

## **ARDSCOIL RÍS**

### **Substance Use policy**

#### **Mission Statement**

Ardcoil Rís aims to provide a holistic education, which is driven by a Catholic ethos. We strive to create a safe environment, which fosters inclusion, honesty, dignity and respect. The School community encourages the individual in their pursuit of excellence. We aim to promote among our students a sense of pride in their school and to uphold the reputation of the school.

#### **Scope of our Substance Use policy**

- Our Substance Use policy is concerned with the use of any substance, controlled or otherwise, including, illicit substances (illicit substances is understood in this policy and in our Code of Behaviour as any substance or product that is forbidden by law, rules or custom), drugs, solvents, alcohol, tobacco and infused vapes which have the effect of damaging and/or altering the way in which the human body functions, whether at a physical, psychological or emotional level and it includes the use of substances that may not, in themselves, be unlawful.
- The prohibitions on substance use as outlined in this policy extend to all current students of the school whether such use occurs within or beyond the confines of the school e.g. on a school trip/tour etc.
- The terms of this Policy are without prejudice to the use of prescribed medications taken by a student under medical supervision for the purposes of the management or treatment of a medical condition. Where students are required to take such prescribed medication on a long-term basis notice thereof must be given to the school authorities.

#### **When will the policy apply?**

This policy is in effect during school time (including break times), and at all school related events such as team training, sporting events, international/national school tours, overnight trips/tours and day trips. Incidents relating to substance abuse outside of these times will be assessed with regard to the impact it has on our school community.

#### **Policy Objectives**

The objectives of this Policy are:

- to provide a safe and secure environment that promotes the welfare and development of students as members of the school community
- to try to protect students from the actual and potential harmful effects of substance use through education and the provision of accurate information;
- to recall the responsibilities of all students, staff and parents in relation to the protection of students from substance use;
- to outline the school's procedures in the event of a suspected or an actual incident of substance use which may be superseded by the school's Code of Behaviour;
- to indicate the possible consequences of any breach of the school's prohibition on substance use (in tandem with the Code of Behaviour) as outlined in this Policy and in the Code of Behaviour and all other associated School Policies;
- to confirm the limitations of the School's liability for any loss, damage or injury caused and/or contributed to by a breach of the terms of this Policy.

## **Code of Behaviour**

All students admitted to the school are obliged to comply with the School's Code of Behaviour and all associated policies including in this case, the Substance Use policy. Students shall accept that they represent and are ambassadors of the school at all times and will strive to ensure that the School's good name and high reputation are respected and upheld. Our Code of Behaviour is one that is based on the recognition of the student as an individual and yet creates an environment in which the safety & welfare of all are protected.

## **School Curriculum**

The School provides programmes on substance use for students through JC SPHE, JC Wellbeing, JC & SC Religion, TY specific talks and presentations, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year programmes etc. These aim to provide clear, accurate and up to date information concerning the nature, signs, dangers and consequences of substance use.

Pastoral care and regular school support are provided via:

- The Year Head and Tutor system
- Regular assemblies
- Positive affirmation of Students
- Guidance and counselling services
- The Extra-curricular programme
- The SEN department

## **Staff Training**

The School shall ensure that teachers, SNAs and any other staff (where relevant) are offered training in Substance Use Awareness as part of their in-service training and/or their training in specific subjects.

Year Heads shall have overall responsibility for the pastoral needs and behaviour of their specific year group and shall liaise with the Principal, Student Support Team, HSE, Gardai or any other agencies involved in or supportive of education in substance use, where required (subject to any over-riding Code of Behaviour procedures that may be deemed necessary).

All staff are required to report to the Principal (or in his absence, the Deputy Principal) any incident of suspected or actual incident of substance use which includes any substance, controlled or otherwise, including, illicit substances (illicit substances is understood in this policy and in our Code of Behaviour as any substance or product that is forbidden by law, rules or custom), drugs, solvents, alcohol, tobacco and infused vapes which have the effect of damaging and/or altering the way in which the human body functions, whether at a physical, psychological or emotional level and it includes the use of substances that may not, in themselves, be unlawful or any incidence of consuming/possessing/sharing and/or supply of the above. If the Principal or Deputy Principal are not available, the teacher must act in loco parentis.

## **Responsibilities of Parents**

Parents are obliged to understand and accept the full extent of their responsibilities in relation to education in and prevention of substance use. In this regard, parents shall:

1. Recognise that the School owes a duty of care to all students, staff and members of the School community and must discharge its obligations in accordance with this duty;
2. Consult with and educate their sons about the nature, danger and consequences of

substance use;

3. In the case of a trip/tour/excursion out of school for a day or more, parents are obliged to guarantee that when their son assembles for the start of the trip/tour/excursion, that he does so free from illegal substances or any substance listed in the Tours policy i.e. alcohol, tobacco, vapes, illegal drugs and/or illicit substances.
4. Satisfy themselves that their son is aware of, understands and accepts the Code of Behaviour and all associated policies required of students and, in particular, the School's prohibition of substance use which persists for the duration of his time as a student of Ardscoil Rís.
5. Inform the School Principal in the event that they suspect and/or are concerned about their son in relation to any actual or potential incident of substance use;
6. Attend all meetings and briefings organised by the School in relation to any actual or potential substance use incident involving their son;
7. Complete all necessary forms and furnish all relevant medical and other information concerning their son to the School, as required;
8. Co-operate fully with the School authorities in the event of their son being involved in an incident of substance use.

### **Managing Incidents of Substance Use**

1. The School views all instances of substance use in a serious light. An incident of substance use involves any circumstance in which a student uses, possesses, shares, distributes or supplies drugs (whether controlled or otherwise), illicit substances, solvents, alcohol, tobacco or vapes at any time whether on or off the School premises.
2. An incident of substance use may come to the attention of the School in any number of ways, including, through the manifestation of unusual or intoxicated behavior, disclosure by a third party, the presence of drug related material on the person of a student, the discovery of evidence on the School premises or through the occurrence of an emergency or a critical incident.
3. If such an incident of substance use occurs, it will be assessed as a serious incident and a report will be completed and submitted by the supervising staff. Where necessary, a student's bag, locker and other belongings may be searched. Accessing appropriate medical care/advice for any student, however, will be top priority.
4. It is only after the care and safety of the student(s) has been established and affirmed that the decision to treat the matter under the terms of the Code of Behaviour which includes the School Rules, all School Policies, the Suspension policy, the Expulsion policy may be invoked. The Code of Behaviour procedures may supersede all other School policies, where deemed necessary.
5. An incident of substance use may give rise to personal, pastoral, disciplinary, legal and/or other considerations. Whereas pastoral support is offered to all students affected by such an incident, the School will at all times discharge its moral and legal obligations to report matters to the relevant authorities, as appropriate and necessary.
6. Whereas information concerning an incident of substance use is treated as confidential, the School does not and cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality or non-disclosure of the information relating thereto. Information is communicated on a 'need to know' basis, including, where necessary to the relevant authorities. Parents will be informed in such an instance.
7. Any media inquiries in relation to any incident of substance use allegedly occurring in relation to a student or students of the School shall be directed towards and responded to by the Principal.
8. Where a student presents with an ongoing substance use problem, a referral to

appropriate support services will be made. The standards and expectations, as well as the School Rules and the other elements and procedures of the Code of Behaviour and associated policies will however, still apply.

### **Code of Behaviour Procedures**

In the event of an incident of substance use, disciplinary procedures in accordance with the School's Code of Behaviour will be implemented, forthwith, depending on the seriousness of the incident.

- Students who engage in substance use will face serious sanction under the Code of Behaviour, up to and including referral to the Board of Management. Depending on the individual case, support will be provided where necessary, but possibly in conjunction with appropriate sanctions.
- Students who threaten or compromise the health and safety of others, and/or engage in the sale, distribution, supply or sharing of any drug, controlled or otherwise, illicit substance (illicit substance is understood in this policy and in our Code of Behaviour as any substance or product that is forbidden by law, rules or custom), solvent, alcohol, tobacco or infused vapes which have the effect of damaging and/or altering the way in which the human body functions, whether at a physical, psychological or emotional level and includes the use of substances that may not, in themselves, be unlawful but may result in the student or another (as a result of their actions) being hospitalised, after a detailed investigation, may be referred to the Board of Management because the Principal judges that it would be most appropriately dealt with by the Board, in line with the Code of Behaviour, which includes the School's Suspension and Expulsion policy. The Principal may also give a recommendation of sanction up to and including suspension and/or expulsion, again in line with the School's Code of Behaviour, associated policies, including the School's Suspension and Expulsion policy.
- A student who knowingly withholds information or who misleads a teacher or emergency/medical personnel or who fails to respond honestly and appropriately to a teacher or emergency/medical personnel when another student is ill, particularly in a case where the student may know that a fellow student may have ingested something illicit, illegal, or that was considered wrong, (as outlined in the description of drugs [controlled or uncontrolled] solvents, alcohol, tobacco or infused vapes etc. outlined above) may be referred to the Board of Management if the Principal judges that it would be most appropriately dealt with by the Board, in line with the Code of Behaviour. The Principal may also give a recommendation of sanction up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

### **Dissemination and Review of Policy**

Like all policies, the School's policy on Substance use shall be distributed to all members of the School community through the website.

The School shall monitor and review this Policy on a periodic basis and shall seek to ensure that best practice in relation to the prevention and management of substance use is observed.