



# **SUBSTANCE USE POLICY**



## **Substance Use Policy Jonah Special School**

### **Introduction**

The policy was drawn up in consultation with the school community – parents, teachers, SNA's and members of the Board of Management. This policy applies to students, teachers, auxiliary staff members, students on placement, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the school premises. It is applicable during school-time – including breaks and to all school related activities. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place, e.g. School Tour.

*'A drug can be defined as a chemical, which causes changes in the way the human body functions mentally, physically or emotionally'.*

### **Aims of Policy**

The aim of the substance use policy of The Jonah Special School is primary prevention. We aim to protect our students from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs. Through providing a positive school climate, and giving our students age appropriate information from educational programmes, we aim to increase positive self-esteem in our students.

### **Relationship to School's Mission, Vision and Aims**

The Jonah Special School sees itself as having a role in the process of enabling students to increase control over and improve their health. We endeavour to promote the well-being of students by:

1. Providing a safe and healthy environment.
2. Promoting positive health behaviours.
3. Increasing knowledge regarding health.
4. Promoting the self-esteem and self-awareness of students.
5. Working in partnership with the parents and students.

To this end, in response to the encroaching drug culture in our society we feel the need to implement a comprehensive policy to address the problem of substance misuse.

This policy reflects the Vision, Mission and Ethos Statement of The Jonah Special School in that:

- It is a policy supported by the entire school community, students, teachers, SNA's, parents and Board of Management.



- It is dedicated to the care of the whole school community.
- It nurtures the development of each student academically, physically, emotionally, spiritually and socially. It endeavours to develop within each student a sense of self-worth and pride in school life and society.
- It supports our Vision of a caring, living school where communication, openness and co-operation are valued and encouraged.
- It reflects the Ethos of our school policy providing for a broad, holistic, multi-cultural education, which embraces the culture of our community, a caring, tolerant community.

## Rationale – Why is this policy necessary?

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.

The Education Act 1998 states that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them. The National Drugs Strategy '*Building on Experience*' is now government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place. The recent report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled '*Drug Use Prevention*' (November 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.

The 1999 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) Report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among sixteen year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 29 ESPAD countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug misused in Ireland whilst the use of tobacco and other drugs was above the ESPAD average.

For the population as a whole, alcohol consumption per capita in Ireland has increased by 41% in the period 1989 to 1999, while the other EU Member States showed either a decrease or a modest increase. Ireland now has the second highest per capita consumption of alcohol in the EU.

The school authority in The Jonah Special School has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.

Our policy complies with the following:

- **The Education Act 1998:** Schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- **The National Drugs Strategy "*Building in Experience*":** Is now Government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.
- **National Advisory Committee on Drugs:** Recent report "*Drug Use Prevention*" (Nov. 2001): Underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.



## Implementation Procedures

Copies of the policy were distributed to Board of Management members for ratification in February 2015. When ratified and amended, copies were given to –

- All staff members.
- Committee members.
- School Community on request.
- Students on work placement.

## Monitoring and Review Procedures

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. There will be an annual meeting to monitor and review procedures to be held in February each year. A copy of this policy will be issued to all staff members and a reminder of its contents will be given at the first staff meeting of each year.

## Policy Content

### Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

The Board of Management members believe that young people are most at risk in relation to substance use in The Jonah Special School in recreational areas, on the way to and from school and at out of school related activities supervised by staff members of our school. The school's shared understanding of a 'drug related incident' is:

- Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs.
- The sale or passing on of any illegal substance.
- The possession of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs on school grounds or at school related activities.
- Disposal of drugs or related items (e.g. syringes) found on school property.

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

**Step 1:** Witness to drug related incident informs teacher/staff member/Principal.

**Step 2:** Principal inform parents/guardians.

**Step 3:** Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management.

**Step 4:** Gardaí informed depending on seriousness of incident.

**Step 5:** Area Health Board informed for disposal of items.



Parents will be involved by accepting the school's Code of Behaviour and Enrolment Policies. They will be informed of an incident involving their own child and will be asked to accept responsibility, co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardaí if necessary.

Parents will be involved in incidents involving another child only if deemed necessary by the school authorities; if parents are aware that another child is involved in drug-related incidents under the scope of this policy they should inform the teacher, Principal or a Board member.

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Ratify this policy.
- Implement this policy.
- Monitor and evaluate it.
- To sponsor/provide training for staff members.
- Make decisions involving critical incidents.
- To deal with the media in the event of a critical incident.

This policy puts the following procedures in place to deal with an incident requiring medical intervention:

- 'Universal Precautions' will be applied; e.g. wearing of proper protective gloves etc., washing and making safe an area after an incident; provision of a yellow bin to dispose of needles or other unsuitable appliances.
- First Aid training has been given to a staff member who is now qualified and certified to assist with medical emergencies.
- Copies of all relevant phone numbers are appendixes (see Appendix 1).
- A local doctor from a local practice has agreed to respond to a medical emergency in the school.
- The Board of Management has developed a Critical Incident Policy.

Whether or not to inform the Gardaí of minor incidents will be at the discretion of the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management, but they will be involved in any serious substance abuse incidents.

At local level the following support agencies are available to which students involved in substance misuse might be referred:

- N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous).
- Child Care & Family Support Services.
- Drug Education Officer.
- Drug Helpline.
- Juvenile Liaison Officer.
- Community Garda.

In the event of media interest in relation to a 'drug related incident', the matter will be referred to the Board of Management and the Chairperson will issue a prepared statement to the media.



## **Management of Persons in the Workplace under the Influence of Drugs and/or Alcohol**

The Board of Management shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that students and other persons in the workplace are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare from persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The term "in the workplace", in the preceding sentence includes all school related activities taking place under the supervision of a teacher, with the Board's approval, and both within and away from the school premises.

Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

Should the Principal and/or Director have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Director of Education shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and others. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented.

Should the Principal and/or Director have reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of any contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Director shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Director, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a parent or adult collecting a pupil from school or presenting themselves on the premises for another reason is unfit to be on the premises or to take care of the said pupil, the Principal and/or Director will be informed and the duty of care will apply to the student. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the student and safeguard their best interests.

In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove him/herself from the premises, the Principal and/or Director may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers and SNA's. An Employee Assistance Service (telephone: 1800 411 057 or e-mail: [eas@vhics.ie](mailto:eas@vhics.ie)) is available to all staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service.

The Board of Management also acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all other staff members. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the



performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the non-teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to seek counselling or other professional intervention.

All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded and reported as soon as possible to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management shall consider all such reports and decide on the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

## **Jonah Special School**

Substance Use Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Jonah Special School at its meeting held on:

**Ratified by the Jonah Board of Management on:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairperson, Board of Management**

**Next Review Period: *September 2024***



## Appendix 1

### Important Contact Numbers

#### Drugs/AIDS Services:

Drugs Advisory and Treatment Centre Trinity Court, 30/31 Pearse Street, Dublin 2	01 6488600
A.C.C.E.P.T. Addiction Centre HSE-South East Region Brook House, Cork Road, Waterford.	051-842790
Aiseirí Addiction Treatment Centre Céim Eile, Waterford	051-853974
Aislinn Adolescent Addiction Treatment Centre Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny	056-8833777
Al-Anon - Ireland St.Brigid's Family & Community Centre, 37 Lower Yellow Rd, Waterford	051-375261
Alcoholics Anonymous	01-8420700
Waterford Substance Misuse Team 10a Waterside, Waterford	051-301201
Waterford Community Based Drugs Initiative Millennium Youth & Community Centre, Church Road, Lisduggan, Waterford	051-351100

#### Doctor:

The Keogh Practise Ferrybank, Waterford	051 317600
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