

PATRICIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

Mission Statement

The Patrician Secondary School as a christian community commits itself to the development of all it's members in an environment of co-operation and mutual respect.

Introduction

A drug can be defined as a chemical that changes the way the human body functions, whether mentally, physically or emotionally. For the purpose of this policy we are concerned with drugs which have the power to change a previous mood and the way a person thinks. We are also concerned with drugs upon which the taker may become physically, or more often, psychologically dependent. The categories and the effects of different drugs are varied. For further information see The Drugs Wheel (Appendix).

The policy will focus on the following:

- *Strategies for the prevention of substance abuse.*
- *Procedures for managing and dealing with substance abuse and related issues by members of the school community.*

Prevention

Education

It is accepted by professionals working within the field that education in relation to alcohol, tobacco/vaping and substance abuse is best carried out by teachers that the students know and within the overall context of a healthy living programme. Substance abuse education occurs in the SPHE, Wellness and Lifeskills programmes. A number of teachers have also trained in the Substance Abuse Prevention Programme. The aforementioned programmes endeavour to ensure that students;

- a) Have clear information about the effects of various drugs.
- b) Examine their attitudes to alcohol, tobacco/vaping and illicit substances in their lives and within their communities.
- c) Are equipped with the skills to make informed and healthy decisions regarding substance abuse.

Counselling

Substance misuse rarely occurs in a vacuum and where students have been in difficulties because of the use of any other drug, it may be discovered, in some cases, that they have been using it to help them with or to avoid some other problem. In this instance, the student may be referred to counsellors within or outside the school. (Guidance counsellors or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services CAMHS).

Parents

Information evenings are held in consultation with the Parents' Association to increase awareness of substance misuse. These information evenings are addressed by the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer, the Drugs Outreach Service Counsellor, or whoever is deemed appropriate.

Procedures for dealing with substance abuse

The step by step procedure for dealing with behaviour which leads to suspicion of a substance misuse issue is outlined below. Any incident of intoxication will also be followed up in this way.

1. A balanced approach will be followed to take into account the welfare of the student(s) concerned and the school's Code of Behaviour.
2. A member of the school community who suspects an incident of substance misuse should report it to the Principal (DLP)/Deputy Principal (DDL) and the Child Safeguarding statement will be followed.
3. If a drug/substance is found, it will be confiscated by the Principal/Deputy Principal and sealed in an envelope or similar (signed/counter-signed and dated) and kept secure.
4. The parents of the student involved shall be informed as a matter of urgency.
5. If necessary, medical attention shall be sought.
6. If necessary, the person involved shall be referred to the HSE.
7. In the case of illegal drugs, the Gardaí will be informed and/or if illegal drugs have been confiscated, they will be handed over to An Garda Síochána.
8. The school's Code of Behaviour will be enforced.
9. The incident will be recorded on an incident report form.

On School *Activities/Tours* (In addition to Steps 1-9 above):

1. The Principal/Deputy Principal shall be informed immediately. The Principal will contact the parents of the student.
2. If a drug/substance is found, it will be confiscated by the designated teacher and sealed in an envelope or similar (signed/counter-signed and dated) and kept secure.
3. At the earliest opportunity, the student(s) involved will be returned to the care of their parents.
4. The incident will be recorded on an incident report form.
5. The school's Code of Behaviour will be enforced.
6. Counselling/ Support shall be sought if appropriate.

School Policy On Alcohol

The school is an alcohol free area, except for designated adult functions where prior notice is given to the Principal. Students will not, under any circumstances, be allowed to bring alcohol into school or to consume *alcohol* on school grounds.

Students will not be allowed to consume alcohol on school trips/ tours.

Where a student comes to school under the influence of alcohol, his parents will be called to take him home. Students breaking these rules could incur suspension and may also meet with the Board Of Management (or a representation thereof).

School Policy On Tobacco and Vaping

Smoking, in accordance with the Public Health Tobacco Act 2002, and Vaping is banned from all areas of the school grounds. The following outlines the disciplinary procedures involving smoking and vaping offences:

- 1st offence - Category C offence as per our Code of Behaviour
- 2nd offence - Minimum 1 day suspension
- 3rd offence within 12 months - Meeting with the Board Of Management

Policy On Illicit Drugs and Solvents

Possession

Members of the school community are prohibited from being in possession of, or using illicit drugs or solvents on the school premises or in connection with any school related activity away from school premises on penalty of suspension or possible expulsion. Illicit drugs found on the school premises will be placed in the care of the Principal/Deputy Principal, who will lock them away until the Gardai are contacted to dispose of them. An internal school investigation by a designated member of staff will be carried out into the internal (within school) origin of illicit drugs found.

Where it is endeavoured to establish the source of the illicit drugs outside the school, such information arising from an internal investigation, may be passed on to the Gardai to enable them to carry out such further investigations outside the school, as deemed appropriate.

Trafficking

Where the school suspects trafficking or distribution of illicit drugs;

1. An investigation will be carried out by the Principal or a designated member of staff.
2. An incident report form will be filled out.
3. The parents of the student(s) allegedly involved will be informed.
4. The Gardai will be informed.
5. Where it has been proven that a student has been involved in trafficking or distributing illicit drugs on the school premises or in connection with any school activity away from the school premises, he may, at the discretion of The Board Of Management, face permanent exclusion.

In the drawing up of this policy the Board Of Management acknowledges that it has a duty to take all necessary steps to protect the members of the school community from the harm that drug misuse causes. In pursuit of this objective, however, every effort will be made to respect the rights of the individual.

Signed (Proposed by): Gary Duxham

Signed (Seconded by): May Corrigan

Signed (Principal): Pat Mohrney

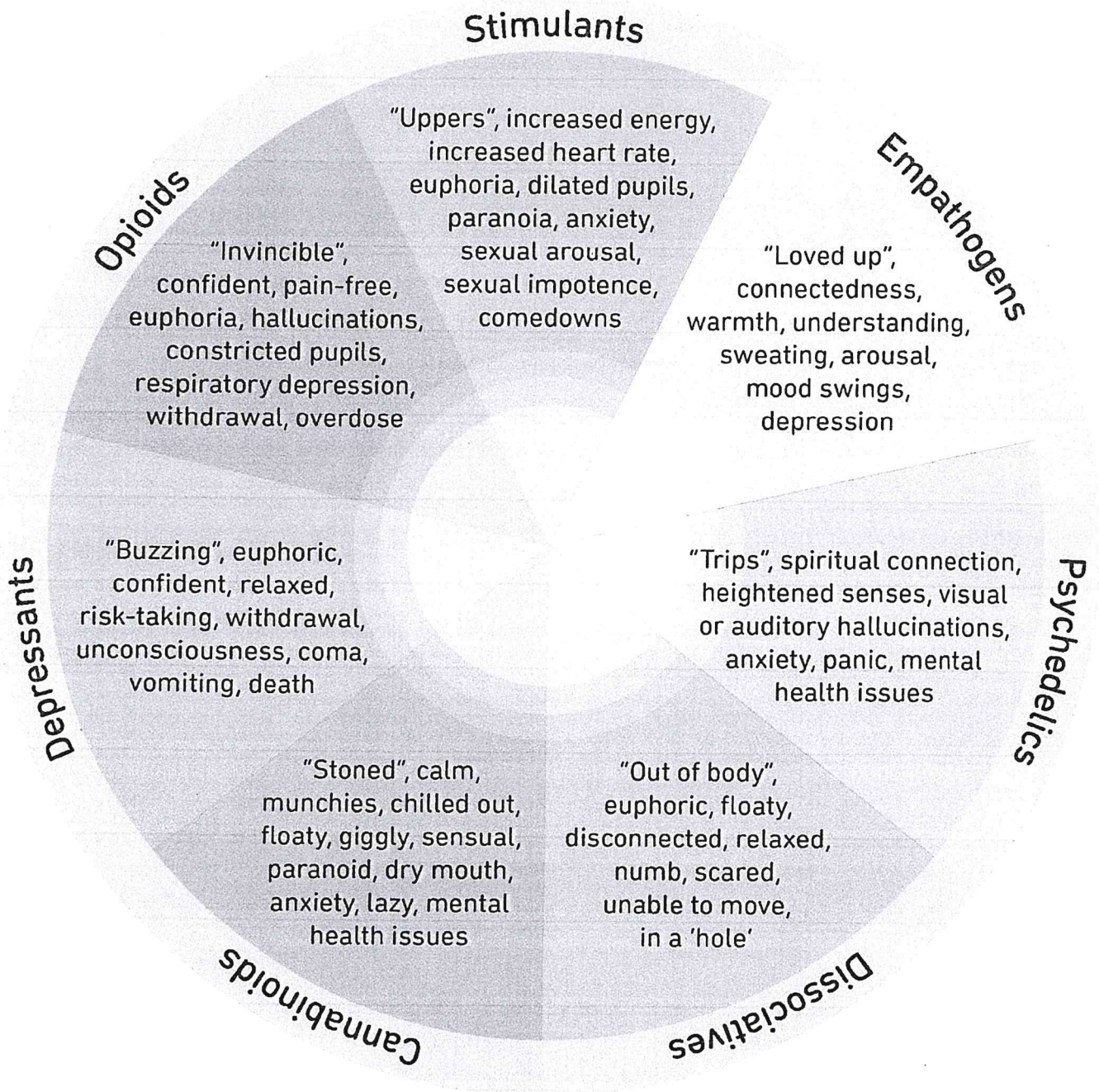
Signed (Chairperson): Pat O'Leary

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 17th FEBRUARY 2022

Appendix

The Drugs Wheel

A new model for substance awareness



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The Drugs Wheel by Mark Adley is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 Unported License. Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available by contacting mark@thedrugswheel.com.

Designed in collaboration with DrugWatch: an informal association of charities, organisations and individuals who share an interest in establishing a robust early warning system in the UK for all types of drugs.

