In dealing with the whole school community, members of staff are subject to procedures as have been agreed by union bodies and management. Non – union workers are subject to procedures agreed with the principal.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Name(s) of individual(s) involved:

Class: _____

Class-Head: _____

Year Head: _____

Details of Incident:

Where it occurred:

When?

Who was involved?

What happened?

What action was taken?

What follow-up has been planned?

Signed _____ Date _____

