

Substance Use Policy

The Substance Use Policy of St Michael's House Special National School Baldoyle

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to students, teachers, auxiliary staff members, users of the school premises, visitors and every person who enters the school building. 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.

Aims of Policy

The aim of the substance use policy of St. Michael's House SNS Baldoyle is primarily 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. We aim to develop in our student's better self-esteem, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils appropriate information about self-care and personal wellbeing through our SPHE, JC and SC programmes.

Relationship To School's Mission, Vision And Aims

The Students who attend St. Michael's House SNS Baldoyle all have a severe to profound intellectual disability so their wellbeing and education is the responsibility of all school staff, parents and our educational partners.

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 provides 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 school has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.

Implementation Procedures

Copies of the policy are held in each classroom policy folder, in the school office and available for anyone on request.

Timeframe

It was circulated to staff members, parents and Board of Management for feedback in December 2025.

Monitoring and Review Procedures

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. 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.

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

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 Principal

Step 2: Principal informs parents/guardians

Step 3: Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management

Step 4: Gardai informed depending on seriousness of incident

Step 5: Area Health Board informed for disposal of items

Parents will be informed of an incident involving their own child and will be asked to co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardai if necessary.

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Ratify this policy
- Implement this policy
- Monitor and evaluate it
- 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 staff and we have nurses on site if medical intervention is necessary
- Copies of all relevant phone numbers are available
- The Board of Management has a Critical Incident Policy.

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

- Community Garda
- TUSLA
- CDNT clinic team

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 Deputy Principal 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 Deputy Principal 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 Deputy Principal 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 Deputy Principal 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 Deputy Principal, 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 Deputy Principal 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.

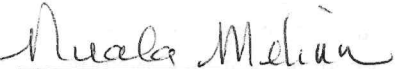
In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove him/herself from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

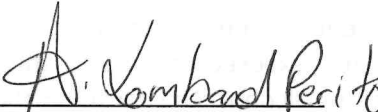
The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers and all school staff. An Employee Assistance Service (information is on display in the staffroom and in every bathroom) is available to all staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely 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 and grievance procedures may be initiated.

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.


Nuala Melinn
Chairperson Board of Management


Anna Lombard Perito
Principal

Ratified by Board of Management on:

3rd December 2025

Important Contact Numbers

Drugs Advisory and Treatment Centre
Trinity Court, 30/31 Pearse Street, Dublin 2

01 677 1122

Howth Garda Station

01 666 4900

Tusla North Dublin, Swords Office

01 8708000