



ROSEMONT
SCHOOL

Rosemont School Policy on Substance Abuse

Reviewed: June 2017

Due for review: 2019

The school does not accept or tolerate the possession, use, or supply of banned or prohibited drugs and/or drug paraphernalia by any student in the school, on school trips and outings, or during any school-related activity.

The only exception is the use of properly prescribed drugs and parents of students taking prescribed medication must inform the school in writing of that fact.

The school, within the limited resources available to it, will provide appropriate education programmes for all its students. This will be provided in all classes in an age appropriate manner.

Transition Year Programme **can include** visits to Mountjoy Jail with the opportunity to speak to reforming drug addicts; visits to drug rehabilitation centres and presentations from Gardai.

The topic is also periodically included in talks for parents.

Parents are expected to:

- Acknowledge the importance of these programmes.
- Recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse.
- Assist and co-operate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

To assist the parents in their role, the school will:

- Provide them with information on what is happening in the school regarding education programmes SPHE
- Encourage and welcome consultation with parents on the best use of available resources in the community to support the school in its programme and policy implementation.
- Require both parents and pupils to sign a contract stating that there will be no abuse of any substance when on trips abroad.

MANAGEMENT OF ANY SUBSTANCE ABUSE INCIDENTS

In the event of an abuse incident, the school will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of student or students involved and the welfare of the school community as a whole and the reputation of the school.

The school will take the following steps in managing and investigating an abuse incident.

1. Where it is apparent that there is an 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. The completion of an Abuse Incident Report Form will be undertaken immediately.
3. The school will take all steps required to fully investigate and assess any abuse incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this.
4. The school will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances associated with an abuse incident, carefully recording all such items and retaining them pending completion of the investigation.
5. In the event of an incident, the school will seek statement from all persons involved in, concerned with or having knowledge of the incident and will record these statements.
6. The school will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of an 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 the investigation.
7. The school, at its own discretion, will liaise with any appropriate outside authority and seek advice or assistance, as it deems appropriate in relation to its investigation of an incident.
8. A statement that 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 and his parents – at the discretion of the school – in time to permit the student a reasonable opportunity to make his own reply to the matters at issue and any representations that he would wish to make or have made on his behalf.
 - b) The school will allow the student concerned and his parents' reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. The school 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) The school shall shortly thereafter inform the student and his parents of the school's findings and their reasons for these. If the school finds that the student has been guilty of or involved in an incident, it shall indicate the penalty or sanctions that it intends to impose in any 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, as suspension of more than three days duration, other sanctions short of expulsion, and expulsion.
10. The school can, at its sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstances or representations that it considers should be taken into account. The school asserts the right to exercise an appropriate show of mercy. This however, will be used sparingly.
11. The school should also ensure that pastoral supports are offered to the students and parents affected by an incident of substance abuse.

The Principal or delegate is the person responsible for all matters relating to this area. He or she may nominate the Deputy Principal or Year Head or other nominated staff to act on his or her behalf in the investigation of a substance abuse 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:

- i. The Principal is responsible for dealing with abuse incidents arising at the school.
- ii. All reports of abuse incidents or suspected incidents must be reported to the Principal.
- iii. The Principal makes all decisions regarding investigation of an incident; communication with, liaison with, and reporting to relevant parties; and disclosure of information regarding an investigation.
- iv. The Principal is responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed regarding investigation developments.
- v. The Principal is responsible for secure and confidential storage of any written documentation and records associated with an incident.
- vi. 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.
- vii. The Principal may seek the assistance of the Deputy Principal, Year Head, and/or school guidance counselor in conducting an incident investigation.

The previous section has dealt with the procedure for communicating with parents and students in the event that an abuse incident continues to be investigated, and the school is required to put the particulars of the matter to the student or students concerned.

If there is a suspicion of substance abuse we will contact the parent of student as soon as possible. We will do this particularly where there is a concern regarding the health and welfare of a child and share any available information that may help parents in attending to their child's health and wellbeing and will keep students informed about what is happening and why. We wish to state that such actions would be undertaken without prejudice to the school's separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage any abuse incident.

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

1. The duty of teachers and staff to the school community preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any students when they come in contact with an abuse incident or suspected abuse incident.
2. The school may be required in a given situation to contact, as appropriate such authorities as the Gardai, Health Board, Probations Service, or Officers of the Courts.
3. The school may need to engage the expert assistance of an appropriate third party to properly investigate an incident.
4. The school may be duty bound to notify certain persons about an incident and/or the outcome of an incident investigation under statute, regulation, or DES guidelines.

Should there be media enquiries about the alleged 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 incidents. 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.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The school will provide training for Staff, Board of Management, Parents and Student.

In relation to staff, the school will provide appropriate information and training.

In relation to Parents and the Board of Management the school:

- Will provide opportunities to attend information sessions and workshops in relation to drugs and the relevant policies.

- 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 students programmes relating to alcohol and tobacco.
- Drug education within the context of the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes.

The school will monitor, review and evaluate the Policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practice.

While the legal smoking age is 16 years and over, the school still has the responsibility for the health and wellbeing of all students. Therefore, all students who are 16 years or over are not permitted to smoke on the school grounds or near the vicinity of the school. Any students caught smoking in their school uniform will be reprimanded and dealt with accordingly based on school policy as the reputation of the school must be upheld. If a student is deemed to smell of smoke, a note will be made in her journal, a written record will be made and the parents of the said student will be informed.

A staff member presenting themselves as under the influence of alcohol or drugs, will not be allowed take part in their normal duties. The matter will be reported to the Board of Management. Such incidents would be viewed as a gross breaking of both contract and professional code of conduct. Staff should not smoke in view of pupils either in school or on outside school activities including sporting events and school tours.