



Stratford College

Co-educational Secondary School

Substance Abuse Policy

21st June 2023

Mission Statement

Stratford College is a teaching and learning community committed to quality and excellence in education.

We are dedicated to:

- Providing a nurturing environment where each individual can develop self-esteem and a sense of their place in, and responsibility to, society.
- Instructing Jewish students in their religion while fostering mutual respect for all traditions.
- Promoting personal achievement and academic success.
- Respecting the unique potential of every student and encouraging each to maximise it.

This policy is part of a general pastoral approach by the school in order to ensure a healthy, caring and supportive learning environment. The Substance Use Policy is one among many that serve to endorse the school's ethos.

Stratford College asserts its right to protect and promote its ethos by requiring certain standards of behaviour and prohibiting certain practices.

- The prevalence of tobacco / vaping, alcohol, and drug misuse pose challenges and opportunities for the school community as an important social partner in providing drug awareness and education.
- The Management of Stratford College recognizes and accepts the seriousness of various research findings regarding the problems associated with drug and, in particular, alcohol misuse.

- The school policy aims to co-operate fully with the strategic plan adopted by the government under the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 and made mandatory for schools in circular 18/02.
- The Education Act (1998) provides that schools promote the social and personal education of students and provide health education for them.

School Policy

Stratford College does not accept or tolerate the possession, use, or supply of banned or prohibited substances and/or drug paraphernalia by any student in the school, on school trips and outings, or during any school-related activity. The use of properly prescribed drugs is considered separately but parents of students taking prescribed medication should inform the school in writing of that fact.

PROGRAMMES FOR ALCOHOL, TOBACCO / VAPING, VOLATILE SUBSTANCES AND DRUG EDUCATION.

Stratford College, within the limited resources available to it, will provide appropriate education programmes for all its students.

This programme of education will be age-appropriate and will seek to build on and complement existing programmes already being taught in the school – SPHE, PE and CSPE.

Parents are asked / expected to:

- Acknowledge the importance of these programmes.
- Recognize that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse.
- Assist and co-operate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

To assist the parents in their role the school will

- Provide them with information on what is happening in the school regarding education programmes (eg. SPHE etc).
- Encourage and welcome consultation with parents on the best use of available, resources in the community to support the school in its programme and policy implementation.

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

Procedures for managing Alcohol, Tobacco / Vaping, Drug related or Substance abuse incidents

1. Where it is apparent that there is immediate danger to students or the school community, the school reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school any student involved in a suspected abuse incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident.
2. The completion of an Abuse 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.
4. The school will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances and drug paraphernalia associated with an abuse incident, carefully recording all such items and retaining them pending completion of the investigation, unless otherwise instructed by appropriate outside agencies.
5. In the event of an incident, the school will seek statements from all persons involved in, concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident and will record these statements.
6. The school will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of an incident, including records referred to in the above steps, communications with other people or agencies involved or concerned with the matters under investigation, the investigation outcome, decisions taken and the rationale for these decisions, any penalties or disciplinary measures imposed following an investigation, and the management and outcome of any appeal that may arise following an investigation.
7. The school, at its own discretion, will liaise with any appropriate outside authority and seek advice or assistance as it deems appropriate in relation to its investigation of an incident.
8. If the 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:
 - i. Copies of all records deemed relevant to the position of the student concerned and to the nature of the complaints or allegations that a student is facing will be made available to the student and his parents—at the discretion of the school—in time to permit the student a reasonable opportunity to make his own reply to the matters at issue and any representations that s/he would wish to make or have made on his/her behalf.
 - ii. (b) The school will allow the student concerned and their parent's reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. The school will take in to account any response so made and any other relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.
 - iii. (c) The school shall shortly thereafter inform the student and his parents of the school's findings and their reasons for these. If the school finds that the students 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. In relation to a verified and investigated incident, the Board of Management may implement disciplinary actions or sanctions, including but not limited to: an oral warning, a written warning, a suspension of three days duration, a suspension of more than three days duration, other sanctions short of expulsion, and expulsion.
10. The school can, at its sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstances or representations that it considers should be taken into account.
11. The school should also ensure that pastoral supports are offered to the student / students and parents affected by an incident of substance abuse. These incidents can be

sometimes traumatic for those involved and the services of a tutor, counsellor, chaplain etc. will be made available as appropriate.

The Involvement and Roles of Various Parties in an Incident Investigation.

The Principal or his/her delegate or nominated staff member is the person responsible for all matters in this area.

In the case of a *suspected* abuse incident the school will immediately inform parents/guardians. This will be done without prejudice to the school's separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage any abuse incident.

While confidentiality will be maintained as far as is practicable the duty of teachers and staff to the school community, the Gardai, Health Board, Probation Office or Officers of the Courts preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any students involved in a substance abuse incident.

The school will not comment on an individual matter when an investigation is in progress other than to outline its policy and procedures for managing incidents. However, in the interests of the reputation of the school the management may clarify the school's position regarding an incident after the investigation has been completely concluded.

Training and Development

In relation to staff, the school

- Will deliver training in delivering education programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco / vaping, and drugs and Specific training on the role of staff in relation to the management and investigation of an abuse incident.

In relation to Parents & the Board of Management the school

- Will provide opportunities to attend information sessions and workshops in relation to drugs and the Policy.
- Will provide appropriate information, guidance, and support to the board regarding issues relating to investigation of and adjudication on incident investigations

In relation to the students the school will:

- Offer all students programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco / vaping, and Offer drug education within the context of the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes.

Monitoring and Reviewing

Stratford College will monitor, review, and evaluate this policy and all related work and procedures as necessary but at least every 5 years to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

Signed: John Rafter

Chairperson of Board of Management

Dated: 21st June 2023

Signed: Patricia Gordon

Principal

Date: 21st June 2023

Appendix: Definitions

<p><i>The School</i></p> <p><i>Banned or Prohibited Substances</i></p> <p><i>Drug Paraphernalia</i></p> <p><i>An Abuse Incident</i></p>	<p>The School includes school buildings, grounds, play areas, public areas where student congregate coming to and going from school.</p> <p>All substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non-validated prescription medication, all alcohol and tobaccos / vaping used contrary to the law of the land. The school reserves the right to determine that a substance found at the school qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance.</p> <p>Any banned or prohibited substance as defined above, any items that may be deemed to be used in the taking of illicit substances, and any written or printed material promoting the use of illicit substances.</p> <p>Any incident relating to banned or prohibited substances that occurs in the School or during school functions or outings or any such incident that may be deemed damaging to the health or welfare of the student concerned, to other students or to the policy or reputation of the School. The School reserves the right to determine whether a specific incident constitutes an abuse incident to be addressed under the terms of the policy.</p>
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Substance Abuse Incident Report Form

1. Name of Student and Year:

2. Description of items in student's possession:

3. Account of event:

Signed:

Dated:

Appendix – Advisory from the HSE on Vaping among children and young people. Dated: 29/05/2023

Vaping is an emerging risk to the health of children and young people. The purpose of this communication from the HSE is to better inform and support parents and guardians to protect children and young people from the harms of vaping.

Vaping means using an electronic cigarette (E-cigarette). E-cigarettes are battery-powered devices. They heat nicotine mixed with flavourings and other chemicals to create an aerosol that the user inhales.

Trends in smoking and vaping among children and young people

Parents, guardians, teachers and schools play an important role in protecting children and young people from smoking. Smoking among children and young people aged 10-17 years decreased from almost 1-in-4 in 1998 to 1-in-20 in 2018. This is a huge achievement, which puts children and young people on a course for good health throughout their lives.

Vaping has become more common for adults in recent years. Almost 1-in-20 people aged 15 years and older in Ireland vape. Most of these people smoke or have smoked in the past.

Vaping has also become more common among children and young people. Data from 2018 shows that that about 1-in-10 children and young people aged 12 to 17 years old used an E-cigarette in the last 30 days. Data focused on 16 year olds, found 1-in-5 were using

E-cigarettes in 2019 which is double what it was in 2015. More up-to-date Irish data is due to be published later in 2023. Based on these recent trends, we expect this will confirm a further increase in E-cigarette use among children and young people in Ireland.

Risks of harm caused by vaping among children and young people.

Vaping is harmful for children and young people for many reasons:

E-cigarette use has been linked with acute harms including poisonings, burns, fractures, lung injury and asthma exacerbations.

Early evidence links E-cigarettes use to cardiovascular and respiratory tissue damage.

E-cigarettes often contain nicotine, which is addictive and leads to dependence.

Children and young people are especially vulnerable to the effects of nicotine on their developing brains including nicotine addiction, mood disorders, and lowering of impulse control.

Other drugs such as alcohol, synthetic cannabinoids, and opiates can be added to E-liquids and consumed through vaping.

Finally, children and young people who use E-cigarettes are more likely to start smoking compared to those who never used E-cigarettes.

Longer-term health effects of vaping are uncertain at this point in time.

Regulating to better protect children and young people from the harms of vaping

In 2022, the drafting of the Public Health (Tobacco and Nicotine Inhaling Products) Bill was approved by government. The Bill will ban the sale of E-cigarettes to those under the age of 18 and strengthen regulation of the retail of tobacco and E-cigarette products. We expect the Bill to be brought forward into the legislative programme soon.

Support for parents, guardians and teachers to protect children and young people from the harms of vaping

Parents, guardians and teachers have been in touch with the HSE for advice on how to protect children and young people from the harms of vaping.

Including E-cigarettes in substance misuse policies and procedures is an important step which many schools have taken to protect children and young people.

A range of resources for schools from the HSE Education Programme were updated and enhanced to include new information on E-cigarettes. Links are provided at the end of this document.

The HSE encourages parents and guardians to discuss vaping with their children and young people.

A 'QUIT4Youth' Resource has recently been developed for local HSE Health and Wellbeing services to support them in their response to the needs of young people who smoke and use E-cigarettes. The HSE is working on further resources to support parents and guardians.

We will monitor this situation and continue to develop our response, resources and supports. We will continue to work with parents and guardians, schools, the Department of Education, Department of Health and all stakeholders to ensure we protect children and young people from the harms of smoking and E-cigarettes.

Links to information and resources -

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/tobaccocontrol/resources/e-cigarette-resources.html>