



Introduction

THE SCHOOL POSITION

St Raphaela's Secondary School is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs. The policy has been drawn up and accepted by the Principal, Teachers, Parents/Guardians, Board of Management and Students, in accordance with the National Drugs' Strategy 2026-2029: An integrated, equitable and evidence-based response to drug and problem alcohol use National Drugs Strategy 2026-2029 v2

It is necessary that all those involved in the school community work together to implement this policy. It is vital that parents/guardians actively work with the school to implement this policy to ensure their children's health and safety. In this policy "Drug" means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The School recognises that drugs both legal and illegal are available in the local community and that the School, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents.

THE SCHOOL ETHOS

As reflected in the School's mission statement, St Raphaela's Secondary School is committed to enabling students to flourish academically, spiritually and morally. In order to reach their potential, the school encourages all students to look after their physical and mental health. It is also committed to fostering the development of personal responsibility. This is the ethos which guides our Policy.

- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs and/or drug paraphernalia in the school, or on outside activities by any student.
- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco in the school or on school activities by any student.
- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of a vape in the school or on school activities by any student.
- Students found to be in possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco or vapes will be sanctioned in line with the Code of Behaviour.
- The School does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances. Students may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only.
- Students who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school long term must inform the school.
- The School must be informed if a student has a medical condition and relevant teachers, e.g. P.E. teacher must be informed also.
- A student should not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine.
- A teacher may not share or give a student a prescribed or over-the-counter medicine without the permission of a parent, except in the case of medical emergencies.

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 13/4/2026

- Chemicals in school laboratories will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher's supervision.

The policy is focused in four key areas:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco, e-cigarettes, Vape and Drug Education Programmes.
2. Managing Drug Related Incidents.
3. Training and Staff Development.
4. Monitoring and Review

1. Alcohol, Tobacco, e-cigarettes, Vape, New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), volatile substances and Drug Education Programmes.

The School is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco, e-cigarettes, NPS, Vape and Drug Education Programme for all students. Our educational aims are:

- To increase the self-esteem and confidence of our students.
- To equip our students with personal and social skills.
- To maintain staff awareness of the changing nature substance abuse, and the development of new forms of substance abuse.
- To enable our students to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions.
- To provide clear and age-appropriate information on drugs.
- To minimise the harm caused by drug abuse by offering supportive interventions.

These aims will be achieved by:

1. The school's substance use education programme is delivered in line with the SPHE Junior Cycle specification and the Senior Cycle SPHE Specification (2024), which includes dedicated learning outcomes relating to substance use, personal safety, and informed decision-making. SPHE teachers are supported to engage with the SPHE postgraduate training programme (commenced January 2026) where relevant.
2. Teachers are offered Drug Awareness training, SPHE training or any relevant training through regular in-service training.
3. Outside speakers are used where appropriate to reinforce the work done in class.
4. Parents/Guardians will be consulted on the need for drug education and will be informed of what is happening in the School.
5. Drug information and drug awareness sessions are organised for parents.
6. Student Drug Education will be achieved through:
 - SPHE Programme
 - RE
 - Civic, Social and Political Education (integrated within Junior Cycle)
 - PE
 - Science
 - Home Economics
 - First Aid Course in Transition Year
 - Wellbeing/Mental Health Related Events

2. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, e-cigarette, Vape, NPS, Drug Related Incidents

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

Should such an incident take place, the following steps will be taken, in line with Child Protection Procedures for Schools, 2025 and our own Child Safeguarding Statement.

1. Where it is apparent that there is immediate danger to students or to the school community, the school reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school any student involved in the incident of abuse pending a further and complete investigation of the incident.
2. A report form detailing the incident of substance abuse will be completed. Substance Use Incident Report Form
3. The school will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any abuse incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this. All records will be held confidentially by the Principal and will be accessed on a 'need to know' basis only.
4. In the case of illegal drug use, the Principal will inform the Gardaí Juvenile Liaison Officer or Community Garda and any drugs will be dealt with by the Gardaí.
5. Where a drug-related incident gives rise to a concern about the welfare or protection of a child, the matter must be referred immediately to the school's Designated Liaison Person (DLP). The DLP will assess whether a report to Tusla — Child and Family Agency is required under the Children First Act 2015 and the Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025. All staff are reminded that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality to students where a child protection concern arises.

(Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025, Chapter 3)

6. The Principal will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of an incident.
7. The Principal and Deputy Principal will deal with all media enquiries. They will not comment on individual cases but will refer to school policy and procedure.
8. If 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. The student and her parent(s) will be informed sensitively of complaints or allegations that have been made, and support will be offered. The student and her parents will be given some time and the opportunity to respond to the complaints or allegations. When the Principal has completed all investigations a report for consideration by the Board of Management will be prepared.
 - b. The school will inform the student and her parents of the school's findings and their reasons for these. If the school finds that the student has been guilty of or involved or implicated in an incident, it shall indicate the penalty or sanctions that it intends to impose in the circumstances.
9. After due consideration, the Board may decide to implement disciplinary actions or sanctions, including but not limited to a verbal warning, a written warning, suspension, other sanctions up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
10. The Board may decide to postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstances that it considers should be considered.

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11. The Board will also ensure that pastoral supports are offered to the student/students and parents affected by an incident. These supports may include the services of a tutor, Guidance Counsellor, etc. If addiction is an issue for the student, a referral will be made to a relevant agency. Relevant external agencies include: HSE Addiction Services, Drugs.ie, Spunout.ie, the HSE Drugs Helpline (1800 459 459), and locally available youth support services as appropriate.
12. It is important to note that the duty of teachers and staff to the school community preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any students when they come into contact with an abuse incident or a suspected abuse incident.

3. Training & Development

We will provide:

Staff

- The School will facilitate training for staff involved in the SPHE programmes.
- All staff will be offered drug information and awareness training and will be aware of the steps to be taken in managing drug related incidents should the need arise.
- First Aid training will be made available to all staff regularly.

Parents/Guardians

The School will provide opportunities to attend drug workshops, information evenings and sessions on the Substance use, in consultation with the Parents' Association and outside agencies as needed.

Students

- In line with curricular requirements, the School will provide all students with drug education programmes.
- TY students will study First Aid.
- Other subject areas will address the drug education within the context of the curriculum.

4. Monitoring the Policy, Review and Evaluation

The policy will be monitored and reviewed every two years, or sooner should relevant government guidance be issued or updated.

Dissemination of Policy

Copies of this policy will be available also from the school website, and school management system. Students will be made aware of the policy within the context of the SPHE programme.

St Raphaela's Secondary School

Substance Use Incident Report Form

CONFIDENTIAL — For Principal's Records Only | Access on a Need-to-Know Basis

(In line with St Raphaela's School Policy on Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use 2026 and the Data Protection Acts 1988–2018)

PART A — INCIDENT DETAILS

Field	Details
Date of Incident	
Time of Incident	
Location of Incident	
Date of This Report	
Report Completed By	
Role of Reporting Person	

PART B — STUDENT DETAILS

Field	Details
Student Name	
Year Group / Class	
Date of Birth	
Student ID / Roll Number	

> ⚠ Once completed, refer to student by **pseudonym or student ID only** in any further documentation shared beyond the Principal.

PART C — NATURE OF INCIDENT

Type of Substance Involved (*tick all that apply*)

Substance	✓
Alcohol	☐
Tobacco / Cigarettes	☐
Vape / E-cigarette	☐
Cannabis	☐
Other illegal drug (specify below)	☐
New Psychoactive Substance / 'Legal High'	☐
Misuse of solvent-based substance	☐
Misuse of prescribed / OTC medication	☐
Unknown substance	☐

Specify substance (if known):

Nature of Involvement (*tick all that apply*)

Involvement	✓
Possession	☐
Use / Under the Influence	☐
Supply / Dealing	☐
In possession of paraphernalia	☐

PART D — DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

Provide a full factual account of what happened, including who was present, what was observed, and any immediate actions taken:

Witnesses (name/role — do not include other student names in shared documents):

PART E — IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TAKEN

Action	Completed?	By Whom	Time
Student removed from immediate situation	☐ Yes ☐ No		
First aid / medical assistance sought	☐ Yes ☐ No		
Emergency services (999) contacted	☐ Yes ☐ No		
Parent/Guardian notified	☐ Yes ☐ No		
Principal / Deputy Principal informed	☐ Yes ☐ No		
Substance secured / handed to Gardaí	☐ Yes ☐ No		

PART F — CHILD PROTECTION ASSESSMENT

>  **Mandatory Step:** Consider whether this incident gives rise to a **child welfare or protection concern** under the Children First Act 2015.

Does this incident raise a child protection concern?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Further assessment required

If Yes — DLP Notified:

Field	Details
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DLP Name	
Date/Time Notified	
Action agreed with DLP	
Tusla referral made?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Date of Tusla referral (if applicable)	

[Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025, Chapter 3]

PART G — GARDA NOTIFICATION

(Required in cases of illegal drug use — St Raphaela's Substance Use Policy 2026, Section 2, Step 4)

Field	Details
Gardaí / JLO notified?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
Name of Garda / JLO contacted	
Date / Time of contact	
Reference number (if provided)	
Substance handed over?	☐ Yes ☐ No

PART H — PARENTAL COMMUNICATION

Field	Details
Parent/Guardian Name	
Relationship to Student	
Date / Time Contacted	
Method of Contact	☐ Phone ☐ In Person ☐ Written
Summary of Communication	

Parent/Guardian Response	
Follow-up meeting arranged?	☐ Yes ☐ No — Date:

PART I — INVESTIGATION SUMMARY

(To be completed by the Principal following full investigation)

Summary of Findings:

Mitigating Circumstances Considered:

Student's Response to Allegations:

Sanctions Proposed *(in line with Code of Behaviour)*:

Option	Proposed?
Verbal Warning	☐
Written Warning	☐
Suspension	☐
Referral to BOM (for expulsion consideration)	☐
Other (specify)	

PART J — PASTORAL & SUPPORT REFERRALS

Support	Referred?	Date
Tutor / Year Head	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Guidance Counsellor	☐ Yes ☐ No	

School Chaplain / Pastoral Support	☐ Yes ☐ No	
HSE Addiction Services	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Drugs.ie / Spunout.ie	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Other external agency (specify)	☐ Yes ☐ No	

PART K — BOARD OF MANAGEMENT REFERRAL

(Where suspension beyond 3 days or expulsion is under consideration)

Field	Details
Referred to BOM?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Date referred	
BOM decision	
Date of BOM decision	
Student/Parent notified of BOM decision?	☐ Yes ☐ No — Date:

PART L — SIGN-OFF

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Reporting Staff Member			
Deputy Principal			
Principal			

STORAGE: This form is to be stored **securely and confidentially** by the Principal. Access is on a **need-to-know basis only**. Retained in line with the school's Data Retention Schedule under the Data Protection Acts 1988–2018.

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 13/4/2026

> 💡 This template has been built directly around the incident management procedures set out in St Raphaela's own Substance Use Policy 2026 and incorporates the Children First Act 2015 and Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025.