

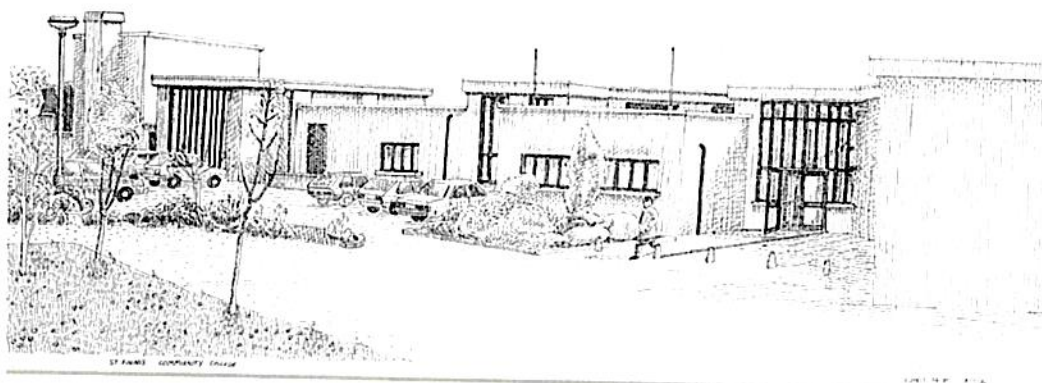
Substance Abuse Policy

2026-2029

St. Finian's Community College



Core Values: Respect · Responsibility · Diversity · Equality



1. Introduction

St. Finian's Community College is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safeguard their wellbeing. St. Finian's Community College recognises that substance misuse can have serious consequences for the health, wellbeing and educational development of young people. The school is committed to promoting a safe, healthy and supportive environment in which all students can achieve their full potential.

This policy aims to prevent substance misuse through education, to clearly outline procedures for responding to substance-related incidents, and to ensure appropriate support is provided to students where required. This policy applies to students, teachers, parents, and ancillary staff and all users of the school grounds. It is applicable any time the school is in operation and to all school related activities.

The possession, use, supply or promotion of any harmful substance is strictly prohibited on school premises, during school activities or while representing the school.

This policy has been developed in accordance with guidance from the **Department of Education and Education and Training Boards Ireland** and operates under the governance of the **Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board**.

This policy is guided by the principles of the National Drugs Strategy 2017–2025 and supports a whole-school approach to substance use education, prevention and student support.

The draft National Drugs Strategy 2026–2029 is due for publication in July 2026. This policy will be reviewed and updated, where appropriate, following the publication of the new national strategy.

2. School Ethos

St. Finian's Community College seeks to provide a safe and respectful environment that promotes the personal, social and academic development of all students.

The school acknowledges that substance misuse can impact negatively on:

- student health and wellbeing
- learning and academic progress
- relationships within the school community
- the safety of others

The school therefore adopts a **preventative, educational and supportive approach**, while also applying appropriate disciplinary procedures where necessary.

3. Relationship to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Code of Positive Behaviour
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement
- Wellbeing Policy
- Anti-Bullying/*Bí Cineálta* Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- School Tour Policy

4. Definition of Substances

A substance refers to any drug or chemical which alters how the body functions physically, mentally or emotionally.

These include:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco products
- Nicotine products including e-cigarettes and vaping devices
- Illegal drugs
- Prescription medication when misused
- Over-the-counter medication when misused
- Solvents or inhalants
- Any new psychoactive substances.

5. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All students enrolled in the school
- Teaching staff
- Non-teaching staff
- Parents/Guardians/Caregivers
- Visitors to the school

The policy applies:

- On school premises
- During school hours
- On school trips and tours
- During extracurricular activities
- While representing the school
- While travelling to and from school

6. Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

1. Promote the health and wellbeing of students.
2. Prevent substance misuse through education and awareness.
3. Provide clear procedures for dealing with substance-related incidents.
4. Ensure a consistent and fair approach to discipline.
5. Support students who may be experiencing substance-related difficulties.
6. Promote cooperation between the school, parents and external support agencies.

7. Prevention and Education

St Finian's Community College promotes substance misuse prevention through a range of educational initiatives.

These include:

Curriculum

Substance use education is delivered through:

- SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education)
- Wellbeing programmes
- Guidance classes
- Guest speakers and workshops
- Developing student self-esteem and decision-making skills
- Staff training and professional development

Students are encouraged to develop:

- decision-making skills
- resilience and self-esteem
- awareness of the risks associated with substance use.

School Initiatives

The school may organise:

- awareness campaigns
- wellbeing events
- information sessions for students and parents.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

The Board of Management:

- approves and reviews the policy
- ensures the policy is implemented appropriately.

Principal

The Principal:

- oversees implementation of the policy
- ensures procedures are followed
- liaises with the Board of Management when necessary.

Staff

All staff members:

- promote a healthy school environment
- implement the policy consistently
- report concerns or incidents to school management.

Students

Students are expected to:

- comply with school rules regarding substances
- support a safe and healthy school environment.

Parents/Guardians/Caregivers

Parents and guardians are expected to:

- support the implementation of this policy
- cooperate with the school where concerns arise.

9. Substance-Related Incidents

A substance-related incident may include:

- possession of alcohol, drugs or other substances

- use or suspected use of substances
- distribution or supply of substances
- intoxication while in school or at a school activity
- possession of drug-related paraphernalia
- disclosure of substance use.

10. Procedures for Managing Incidents

Where a substance-related incident occurs, the following procedures may apply:

1. The incident is reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
2. The situation is assessed and managed to ensure student safety.
3. The substance may be confiscated and stored securely.
4. The incident is recorded by school management.
5. Parents/guardians/ are informed.
6. Appropriate disciplinary action may be taken under the Code of Behaviour.

In serious cases, the school may contact:

- external support agencies
- the **Health Service Executive (HSE)** / **TUSLA**
- **An Garda Síochána** where required

11. Search and Confiscation

Where there is reasonable suspicion that a student possesses a prohibited substance, the school reserves the right to:

- request that the student voluntarily empty pockets or bags or lockers. This should be witnessed by another member of staff. A student who refuses to submit to such an inspection faces serious sanction.
- confiscate substances or related paraphernalia.

All confiscated substances will be handled according to school procedures and may be passed to appropriate authorities if required.

12. Disciplinary Procedures

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Sanctions for breaches of this policy may include:

- confiscation of substances
- verbal warning
- detention
- behavioural contract

- suspension
- referral to the Board of Management
- expulsion

The school seeks to ensure that sanctions are fair, proportionate and educational in nature.

13. Support for Students

Where a student is experiencing substance-related difficulties, the school may provide support through:

- Parental Involvement
- The Guidance Counsellor
- Year Head support
- Referral to appropriate external agencies.

The school aims to work collaboratively with parents/guardians/ caregivers to ensure the best outcomes for the student.

14. Confidentiality

All substance-related incidents will be treated with sensitivity and confidentiality, consistent with the school's duty of care and legal obligations.

Information will be shared only with those who need to know in order to ensure student welfare and safety.

15. Training and Staff Development

The school may provide training opportunities for staff on a regular basis relating to:

- substance misuse awareness
- student wellbeing
- responding to substance-related incidents

16. Communication of the Policy

This policy will be communicated to the school community through:

- the school website

- as part of the schools Code of Behaviour
- parent communication channels
- staff briefings

17. Monitoring and Review

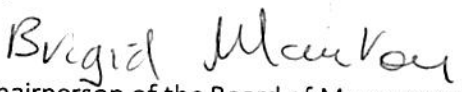
This policy will be reviewed every **three years**, or earlier if necessary.

The review process will involve:

- school management
- staff representatives
- parents/guardians
- the Board of Management.

18. Policy Approval

This Substance Abuse Policy was ratified by the Board of Management:

Signed:  Chairperson of the Board of Management	Signed:  Principal (Secretary to the Board)
Date: 18/6/2026	Date: 18/6/2026

Appendix 1 – Vaping and E-Cigarette Use

Rationale

The school recognises the increasing prevalence of vaping among young people and the associated health risks. Many vaping devices contain nicotine and other chemicals that may negatively affect health and wellbeing.

Vaping devices may also be used to deliver illegal or harmful substances.

For these reasons, vaping is treated as a substance-related issue under this policy.

School Rules Regarding Vaping

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Possession of vaping devices
- Use of e-cigarettes or vaping devices
- Charging of vaping devices on school premises
- Supply or distribution of vaping devices or vape liquids
- Possession of vape liquids containing unknown substances

These prohibitions apply:

- On school premises
- During school activities
- On school trips and tours
- While representing the school.
- While in the school uniform *****

Procedures When Vaping is Suspected or Detected

Where a vaping-related incident occurs:

1. The device will be confiscated by a staff member.
2. The incident will be reported to school management.
3. Parents/guardians will be informed.
4. The incident will be recorded.
5. Appropriate sanctions will be applied in line with the Code of Positive Behaviour.

Repeated incidents may result in increased disciplinary measures.

Appendix 2 – Substance Incident Management

Step 1 – Identify Concern

Possible indicators include:

- smell of alcohol or cannabis
- unusual behaviour
- possession of suspicious items
- student disclosure
- reports from other students.



Step 2 – Ensure Safety

Staff should:

- remain calm
- ensure the student and others are safe
- remove substances if present
- seek assistance from school management.



Step 3 – Report to School Management

Inform:

- Principal or
- Deputy Principal
- Complete initial report form

Do not investigate alone beyond basic safety actions.



Step 4 – Investigation

School management may:

- speak with the student
- secure substances
- gather information from staff or witnesses.



Step 5 – Inform Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians will normally be contacted the same day.



Step 6 – Apply School Procedures

Possible outcomes:

- warning or sanction
- behavioural support
- referral to guidance counsellor
- external support referral if necessary.



Step 7 – Record Incident

The incident must be documented using the **Substance Incident Recording Form**.

Appendix 3 – Substance Incident Recording Template

St. Finian's Community College Substance Incident Report Form	
Date of Incident: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____ Student Name: _____ Year Group: _____ Staff Member Reporting: _____	
Nature of Incident Tick all that apply: ☐ Possession of alcohol ☐ Possession of illegal drugs ☐ Suspected drug use ☐ Intoxication ☐ Possession of vaping device ☐ Possession of drug paraphernalia ☐ Supply/distribution ☐ Other	
Details: 	
Description of Incident Provide a factual account of what occurred.	

Action Taken

- ☐ Substance confiscated
- ☐ Student removed from class
- ☐ Parents/guardians informed
- ☐ Student sent home
- ☐ Referred to school management
- ☐ Other

Details:

Follow-Up Action

- ☐ Meeting with parents/guardians
- ☐ Guidance counsellor referral
- ☐ Behavioural contract
- ☐ Disciplinary sanction
- ☐ External agency referral

Details:

Signatures

Reporting Staff Member: _____

Principal / Deputy Principal: _____

Date: _____

Support Services North Dublin/ Fingal/ Swords

Local Support Services

- Swords Garda Station
Phone: 01 6664700
- Swords Counselling Service
Counselling support for adolescents, adults and families.
Phone: (085) 145 4176
Website: [Swords Counselling Service](#)
- North Dublin Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force
Community drug and alcohol supports, counselling and recovery services for North Dublin and Fingal.
Phone: (01) 223 3493
Email: info@ndublinrdtf.ie
Website: [North Dublin RDATE](#)
- Crosscare Drug and Alcohol Programme
Support for young people and families affected by substance misuse. Services available in Swords and surrounding areas.
Swords Youth Support Mobile: 086 440 7925
Main Office: (01) 557 4705
Website: [Crosscare Drug and Alcohol Programme](#)
- Jigsaw North Fingal
Free mental health support service for young people aged 12–25.
Phone: (01) 960 3020
Email: northfingal@jigsaw.ie

Website: [Jigsaw North Fingal](#)

- Tusla Child and Family Agency

Child protection, welfare and family support services.

Phone: (01) 870 8000

Website: [Tusla](#)

- Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Office

Information on local Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and supports.

Phone: (01) 842 0700

Website: [Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland](#)

- Summit Counselling and Psychotherapy Swords

Counselling and psychotherapy services for young people and adults.

Phone: (089) 604 9029

Website: [Summit Counselling](#)

- Carnegie Counselling Centre

Affordable counselling and psychotherapy services in Swords.

Phone: (083) 016 1148

Website: [Carnegie Counselling Centre](#)

- SASSY: Substance Abuse Service Specific to Youth

SASSY is a HSE community service providing support to young people under 18 years of age, resident in Dublin North City and County for whom drug use or alcohol use is having a significant negative impact on their daily lives.

Office: 01 856 6837 or 01 7785980

Email: SASSY@hse.ie

National Helplines and Supports

- HSE Drugs and Alcohol Helpline

Free confidential information and support.

Phone: 1800 459 459

Website: [HSE Drugs and Alcohol Helpline](#)

- Pieta

Crisis intervention and suicide prevention support.

Freephone: 1800 247 247

Text HELP to 51444

Website: [Pieta](#)

- Samaritans Ireland

24-hour emotional support helpline.

Phone: 116 123

Website: [Samaritans Ireland](#)