

# Holy Family Secondary School

## Substance Abuse Policy

*Review of existing HFSS Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Policy*

### September 2015

1. Link to Mission Statement and Aims
2. Rationale
3. Scope of the policy
4. The use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs in school
5. Managing drug-related incidents
6. Tobacco, alcohol and drug education programmes
7. Staff training and development
8. Review and evaluation
9. References and Advice for Parents



*Appendix 1: HFSS Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Policy as at February 2014*

Holy Family Secondary School staff, the Parents' Association, the Pupil Council and the Board of Management were consulted during the formation of the policy.

**Ratified by Board of Management on: September 2014**

**Proposed Policy Review date: Academic 2018/19**

---

Chairperson, Board of Management  
Mr Feargal Whyte

---

Secretary, Board of Management  
Mrs Angela Ryan

---

Representative of the Diocese  
Fr. Joe Mc Dermott

## **1. Link to Mission Statement and Aims**

This Policy has been developed in line with our Mission Statement which states;

*‘We promote the Christian virtues of faith, hope, love, gentleness, respect and tolerance, and we emphasise togetherness and family. Guided by these Christian virtues, and dedicated to the pursuit of excellence, it is our mission to provide a safe, caring, inclusive learning environment in which to foster the spiritual, intellectual, academic, aesthetic, physical, emotional and social development of each pupil so that she may fulfil her own unique potential and may leave our school with the capacity and the willingness to contribute to the building of a society characterised by these Christian virtues’*

As such, Holy Family Secondary School is committed to enabling pupils to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, cultural and physical potential. It also is committed to fostering the development of personal responsibility. This is the ethos which guides the school’s Substance Abuse Policy.

The policy content herein must be interpreted and understood in conjunction within the policies framework of Holy Family Secondary School and the school’s Code of Behaviour.

## **2. Rationale**

Holy Family Secondary School is committed to protecting and promoting the health and safety of all members of the school. Consequently, we condone neither the misuse of drugs or alcohol by the members of the school nor the illegal supply of these substances on school premises. Any instances of possession, use or supply will be regarded with the utmost seriousness.

Holy Family Secondary School does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the school, or on outside activities or in non-school time by any member of the school community. Holy Family Secondary School does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco in the school or on school activities by any pupil. The school does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances. Pupils may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only. Holy Family Secondary 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.

## **3. Scope**

The policy operates within a legislative framework and takes account of the following;

- The Education Act ,1998
- The Education Welfare Act , 2000
- Equal Status Act, 2000
- The Equality Act, 2004
- Misuse of Drugs Act 1977 and the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1984. These have been further amended by subsequent Criminal Justice Acts, including the Criminal Justice Act 2007
- Intoxicating Liquor Act 2008
- Tobacco Smoking (Prohibition) Regulations 2003.

### **Definitions:**

- **‘School ’** means Holy Family Secondary School, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
- **‘Parent/Guardian’** means those having parental responsibility for a child

- For the purpose of this policy and in line with the guidance issued to all schools by the Department of Education and Skills, ‘**drugs**’ will include any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.
- ‘**Drugs**’ include: alcohol and tobacco; “over-the-counter” medicines, such as paracetamol, codeine, prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, tranquillisers, inhalers and Ritalin; volatile substances, such as correcting fluids/thinners, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol, controlled drugs, such as cannabis, LSD, Ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms (processed), heroin and cocaine, other substances such as amyl/butyl nitrite (poppers) and legal highs as well as performance enhancing drugs. All other substances construed as legal highs under current and future legislation.

This policy focuses on five key areas:

- The use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs in school
- Managing drug-related incidents
- Tobacco, alcohol and drug-education programmes
- Staff training and development
- Monitoring, review and evaluation

#### **4. The use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs in school**

**Holy Family Secondary School does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the school, or on outside activities or in non-school time by any member of the school community.**

**The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco or e-cigarettes in the school or on school activities by any pupil.**

**The School does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances.** Pupils may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only. Pupils who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school long term must inform the school.

The School **must be informed** if a pupil has a medical condition and relevant teachers, e.g. P.E. teacher must be informed also.

A pupil or Holy Family Secondary School staff member **may not give** a pupil any prescribed or "over the counter "medicine.

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

**Smoking and E-cigarettes:** Pupils are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes and/or e-cigarettes on the school premises, on school trips, or when involved in any school activities. Smoking is also legally forbidden in enclosed places of work, such as Holy Family Secondary School. The ban was introduced by the *Tobacco Smoking (Prohibition) Regulations 2003*. The purpose of this ban is to offer protection to those who are exposed to the harmful and toxic effects of tobacco smoke. Smoking has been identified as a major cause of heart disease and a significant contributor to lung cancer.

Vaping (to inhale vapour from e-cigarettes) is also not permitted on the school premises, on school trips, or when involved in any school activities. In May 2014, The Health Service Executive banned the use of e-cigarettes in all health service facilities. As e-cigarettes resemble ordinary cigarettes, their use may promote

or re-normalise smoking, disrupt the environment for non-smokers, and make it harder for the school to enforce a no smoking policy.

Visitors and all members of the HFSS school community must comply with our NO SMOKING and NO VAPING POLICY. If any school fire alarm is activated as a result of non-compliance with this ban, the Fire Services call out fee and any associated costs will be borne by the person who set the alarm off.

Where a pupil is found in possession of cigarettes/e-cigarettes, they will be confiscated and stage three of Responses to Negative Behaviour/Actions for Improving Pupil Behaviour in our HFSS Code of Behaviour will be automatically invoked.

Where a pupil is found smoking, stage three of Responses to Negative Behaviour/Actions for Improving Pupil Behaviour in our HFSS Code of Behaviour will be automatically invoked.

**Alcohol:** Pupils are not permitted to bring alcohol into school or to consume alcohol in school. Pupils are not permitted to consume alcohol on school trips or tours.

Where a pupil comes to school under the influence of alcohol, her parents will be contacted immediately. Stage three of Responses to Negative Behaviour/Actions for Improving Pupil Behaviour in our HFSS Code of Behaviour will be automatically invoked.

Where a pupil is found in possession of, and/or consuming alcohol in school, on school trips or when involved in any school activities, her parents will be contacted immediately. Stage three of Responses to Negative Behaviour/Actions for Improving Pupil Behaviour in our HFSS Code of Behaviour will be automatically invoked. This may include suspension and/or expulsion.

**Illegal Drugs and Solvents etc.:** This school does not permit the possession, use or supply of drugs or solvents on the school premises, on school trips or in the course of any school-related activities. The only exceptions are: prescribed drugs for legitimate medicinal use about which parents should inform the school; legitimate non-prescribed drugs in the possession of pupils with their parents' permission.

Illegal drugs found on the school premises should be locked away and the Gardaí contacted to dispose of them. Teachers are advised not to transport illegal substances at any time. Where the school suspects the possession, use or trafficking of illegal drugs, an investigation will be carried out. Parents of any pupil involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Gardaí will be sought. Stage three of Responses to Negative Behaviour/Actions for Improving Pupil Behaviour in our HFSS Code of Behaviour will be automatically invoked. This may include suspension and/or expulsion.

The school management will expect parents to inform the school if they suspect their child of drug taking. Pupils suspected of taking drugs or solvents outside school will be monitored and every effort will be made to support them and ensure they get the counselling and help they need.

## **5. Managing drug-related incidents**

**The School Approach:** We acknowledge that, in all situations involving drugs, it is necessary to find a balance between the needs of the pupil, the needs of the school community and the reputation of the school. Listening, establishing facts and providing support will be our initial approach to the situation. Stage three of

Responses to Negative Behaviour/Actions for Improving Pupil Behaviour in our HFSS Code of Behaviour will be automatically invoked. This may include suspension and/or expulsion.

**Drug Incidents:** The following are example of a drug incident:

- Suspicion of drug use, possession or dealing
- Emergencies when the person may be unconscious
- Disclosure by another person
- Possession of a drug on the school premises or on a school-related activity
- Selling/supplying legal/illegal drugs
- School grounds being used for drug activity
- Drug paraphernalia found on school property

**Managing a Drug Incident:** All members of staff need to be aware of the signs of drug use and to be alert for changes in behaviour. It is important that, in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents, a limited number of people be involved in managing the incident. People will be informed on a 'need to know' basis. The Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor and person(s) directly involved in the case will be informed. In situations of confirmed use/possession or supply then all the details will be recorded and acted upon. All written documentation will be kept in the confidential care of the Principal.

**Parents:** In the event of parents being unwilling or unable to co-operate with the school, the school will contact the social work department of the Health Service Executive (HSE) for advice and support. Parents will be informed beforehand if the school is about to take this course of action.

**Gardaí:** It is agreed that the Principal or a designated liaison person will contact the Gardaí in the event of a confirmed drug incident and they will deal with any drugs found on the premises.

**Counselling/Pastoral Care:** For some young people their involvement with drugs may be masking some underlying difficulties and, for others, it may be a phase of experimentation that they will pass through safely. In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered.

If the person has a drug problem then referral to an appropriate service will be recommended. Parents and staff involved in the incident will be offered support.

Where a pupil has been suspended in line with the school's Code of Behaviour (Suspension and Expulsion Policy) their return to school will usually be conditional on their receiving external counselling or follow-up.

**Disciplinary Procedures:** Drug incidents are complex and, in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions and punishments (for example, suspension and expulsion), consistent with the nature and severity of the offence, will be implemented.

**Confidentiality:** Teachers cannot offer total confidentiality to a pupil who discloses drug involvement. Information must, however, only be disclosed on a strict 'need to know' basis. The pupil must be informed about what is happening and why. The school recognises that the issue of confidentiality is complex. It is important, therefore, that, in each school year, the issue of confidentiality be discussed with all pupils.

**Media:** Only the Principal or a spokesperson nominated by her will handle all media queries. The school will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug-related incident.

## **6. Tobacco, alcohol and drug-education programmes**

This school is committed to providing a comprehensive tobacco, alcohol and drug education programme for all pupils that will be incorporated into Social Personal and Health Education Programme (SPHE). Drug education and substance abuse education will also continue to be provided in the context of other relevant school programmes.

Our education aims in relation to drug education are:

- To improve the self-esteem, the confidence, the personal and social skills of our pupils
- To enable our pupils to make informed, healthy and responsible choices
- To provide honest and appropriate information on drugs
- To minimise the harm caused by drug use by offering supportive intervention (e.g. counselling)
- To make pupils aware of this policy

**Outside Speakers and Services:** The school believes that teachers are in the best position to carry out drug education but sometimes it may be appropriate to use suitable outside personnel to supplement or reinforce the work done in class. The school will liaise with the local Children and Family Agency (formerly HSE) on Drug Education.

**Parents:** Parents will be kept informed of what is happening in the school with regard to substance abuse education. This policy will be available on the school website [www.holyfamily.ie](http://www.holyfamily.ie)

## **7. Staff training and development**

**Staff:** The school will make available training to staff involved in delivering the SPHE Programme.

First-Aid training will be made available to all staff. A FETAC Level 5 FIRST AID certification programme has been funded by the BOM and is offered to staff whenever possible. All staff are made aware of substance abuse health and safety issues.

## **8. Review and evaluation of the Policy**

This policy will be reviewed periodically, or as may be necessary, in light of changing information, in consultation with the wider school community. The next review date for this policy is academic 2018/19.

The three main areas of the policy that we will continue to monitor and evaluate are:

- Drugs Education Programmes for pupils and information/training for parents and the Board of Management
- Managing Drug-Related Incidents
- Staff Training

**Dissemination of the Policy:** The policy will become part of our School Plan. The policy is available on the school website [www.holyfamily.ie](http://www.holyfamily.ie) . All members of the school community will be made aware of this policy.

## **9. References and Advice for Parents**

- A parent's guide to young people and drug and alcohol misuse is available on [www.drugs.ie](http://www.drugs.ie)
- Citizens Information [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)
- Health Service Executive [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)
- National Smokers Quit line [www.quit.ie](http://www.quit.ie)
- **'Straight Talk'** A useful guide for parents on how to deal with teenage alcohol use. Either to delay a teenager from starting to drink or deal with the issue of a teenager that is already drinking. [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)
- **'Know the Facts About Drugs'** Know the Facts about Drugs is a booklet with information about drugs and drug use. It is aimed at a wide audience and has information that would be relevant to young people, adults, parents and carers. [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)



**HFSS SCHOOL POLICY:  
YEAR OF REVIEW:**

**Substance Abuse Policy  
Academic 2014-15**

<b>PROCESS STAGE</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>Identification Primary Planning Meeting</b>	February 2014	Review of existing HFSS Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Policy
<b>Scoping document (DRAFT 1)</b>	February 2014	Legislation updates and review
<b>Discussion document finalised (DRAFT 2)</b>	March 2014 April 2014	Policy Planning Team meeting Reviewed in line with Code of Behaviour (with C. Rochford)
<b>Circulation of discussion document to focus group (staff) (DRAFT 3)</b>	August 2014	Staff Focus Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careers and Guidance Team</li> <li>• SPHE Dept. Staff</li> <li>• RE Dept staff</li> <li>• School Chaplain</li> <li>• Policy Planning Team</li> </ul>
<b>Circulation of discussion document to staff (DRAFT 3)</b>	August 2014	
<b>Consultation with SRC, Senior Prefect Team, Parents' Association (DRAFT 3)</b>	September 2014	
<b>Review by Planning Team (DRAFT 4)</b>	September 2014	
<b>Consultation with Board of Management (FINAL DRAFT)</b>	September 2014	
<b>Ratification date (BOM)</b>	September 2014	
<b>Implementation date</b>	September 2014	