

LORETO ABBEY SECONDARY SCHOOL DALKEY



SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

'Our school is a caring Christian Community in which pupils have the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, creatively and physically in a healthy environment'.

Section One: Introduction

1.1 Loreto Abbey is a Catholic school offering a holistic and person centred education. Our school gives priority to the integration of the spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and emotional development of the individual student. This policy is part of a general pastoral approach which attempts to foster this integration and create a healthy, caring and supportive learning environment. The school acknowledges that it can make a positive contribution to the prevention of substance misuse. The welfare and protection of our students is central to our Mission Statement.

1.2 This policy applies to the entire school community - staff, students, parent(s)/guardian(s) and users of the school building. It applies before, during and after school time, in the building and on the school grounds, on school trips, tours and school activities.

1.3 The school asserts its right to protect and promote its characteristic spirit by requiring defined standards of behaviour and prohibiting certain practices.

1.4 This policy is informed by the strategic plan adopted by the Government under the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 and made mandatory for schools in Circular 18/02, the Education Act (1998) and the Education Welfare Act (2000). It takes account of our Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding and Risk

Assessment, the Health and Safety Statement, the SPHE Policy, the Wellbeing Policy, the Student Support Policy and the Administration of Medicine Policy.

Section Two: Definition

2.1 A banned or prohibited substance includes all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non-validated prescription medication, all alcohol, and tobacco used contrary to the law of the land.

The substance referred to in this policy denotes 'any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally'.

These include but are not limited to:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Vaping substances
- Medicines
- Over the counter remedies eg: paracetamol etc.
- Illegal drugs
- Solvents
- Cleaning agents
- Gases
- Aerosols
- Laboratory chemicals
- Performance enhancing substances

2.2 The school prohibits the possession, use or supply of banned or prohibited substances and/or drug paraphernalia by any student in the school building, grounds, on school trips and outings, or during any school related activity. This includes vapes or vaping paraphernalia. The school reserves the right to determine that a substance found in the circumstances set out above is a banned substance. Drug paraphernalia includes all items associated with the use of illicit substances and any written or printed material promoting the use of illicit substances. The policy should also be adhered to while in school uniform, on the way to or from school or any school activities on or off site.

2.3 Validly prescribed medical drugs may be taken in school on receipt of written notification from parent(s)/guardian(s). No staff member will give a student any

prescribed or 'over the counter' medication except in exceptional circumstances and with prior consent of the parent/guardian. This is consistent with Loreto Abbey Secondary School's Administration of Medicine Policy which is available on the school website.

2.4 Students may not give another student any prescribed medication during school time.

2.5 Smoking or vaping on school grounds is prohibited. Students are expected not to smoke or vape on their way to and from school. They are prohibited from doing so on school trips or on any other school related activity.

Section Three: Programmes for Alcohol, Tobacco, Volatile Substances, Drug Education and Related Supports

3.1 The school is and will continue to be proactive in relation to education in substance abuse prevention. The school provides and will continue to provide formal programmes through SPHE that are both developmental in nature and age appropriate.

3.2 The educational aims of Loreto Abbey Secondary School, Dalkey in relation to substance use are:

- To enable students to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practising skills particularly in relation to self esteem.
- To provide information about substance abuse.
- To increase understanding about the implications and consequences of substance abuse.
- To encourage an understanding of the personal situation of those experiencing or likely to experience substance abuse.

- To enable students to identify sources of appropriate personal support and information.
- To reinforce learning occurring in SPHE by means of cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

3.3 Education Concerning Substance Use

3.3.1 Junior Cycle SPHE

In the Junior Cycle the issue of substance use is covered as part of the SPHE programme.

The following topics are addressed from 1st to 3rd Year:

1st Year

Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate the personal and social skills to address pressure to smoke, to drink alcohol and/or use other substances
- Reflect on the personal, social and legal consequences of their own or others' drug use
- Critique information and supports available for young people in relation to substance use

Lessons:

- Explore the nature and use of drugs in modern life
- Understand the role and safe use of medicines and how to store and dispose of them
- Identify and explain the personal, social and legal consequences of smoking and misusing alcohol and solvents
- Become familiar with the role of help agencies that deal with substance abuse
- Understand what peer pressure is and the role it plays in young people smoking and drinking alcohol

- Practise strategies for dealing with peer pressure

2nd Year

Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate the personal and social skills to address pressure to smoke, to drink alcohol and/or use other substances
- Reflect on the personal, social and legal consequences of their own or others' drug use
- Critique information and supports available for young people in relation to substance use

Lessons:

- Understand how the main categories of drugs work on the body and mind
- Learn about cannabis and its effects
- Become aware of the personal, social and legal consequences of your own and others' drug use, focusing on alcohol

3rd Year

Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate the personal and social skills to address pressure to smoke, to drink alcohol and/or use other substances
- Reflect on the personal, social and legal consequences of their own or others' drug use
- Critique information and supports available for young people in relation to substance use

Lessons:

- Understand how the main categories of drugs work on the body and mind

- Become aware of the link between substance use and mental health
- Explore the personal and social resources needed to avoid substance use problems
- Investigate what information and supports are available for young people in relation to substance use in their area

3.2 Religion and CSPE classes may also be used to support and reinforce the work done in SPHE class.

3.3 At Senior Cycle the issue of substance use is dealt with in Religious Education classes and visiting speakers.

3.4 Pastoral and Support Services:

- Guidance Counsellors, Year Heads and Student Support Team
- Wellbeing Coordinator responsible for planning awareness initiatives
- Referrals to outside agencies
- Training programmes for students as they become available and are considered appropriate
- Promotional work coordinated by the SPHE Advisory Group which is student led
- Guest Speakers from outside agencies

3.5 Parents:

The school acknowledges the central role of parent(s)/guardian(s) in the implementation of this policy. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked:

- To acknowledge the importance of these programmes.
- To recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse.

- To assist and cooperate fully with the school if and when incidents concerning substance abuse arise.
- The school will support parents by ensuring that students have access to information on substance use/misuse and that parents are provided with details on current educational and information programmes offered.
- The Parents' Association may organise education meetings as deemed appropriate.
- Parents/guardians concerned about substance use are invited to contact the school and will be referred to outside agencies as appropriate.
- The school will assist parent(s)/guardian(s) in their role by providing them with information on the SPHE programmes and by hosting information seminars from time to time.

Section Four: Procedures for Managing Alcohol, Drug Related or other Substance Abuse Incidents

4.1 All suspected incidents shall be reported to the Principal, or the Deputy Principals in the absence of the Principal, by any member of the school community.

4.2 In the event of an abuse incident and in the determination of a response, the school will balance the welfare of the student or students involved, the welfare of the school community, the reputation of the school and legal considerations.

4.3 Examples of substance use incidents may include:

Emergencies where the person may be under the influence of a substance
 Intoxication/unusual behaviour
 Suspicion/rumour of substance use, possession or dealing
 Disclosure of a person involved in substance by a third party
 Possession of substances on the school premises or on a school related activity

Selling/supplying legal or illegal substances
Drug paraphernalia found on school property

This list is not exhaustive.

4.4 Procedures:

- A) The school reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school any student suspected to be, or to have been, involved in a substance abuse incident, while the incident is investigated. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall be informed immediately by the Principal of the incident.
- B) The Principal shall inform the Gardai if any incident involves suspected illegal conduct.
- C) The Principal shall investigate, or cause to be investigated, any suspected substance abuse incident.
- D) The school recognises the importance in limiting, as far as is practicable, the number of people involved in investigating a suspected substance abuse incident. The school shall involve only those directly concerned with the student. In addition to the Principal, these may include the Deputy Principal, the Year Head, the Guidance Counsellor and specific staff directly involved with the incident.
- E) The Principal, in the presence of a reliable witness, shall take possession of any banned or prohibited substances and drugs paraphernalia associated with a suspected substance abuse incident recording all such items. All items will be handed to the Gardai at the earliest opportunity.
- F) The Principal, or a person nominated by the Principal, shall seek statements from all persons involved in, concerned with, or having knowledge of the suspected substance abuse incident and shall record these statements. Such persons shall be advised that these statements may be forwarded to the Gardai.
- G) The Principal may, in his/her absolute discretion, liaise with any appropriate outside authority such as Tusla and may seek advice or

assistance in relation to the investigation of the incident. The Principal shall maintain a record of all communications with outside agencies.

- H) On completion of the preliminary investigation and in the event that he/she concludes that further investigation is warranted, the Principal shall afford the student or students alleged to have been involved in the suspected incident of substance abuse, the opportunity to respond to the allegations. He/she shall put the full particulars of the incident to the student or students concerned and their parents/guardians and make copies of all records deemed relevant to the allegation against the student concerned and to the nature of the complaints or allegations, available to the (each) student and her parent(s)/guardian(s). Each student against whom an allegation is made shall have the right to reply and to make any representations that she may wish to make or have made on her behalf, within 5 school days.
- I) The school will consider any response and representation made and any other relevant considerations, including but not limited to mitigating and aggravating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.
- J) The Principal shall inform each student and her parents/guardians of the school's findings by registered letter. In the event that the investigation concludes that the student is in breach of the Substance Use policy, the Principal shall inform the student and her parents/guardians the sanctions imposed.
- K) The Principal may decide to refer any finding of a breach of this Substance Use Policy to the Board of Management for further consideration. In such event, the student and her parents/guardians shall be given an opportunity to make a reply to the matters at issue. The decision of the Board shall be conveyed by registered letter, outlining, where necessary, procedures for appeal.
- L) The school shall ensure that supports are offered to those affected by an incident of substance abuse.
- M) In the event of an inquiry from the media, the school shall not comment on any individual matter when an investigation is in process. It may outline its policy and procedures for managing allegations of substance abuse. It may, in the interests of the reputation of the school, indicate the nature of any final determination of any investigation.

Note: Interpretation of this policy will be informed by the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section Five: Training and Development

5.1 Staff:

Teachers are given the opportunity to avail of in-service training where available. School management will respond positively where requests are made by teachers for training in this area. The school will endeavour to engage with any substance abuse prevention programmes endorsed by the Department of Education.

5.2 Parents:

The school shall provide opportunities for parents to attend information sessions on substance use.

Adopted and ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on :
22/02/2023



Signed by:

Chairperson

Date: 22/02/2023

Date of next review: 2026