



# **Substance Abuse Policy**

**Version 1.1**

**April 2007**

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### **Mission Statement**

Glenstal Abbey School is a school within a monastic community characterised by moderation and mutual respect. It seeks to provide a balanced and disciplined environment which emphasises values such as integrity, kindness and respect and it seeks to maintain an inclusive climate of learning where each child can fulfil his own unique potential.

### **Intention and aims**

Substance abuse is incompatible with the culture and ethos of the Glenstal Abbey School. Students are accorded considerable liberty in the school and this characteristic of the school's ethos can only operate within firm boundaries. The school seeks to foster a healthy lifestyle among its students. A healthy environment is necessary to foster the skills and attitudes appropriate to an integrated learning community. This policy is designed to protect and foster the valuable ethos of this school.

The school recognises that parents/guardians are the primary carers and educators of their children and their support is essential in supporting any prevention strategy. Parents/guardians should acknowledge the importance of these programmes and co-operate fully with the school.

The Board of Management shall designate a member of staff to coordinate the School's policy on substance abuse. This person shall liaise with the department heads of SPHE, CSPE, RE and the dean of Boarding, in order to ensure the uniform application of this policy and the educational awareness programmes that support it.

The school shall endeavour to strike a balance between the disciplinary aspects of this policy and the more pastoral elements associated with the school's fundamental mission and ethos.

### **Policy Statement**

Glenstal Abbey School will not tolerate "substance abuse" (see below).

### **Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy, "substance" refers to all illegal drugs, together with the illicit use of prescribed medication, solvents, magic mushrooms and plants or chemicals which change how the body functions either physically, mentally, or emotionally. It also refers to tobacco use and alcohol.

An "abuse incident" shall be deemed to include 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, or to other students or to the 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 this policy.

This policy shall apply to students and staff working within the school, its lands and its environs. Students shall also be governed by this policy when they are representing the school or involved in any school activity outside Glenstal Abbey.

### **Implementation and Prevention**

Within the resources available to it, the school 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, Religion, CSPE and Science subjects. The School will access and include the health education programmes relevant to the prevention of substance misuse. The School will encourage consultation with parents, teachers, old boys and the monastic community on the best use of available resources within the school to support it in its prevention programme and policy implementation.

### **The Objectives of this policy**

- To formalise a drug education policy for students, staff and parents.
- To provide clear management procedures for dealing with drug related incidents to support staff and students.
- To ensure students are informed of the risks associated with drugs, so they can make informed decisions.
- To offer support to students and other members of the school community who require assistance.
- To provide the school staff with the necessary training to support and implement this policy.

### **Alcohol**

The use, possession, sale or distribution of alcohol in the school or among students is prohibited. The usual penalty for unauthorised use of alcohol shall be suspension. Fifth and Sixth Year boys are permitted to drink alcohol with the prior written permission of their parents at the Senior Socials and at such school functions as shall be authorised by the Headmaster. Students may not return to the School from any visits or outings under the influence of alcohol. Staff members shall not consume alcohol in the presence of students outside of the above referred to situations.

### **Tobacco**

Smoking is prohibited within the buildings of Glenstal Abbey School without exception in line with section 47 of the Public Health (Tobacco) Act, 2002, The school has a separate policy dealing with smoking. Smoking is also referred to in the Code of Conduct. Fifth and Sixth year boys are allowed to smoke in designated places with the written consent of their parents.

### **Procedure**

If a member of staff has reason to be concerned that a student is abusing substances in school the following procedures shall be followed.

#### ***Preliminary investigation***

- The member of staff will report immediately to the Headmaster. The Headmaster may choose to delegate his investigatory functions to another member of staff. In this event this member of staff shall be deemed to act with all of the authority of the Headmaster. Sanctions may only be imposed by the Headmaster or by the Disciplinary Committee.
- The Headmaster will then consult with the person appointed by the Board of Management to coordinate the School's policy on Substance Abuse.
- The Headmaster will then research the case with the assistance of the relevant members of staff. In this regard the Headmaster does not require the authorisation (of students or of parents/guardians) to undertake searches of lockers and of student property.
- If the information received does not support a reasonable suspicion that the student has been engaged in substance abuse then no further action will be taken. However vigilance

will be maintained and the student may be required to provide samples for random drug testing for a period of time. Parents/guardians of students under 18 shall give their written consent for such testing. Students over 18 years of age may do so themselves. The Headmaster shall outline to next meeting of the Board of management his conclusions and reasons for his decisions.

- If the information received indicates grounds for concern the Headmaster will contact the parents or guardians of the student concerned and will discuss the situation with the student in the presence of another adult. This adult shall endeavour to ensure that the discussion of the situation with the student is fair and reasonable.
- If there is reasonable evidence or if an admission is made the student may be suspended by the Headmaster immediately if he appears to represent a danger to himself or to his fellow students. The preferred course of action shall be to refer the student's case to the Disciplinary Committee.

### ***Disciplinary Committee***

- This Committee will be composed in accordance with the Code of Conduct and shall consider the most appropriate sanction for the student.
- If the student has already been suspended then the Disciplinary Committee shall consider the length of his suspension and whether the student should be subject to further disciplinary sanctions.
- If the student has not been suspended then the Disciplinary Committee may chose to further investigate the case and decide the most appropriate form of disciplinary action.
- The Disciplinary Committee shall be entitled to recommend to the Board that a student be permanently excluded from the school. In this event the Headmaster shall request the Chairperson of the Board of Management to convene a special meeting of the Board.
- The Board of Management meeting convened to consider this case shall follow the standard procedures of the Glenstal Abbey School Board of Management.
- The Board shall consider the best interests of the student and of the school.

The Headmaster or Deputy Principal shall inform the school staff of the decision taken at the next available opportunity.

In cases where disciplinary action has been taken, a detailed record of the case shall be kept by the Headmaster.

The school is obliged to render illicit/illegal drugs beyond further use. Two staff members should be present at any form of search or disposal.

The Headmaster may seek the advice of the Garda Síochana. The school has a good relationship with the Gardai and is happy to co-operate with them for the good of the students and the school.

In the event of a substance abuse incident the Headmaster shall designate a member of staff to liaise with the media.

No other staff member, parent/guardian or student shall presume to discuss such incidents with representatives of any media organisation on behalf of the school.

### **Health & Safety**

Students who are required to take prescribed medication should inform the nurse and the nurse shall decide whether it is appropriate for a student to have custody of these medicines or not.

In the event of a medical emergency arising from suspected substance abuse, the school nurse and doctor will be contacted immediately. Students should notify a staff member should they believe a fellow student to be in need of medical attention. Students are encouraged not to use aerosols because of health and safety reasons.

## **Sports**

The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco are actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity. The games-master and sports coaches should ensure that those in their charge are aware of the harmful effects and the illegality of proscribed drugs or other banned performance-enhancing substances. The school is resolute in its opposition to the use of performance enhancing drugs. The use of such drugs will be treated in accordance with the procedures outlined above.

## **Support**

Substance abuse incidents will be reviewed by the Headmaster or Board of Management. Students may be obliged to engage in an agreed programme of treatment and rehabilitation prior to, or following their return to the school.

Students or other members of the school who wish to speak to someone about their own substance use or that of another person about whom they are concerned, are invited to approach the Headmaster or other staff member. They will be offered support and information about external services.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be maintained as far as is practicable. However the duty of teachers and staff to the school community and their obligation to obey the law preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any student involved in a substance abuse incident. Information may need to be shared, e.g. with certain staff members, or with an appropriate external agency. However, discretion will be observed bearing in mind the health and welfare of the student and of his fellows. School staff shall be made aware of appropriate procedures concerning the handling of confidential information.

## **Visiting Speakers**

Interventions by visiting speakers should be planned and form part of an overall programme. The organising teacher or stand-in should be involved in liaison beforehand and monitor the contribution. Visiting speakers should be made aware of the norms and ethos of the school and speakers are expected to work within this framework.

## **Staff Members**

Members of staff found to be in breach of this policy shall be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedures appropriate to their contracts of employment.

## **Monitoring, Reviewing & Training**

Glenstal Abbey School will monitor, review and evaluate this policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure the maintenance of best practices.

Glenstal Abbey School will take reasonable steps to ensure that staff training of appropriate personnel is provided.

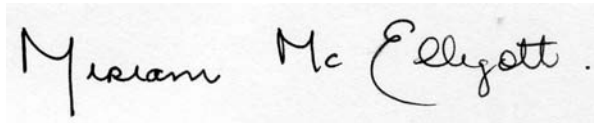
## **Implementation**

This policy will come into effect from November 2004.

The present students will be made aware of the policy through both their parents and the substance use education programme. Parents/guardians will be sent a copy of the policy and invited to contact the Headmaster if they need clarification on any issue.

Parents/guardians and students (irrespective of age) shall be deemed to be bound by the terms of this policy.

## **This policy adopted by the Board**

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Miriam Mc Ellyott." with a period at the end. The handwriting is cursive and somewhat slanted.

**Signed:**

## **Chairperson Board of Management**

**Date: November 30<sup>th</sup> 2004**

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Glenstal Abbey School operates a “No Supplements” Policy.**

This means that dietary supplements are prohibited for use by students except for recognised medical purposes, authorised and administered by the School Health Centre. Typically this would involve supplementation in the case of deficit, or where necessary, in combination with certain medication.

**This appendix to school policy adopted by the Board**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairperson Board of Management**

**Date : April 18<sup>th</sup> 2007**