



# Rosmini Community School

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## SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all students all members of staff and personnel within Rosmini Community School, its lands and its environs. Students will be governed by this policy throughout the school day, when representing the school or involved in any school activity both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time and including going to and coming from school or when wearing the school uniform. It also applies to all those using the premises.

### Rosmini Community School mission statement

*“Rosmini Community School aims to provide an inclusive education catering for the physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development of its students in a caring and friendly atmosphere, which respects the rights of all.”*

In keeping with this, the Substance Use Policy is part of our pastoral approach to providing a caring and supportive learning environment. The substance use policy is one among many that serve to endorse the school’s ethos. Rosmini Community School asserts its right to protect and promote its particular ethos by requiring certain standards of behaviour and prohibiting certain practices.

### Rationale

This policy has been formulated to protect all the students and staff in the school. Many issues outside our school have an impact on our school community. The prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and drug misuse pose challenges for the school. The Board of Management of Rosmini Community School recognises that the issue of substance abuse is very serious and can impact on staff and students. In arriving at a policy to deal with the possession of, distribution of, the use of and the abuse of substances, the school is conscious that each situation is unique and so a flexible response is required.

When referring to substances the Board of Management of Rosmini Community School defines them as follows:

All substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non validated prescription medication, the

misuse of solvents, the use and misuse of matches, lighters and fireworks, all alcohol and tobacco used contrary to the law of the land. Rosmini Community School also reserves the right to determine that a substance found at the school qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance. The school policy aims to cooperate fully with the strategic plan adopted by the government under the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 and made mandatory for school in DES 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**

The school does not accept or tolerate the possession, use, or supply of banned or prohibited substances and or drug paraphernalia by any student, staff or visitor in the school on school trips and outings, during any school related activity or going to and coming from school, when wearing the school uniform or wherever our school Code of Behaviour applies.

### **PRESCRIBED MEDICATION**

Parents of students taking prescribed medication should inform the school in writing of that fact. Staff are not personally obliged to administer medicines. It is recognised that children with long term recurring health problems such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes etc. be accommodated within the school. However, proper procedures for the administration of such medicines must be made. Parents /guardians are to be encouraged to provide maximum support and assistance in helping the school accommodate such students. This would include measures such as self medication where necessary and only after approval from a GP/consultant or under parental supervision. In the case where a student is suffering from a life threatening illness, parents/guardians should consult with the Principal/Deputy Principal and should outline clearly in writing what may and may not be done in a particular emergency situation with particular reference to what may be at risk to the student. This must be backed up with a letter from the GP/consultant caring for the student. In the case of medical emergencies where staff have been given medication to administer, only the smallest dose possible to ensure recovery, until a medical expert can take over, should be provided for administration. Confirmation of this should be obtained from the GP responsible for the child in question before the school would agree to hold such life saving medication in its care. No member of staff has the authority to administer any other medication or over the shelf painkillers to a student without parental approval and permission from the Principal.

### **Education in relation to substance use for students.**

Education about the use of drugs and the consequences of the misuse of substances will be provided as part of a broad developmental SPHE programme. This will be delivered through specific modules that are age appropriate. Substance abuse programmes will also form part of other school subjects such as R.E., PE, and CSPE. It also forms part of the following subjects Home Economics and Science and R.E. Support Services within the school may also offer education in this area SCP, HSCLO. Services outside the school include Gardai, ISPCC and the HSE. Expert speakers may be invited from time to time to speak to students and parents' groups.

### **Role of Parents**

Parents are expected to acknowledge the importance of all school programmes that the school provides for the students. They should attend where possible talks and courses provided for

parents in relation to substance use/ abuse. They should recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing their children in regard to substance abuse. They should assist and cooperate 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, 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 incident of substance abuse, Rosmini Community School will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student or students involved and the welfare of the school community.

## **CONCERN RE STUDENTS AND ILLEGAL SUBSTANCE USE OUTSIDE SCHOOL**

When the school authorities are made aware that a real concern exists where a student may be involved in illegal substance use outside school, the following procedure is followed. The parents of the student will be informed in writing or by phone by the Principal about the concern. It will be stressed that the school is not accusing the student of using illegal substances, but is relaying its concern that this might be the case. The parents may be invited in to the school to meet with the Principal and discuss the concern. The Principal will make them aware of any support services in the school, and the need to make contact with their GP or the Drug Awareness Unit (which may offer testing for illegal substances and follow up counselling).

## **PROCEDURES IN MANAGING AND INVESTIGATING AN INCIDENT OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

1. Rosmini Community 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. This applies particularly where there is a threat to Health and Safety of students or the school community. The school reserves the right to inform An Garda Siochana of its suspicions or findings at any stage and will act in accordance with any guidance or instruction given by same.
2. A record will be kept of all details of the incident.
3. School personnel will then fully investigate and assess any abuse incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this.
4. School personnel will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances or paraphernalia associated with the abuse incident, and carefully record all such items. They will retain 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, and concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident. They will record this statement as part of the investigation.
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, records of 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. The school will also keep a record of any penalties or disciplinary measures imposed following an investigation and the management and outcome of any appeal that may arise following an investigation.

7 Rosmini Community 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 circumstances merit and an investigation is continuing the school will put the full particulars of the incident to the students concerned and their parents/guardians in the following manner.

(a) 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/her parents/ guardians at the discretion of the school. This will be done in time to permit the student a reasonable opportunity to make his own reply to the matters at issue and any representation that he/she would wish to make or have made on his/her behalf.

(b) The school will allow the student concerned and his parents/guardians reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. The school will take into account any response so made and any other relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.

(c) The school shall shortly thereafter inform the student and his/her parents of the school's findings and their reasons for these. If the school finds that the student has been guilty of or has been involved in/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 school and/or the Board of Management may implement disciplinary actions or sanctions, including but not limited to: an oral warning, a written warning, detention, 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, School Completion Programme etc. will be made available. External sources of support may also be recommended. Return to school may depend on participation in an appropriate counselling /addiction programme. Parental involvement and guarantees may also be required.

## **THE INVOLVEMENT AND ROLES OF VARIOUS PARTIES IN AN INCIDENT INVESTIGATION.**

The Principal or Principal's nominated person, (the Deputy Principal in the absence of the Principal), will be the person responsible for all matters in this area. The Principal/or nominated person will have the following duties and responsibilities:

- 1 The Principal is responsible for dealing with abuse incidents arising at the school.
- 2 All reports of abuse or suspected incidents must be reported to the Principal.
- 3 The Principal makes all decisions regarding investigation of an incident: communication with, liaison with and reporting to relevant parties; and disclosure of information regarding an investigation.
- 4 The Principal is responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed regarding investigation documents.
- 5 The Principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any written documentation and records associated with an incident.
- 6 The principal is responsible for taking possession of any banned or prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia and deciding what should be done with same upon appropriate advice.
- 7 The principal may seek the assistance of the deputy principal, year head, and or school guidance counsellor in conducting an incident investigation.
- 8 Communication with the student and parents will be as per the procedures laid down in the previous section.
- 9 The Principal will decide on the appropriate sanction, suspension, or referral to the Board of Management for a longer suspension or expulsion.

#### **DUTY OF STAFF**

The Board of Management requires all staff to report immediately, via the incident report form, any incidents where students/employees/visitors

Encounter the use /suspected use of alcohol drugs on the school premises in the school grounds or during a school related activity

Exhibit symptoms/behaviour that may suggest the use of alcohol/drugs

Are involved or suspected of being involved in the distribution, purchase or use of alcohol/drugs.

Discover suspect substances /paraphernalia in the school.

The school personnel will seek to establish the facts and to be clear about the nature of the incident before deciding on a course of action. There will be no assumption of guilt at this stage

The student should not be confronted openly before his/her peers. There should be no assumption of guilt regarding substance misuse/ abuse, as there are a variety of conditions, which might mimic the suspected misuse of substances. The possession of tablets might be for medicinal use.

The teacher is entitled to request the surrender of a suspicious substance or paraphernalia.

This should be handed over without fuss. The teacher should not seek to search the student or his/her possessions. Where there is a refusal to co-operate the student should be brought to the Principal/ Deputy Principal whose responsibility it is to proceed with the matter.

On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender the suspicious substance and to cooperate in revealing the contents of bags clothing and personal possessions if necessary.

In the case of lack of cooperation from the student, the parents should be informed of the situation and that the Gardai may also have to be notified. The student's bags, and personal property should be isolated until the parents/Gardai arrive.

Rosmini Community School reserves the right to search school property including lockers and toilets at any time.

The Principal /Deputy Principal will recognise that the Health and Safety and the wellbeing of the student/students are paramount and will seek medical aid if deemed necessary. The student will be provided with the appropriate guidance and support they need.

A student may be asked to provide a medical certificate to indicate they are drugs free and are not a threat to Health and Safety before they return to school.

### **Suspected Substance Abuse**

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.

### **STAFF / STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM**

The relevant support systems of the school will be mobilised: Chaplain, Guidance Counsellors, Year Head Tutor, Class teachers SPHE coordinator Care Support Teams and School

Completion. Where considered necessary, legal advice will be sought. If illegal drugs/paraphernalia are found on the school premises, the school will/may contact the Gardai about its safe disposal. It is the responsibility of the Principal/Deputy Principal to summon such persons as may be helpful to the issue. Teachers in their pastoral role may encounter changes in a student's behaviour and attitude on occasion or over a period of time. This may be for a variety of reasons and may not necessarily be indicative of substance misuse. The role of the teacher carries a duty of care towards the student, which involves a degree of confidentiality. However this does not preclude reporting a genuine suspicion or concern. The quality of the relationship between teacher and the student is central to noticing change in behaviour. Teachers should always discuss any significant altered behaviour or performance of a student with the Year Head. This student may then be referred to the Care Support Team or the Counsellors.

The Principal may decide to inform the parents, involve the Board of Management, and recommend addiction counselling and parental involvement in this. Rosmini Community School also retains the right to seek a medical certificate at any time, to indicate that the student is drugs free and are not a threat to Health and Safety.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND MEDIA INQUIRIES**

While confidentiality will be maintained as far is practicable the duty of teachers and staff to the school community preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any students when they come in contact with an abuse incident or suspected abuse incident the school may be required in a given situation to contact as appropriate such authorities as, the Gardai, HSE, Probation Service or Officers of the Courts. The school may need to engage the expert assistance of an appropriate third party to properly investigate an incident.

In the event of a media enquiry arising from an alleged substance abuse incident in the school, the school will undertake not to comment on any individual matter while an investigation is in progress other than to outline policy.

However, in the interests of the school's reputation, The Board of Management may clarify the schools position regarding an incident after the investigation has been completely concluded.

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

In relation to staff, Rosmini Community School will deliver training in delivering education programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs specific training on the role of staff in relation to the management and investigation of a substance incident.

In relation to Parents, the Board of Management of Rosmini Community School will provide opportunities to attend information sessions and workshops in relation to drugs and the Policy. will seek and provide appropriate information, guidance and support to the board regarding issues relating to investigation of and adjudication on incident investigations.

In relation to students, Rosmini Community School will offer all student programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco misuse and drug education within the context of the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate.

## **TOBACCO**

Smoking is prohibited on the school premises both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time. It applies to all those using the premises. Students are also governed by this policy when representing the school or involved in any school activity both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time and including going to and coming from school or when wearing the school uniform and where ever our school Code of Behaviour applies.

## **ADULTS**

A parent or other adult presenting under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be afforded an interview with any member of staff. He/she will be asked to leave the premises by the Principal/Deputy Principal. Failure to do so will result in Gardai being called. A formal letter of complaint will be issued by the BOM in such instances and where necessary a legal injunction may be sought to prevent a re-occurrence of such an incident.

The school operates a NO SMOKING POLICY in accordance with the present national legislation.

## **REVIEW**

Rosmini Community School will monitor, review and evaluate this policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practises.

Rosmini Community School reserves the right to alter this policy document in the light of any new developments before a full review takes place.

## **Appendix definitions**

The following definitions apply in this policy.

### **SCHOOL**

The School includes all Rosmini C S school buildings, grounds, play areas, public areas where students congregate going to and coming from school, school related activities and where ever our school Code of Behaviour applies.

## **BANNED OR PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES**

Banned or Prohibited Substances includes all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non validated prescription medication, the misuse of solvents, use of matches, lighters and fireworks, bangers, all alcohol and tobacco s used contrary to the law of the land. Rosmini Community School also reserves the right to determine that a substance found at the school qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance.

#### DRUG PARAPHERNALIA

Drug Paraphernalia includes any banned or prohibited substance as defined above, any items that may be used in the taking of illegal substances and any written printed or graphic material promoting the use of illicit substances.

#### AN ABUSE

An Abuse incident is 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 and welfare of Rosmini C.S. Rosmini C.S. reserves the right to determine whether a specific incident constitutes an abuse incident to be addressed under the terms of this policy.

#### PARENTS

In this policy Parents include natural parents, foster parents, step parents, or guardian of the student concerned or any person acting in loco parentis either on a temporary or permanent capacity on the date of the abuse incident.

#### PRINCIPAL

In this policy the Principal means the Principal at the time as appointed by the school and defined in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 or the Deputy Principal where the principal is either unavailable or has delegated to the deputy principal.

**Date of adoption by Board of Management: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019**