

POLICY OF SCOIL MHUIRE, MARINO

Document Title: Substance Use Policy

Effective Date: January 2026

Document No: 18

First Edition

No. of pages: 7

1. Purpose

Scoil Mhuire, Marino is an Edmund Rice School committed to fostering a safe, healthy, and respectful learning environment. This Substance Use Policy reflects our ethos of holistic education, valuing the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and moral development of each pupil in our school community.

In line with the *Education Act (1998)*, the *Education (Welfare) Act (2000)*, and national guidelines on substance use – including the *National Drugs Strategy (2001; 2009; 2017)* – this Substance Use policy was developed by school staff in consultation with the Board of Management. Its central concern is the welfare, care, and protection of every pupil in the school community. The policy addresses both education concerning alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarettes, and drugs, and the procedures for managing incidents relating to these substances.

Through the development and implementation of this Substance Use Policy, we aim to:

- protect pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse
- provide a comprehensive programme of education for all pupils in substance use issues through the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) component of the Wellbeing Curriculum Specification
- provide pupils with the knowledge and skills to make responsible, informed choices
- promote self-esteem and resilience through a positive school climate
- ensure clear and consistent procedures in managing substance-related incidents
- equip the school to deal with issues relating to substance use in a planned and considered way and in accordance with its statutory responsibilities
- manage incidents of substance misuse in a clear and consistent manner
- reinforce the role of the school in contributing to local and national strategies in relation to substance use education & prevention
- support all stakeholders in understanding and addressing substance misuse
- involve members of the wider community – Community Garda, School Nurse – in the education process where appropriate

By implementing a comprehensive policy, the school can proactively prevent substance misuse, provide education, and offer guidance to pupils, staff, and parents.

2. Scope

Scoil Mhuire, Marino is an Edmund Rice School which seeks to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and overall development of our pupils.

This Substance Use Policy deals with the potential misuse of illegal or inappropriate substances within our school community and applies to the pupils and staff of Scoil Mhuire as well as to users of the school premises. It is applicable during school-time – including breaks – and to all school related activities including those which take place off the school premises. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place.

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3. Principles

The world in which our pupils are growing up presents many challenges that can affect their health and wellbeing, and exposure to alcohol, tobacco, solvents, medicines, and illegal drugs is part of this reality.

It is emphasised in *Bunreacht na hÉireann* that “the primary and natural educator of the child is the Family” (Article 42), as such the staff and management of Scoil Mhuire recognise that substance misuse prevention falls primarily within the remit of the home, and is supported by the work of the school. As such, the school seeks to support families not alone in providing a framework for prevention, education, and response to substance use issues, but in ensuring that school staff are effective role models for pupils through their professional conduct.

4. Key Terms

In the context of this policy, these key terms will be understood as follows:

Substance	The term substance is interpreted in the widest possible sense to include: alcohol; cigarettes; e-cigarettes; other tobacco or nicotine products; legal or illegal drugs; solvents and gases; and any other substances not deemed appropriate for school-going children
Substance use	The legal or moderate consumption of substances such as alcohol or medicines
Substance misuse	The harmful or hazardous use of substances such as alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, or prescription medications outside of their intended use
SPHE	Social, Personal, Health Education: a component of the Wellbeing Curriculum
Education	The process of informing pupils about the risks associated with substance misuse and equipping them with the skills to make informed, healthy decisions
Prevention	Actions and strategies aimed at reducing the likelihood of substance misuse by educating pupils and promoting healthy choices
Support services	Resources and professional help available to pupils, staff, and families to address substance misuse, such as counselling, community programs, and referrals
DLP	Designated Liaison Person (Principal)
DDLDP	Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy Principal)

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5. Policy

EDUCATION CONCERNING SUBSTANCE USE

Education about alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and other illegal or inappropriate substances is provided for within the SPHE component of the Wellbeing Curriculum. In meeting curriculum objectives, members of the teaching staff of Scoil Mhuire can utilise:

- the *Walk Tall* programme
- the *Stay Safe* and *Relationships and Sexuality Education* programmes
- age-appropriate reading materials, including both picture books and novels

While many elements of substance misuse prevention – such as building pupil confidence, learning to take care of our body, and decision-making – often arise incidentally as part of the day-to-day teaching and learning that takes place in Scoil Mhuire, the following topics are delivered in discrete lessons:

Stage	Topic
Stage One (Junior & Senior Infants)	When do we need to take medicine? How can medicine help us?
Stage Two (1 st & 2 nd Class)	The rules about medication Smoking and cigarettes
Stage Three (3 rd & 4 th Class)	The risks associated with smoking The risks associated with alcohol What is a drug?
Stage Four (5 th & 6 th Class)	Influences and choices Risky substances Dependency and addiction

These topics are discussed with sensitivity in an age-appropriate manner, and with empathy for those in our school community who may be living in situations where there is a dependency or addiction.

On occasion, visits from external professionals – for example medical professionals or members of an Garda Síochána – may complement and enhance the work of teaching staff, however in such instances presentations are made in the presence of the relevant teacher and families will be informed in advance.

SUBSTANCE USE ON THE SCHOOL GROUNDS

SMOKING

In accordance with the *Public Health (Tobacco) Act* (2002), smoking is strictly prohibited in the building and grounds of Scoil Mhuire. The possession or use of any tobacco or nicotine products is strictly prohibited for Scoil Mhuire pupils. Similarly, the possession or use of e-cigarettes is strictly prohibited for all Scoil Mhuire pupils, and adult members of the school community must refrain from vaping on the school grounds during school time.

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ALCOHOL

The possession or consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited for all pupils of Scoil Mhuire.

Similarly, under the *Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Act* (2005) school staff have a legal responsibility to ensure they are not under the influence of intoxicants while at work.

Where concerns arise, the Principal will act to ensure the safety of staff and pupils, with appropriate referral to support services if required.

While Scoil Mhuire is generally an alcohol-free school, on certain occasions – for example school fundraisers or celebrations – alcohol may be served to adults. In such cases, it must be stored securely, served responsibly, and kept completely out of sight and reach of pupils. Staff and other adult members of the school community must not consume alcohol while supervising pupils or during school-related activities involving pupils.

MEDICATION & DRUGS

In line with the school's Administration of Medicines Policy, pupils are prohibited from bringing non-prescription medication to school. Where a pupil of Scoil Mhuire has been prescribed medication that requires administration during school hours, their family must write to the Board of Management requesting that the Board authorise a member of staff to administer the medication, or to monitor self-administration of the medication. For further information, please see the school's Administration of Medicines Policy.

All members of the school community – pupils, their families, and members of staff – as well as those visiting the school are forbidden from possessing or using illegal drugs on the grounds of Scoil Mhuire. Illegal drugs found on the school premises will be locked away securely, and the Gardaí will be contacted to dispose of them.

CLEANING PRODUCTS & SOLVENTS

In Scoil Mhuire, all cleaning agents and solvents are stored securely, and are used only by adult members of the school community.

The possession or use of solvents and aerosol sprays is strictly prohibited for all Scoil Mhuire pupils while on the school grounds or at school-related events.

MANAGEMENT OF A SUBSTANCE-RELATED INCIDENT

The staff and management of Scoil Mhuire, Marino recognise a substance-related incident as including, but not limited to:

- the possession, sale, or supply of alcohol, tobacco or e-cigarettes, solvents, medicines, or illegal drugs on the school premises or during school-related activities
- the consumption or use of alcohol, tobacco or e-cigarettes, solvents, or illegal drugs on the school premises or during school-related events
- being under the influence of substances on the school grounds or at school-related events
- disclosure or admission of inappropriate or illegal substance use
- the discovery of substances or substance-related paraphernalia on the grounds of Scoil Mhuire

REPORTING PROCEDURE FOR SUBSTANCE-RELATED INCIDENTS

Where a member of the school community witnesses, suspects, or is made aware of a substance-related incident, the following reporting procedures are followed:

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- the DLP (Principal) is informed without delay. If the DLP is unavailable, the incident or suspicion must be reported to the DDLP (Deputy Principal) without delay
- where the incident involves a pupil of Scoil Mhuire, their adult family member(s) are informed of the incident by the DLP or DDLP
- the Chairperson of the Board of Management is notified by the DLP or DDLP
- where appropriate, the DLP may report the incident to the Gardaí or Tusla

RESPONDING TO A SUBSTANCE-RELATED INCIDENT

If a member of staff is of the opinion that a Scoil Mhuire pupil is under the influence of a substance, or finds that a pupil is in possession of a substance they will immediately inform the Principal. In responding to the incident, the school will take the following steps:

Legal Substances <i>cigarettes, e-cigarettes, alcohol</i>	Illegal Substances <i>illegal drugs and solvents</i>
Staff will ensure that the pupil is safe and supervised.	Staff will ensure that the pupil is supervised in a safe environment.
The Principal will inform adult members of the pupil's family without delay.	The Principal will inform adult members of the pupil's family without delay.
The incident will be investigated.	The incident will be investigated.
Substances and substance-related paraphernalia will be confiscated and stored securely.	Illegal substances and substance-related paraphernalia will be confiscated and stored securely.
Where necessary, medical assistance will be sought.	Where necessary, medical assistance will be sought.
The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be notified.	The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be notified.
Where appropriate, a referral will be submitted to Tusla.	An Garda Síochána will be informed of the incident and asked to safely dispose of substances.
A record of the incident will be kept on the pupil's file.	A referral will be submitted to Tusla.
Any disciplinary response will be in line with Scoil Mhuire's <i>Code of Behaviour</i> .	Where appropriate, the school will seek legal advice.
	A record of the incident will be kept on the pupil's file.
	Any disciplinary response will be in line with Scoil Mhuire's <i>Code of Behaviour</i> .

If a member of staff appears to be under the influence of an intoxicant, or in possession of illegal drugs or solvents, it must be reported to the Principal without delay. In the interest of the safety, health, and welfare of the entire Scoil Mhuire community, the Principal will ask

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that person to remove themselves from the workplace. In the case of members of staff who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, school management will seek to ensure their safety either by contacting their next of kin or securing other safe transport from the school to their home. The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed of any incidents of substance misuse by school staff that fall within the scope of this Substance Use Policy, and staff are advised that in those instances, disciplinary procedures may be implemented.

If an adult member of the school community appears to be under the influence of an intoxicant when coming to collect a Scoil Mhuire pupil, it must be reported to the DLP. The safety of our pupils is paramount, and pupils should not be permitted to leave the school with an adult who appears to be under the influence. In such an instance, the Principal will ensure that the pupil is safe and supervised, and will call the pupil's alternative contacts as recorded by families on Aladdin. If nobody is available to collect the pupil, the Principal will contact Tusla or the Gardaí.

In the event that there are external contractors or service providers completing works in the building or grounds of Scoil Mhuire, they will be informed that cigarette breaks must be taken outside the school premises and out of sight from Scoil Mhuire pupils. Should the 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 shall ask the contractor to remove their employee from the workplace.

In the event that any adult member of the school community, or visitor to the school, refuses a reasonable request to remove themselves from the premises, the Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

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6. Approval & Review

This policy was brought to the Board of Management for review and ratification in January 2026.

Initial Approval

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal

_____ 13th January, 2026

Date

_____ 14th January, 2026

Effective Date

_____ June 2030

Review Date

