

## **POLICY ON SUBSTANCE USE / MISUSE**

### **Scope**

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 St Kevin's 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 the gym.

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 alcohol, unprescribed drugs, tobacco and other harmful substances, including solvents. The misuse of prescribed drugs also comes under this policy.

### **The School Rules**

The School Rules state the following:

14 'Smoking in the school or within the school grounds is strictly forbidden'.

15 'Pupils may not have alcohol, unprescribed drugs or other harmful substances [including solvents] in their possession. 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 RE in Junior Cycle and the RE 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 etc.

### **Managing an Incident**

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 in the school, gym, grounds or during school related activities, including school tours, shall 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 reported to the Environment Health Service.

- Alcohol or unprescribed 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 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 and a recurrence shall result in access being withdrawn. If unprescribed 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 'pushing' drugs in the school, gym, school grounds, 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 teacher who is under the influence of alcohol or unprescribed drugs shall not be allowed into a classroom and shall be cautioned as to his/her future behaviour. 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'.

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