

Signed Substance Use Policy 11/3/2026.

11 MAR 2026
ST OLIVER POST PRIMARY
OLDCASTLE



St Oliver Post Primary School

Substance Use Policy

March 2026

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Scope

- This policy applies to the entire school community, including staff, pupils, parents/guardians and all users of the school building/facilities.

Relationship to Mission Statement

- In accordance with our mission statement, members of the school community strive to enable students to achieve their potential within a happy and secure learning environment. St Oliver Post Primary School asserts its right to take whatever steps are necessary to protect and promote those values that are central to its mission statement by requiring certain standards of behavior and prohibiting certain practices that undermine it. This philosophy is reflected in our Substance Use Policy.
- For the purposes of this policy substance use refers to:
 - Use of alcohol, tobacco, vapes and e-cigarettes,
 - Use of illegal drugs,
 - Illicit use of other substances e.g. solvents, aerosols, gases, nitrites, chemicals, medicines and many other substances in daily use,
 - Use of any substances such as psychotropic drugs that could adversely affect the health and well-being of students.
 - The school, at its discretion, will determine what substances are deemed to be unacceptable for use or possession by students.

Rationale

- The prevalence of all forms of substance misuse poses challenges and opportunities for the school community. The school is an important social partner in providing tobacco/vape/e-cigarette, alcohol and drug awareness and education.
- The school recognises and accepts the seriousness of various research findings regarding the problems associated with drugs 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 2001-08 and made mandatory for schools in circular 18/02. School policy dictates that any subsequent legislation/strategic plan is also being complied with i.e. 'Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery' – a health led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017 – 2025, Department of Health.
- The Education Act (1998) states that schools promote the social and personal education of pupils and provide health education for them.

What is a Substance Misuse Incident?

Our school believes that a substance misuse incident is as follows:

- any incident involving alcohol, tobacco/vape/e-cigarette, solvents, aerosols, gases, nitrites, chemicals, medicines, use of psychotropic drugs or use of illegal drugs or misuse of legal drugs
- use or suspected use of alcohol, tobacco/vape/e-cigarette, sprays, aerosols, chemicals, medicines or other drugs on the school premises (including the grounds) or on a school-related outing or activity.
- possession/supply of alcohol, tobacco/vape/e-cigarette, solvents, aerosols, nitrites, gases, chemicals, medicines, other drugs or associated paraphernalia on the school premises (including the grounds) or on a school related outing or activity.
- where intoxication arises from suspected substance misuse or where behaviour suggests the use/ misuse of alcohol, tobacco/vape/e-cigarette, solvents, aerosols, nitrites, gases, chemicals, medicines or other drugs.
- medical emergencies where substance misuse is suspected in school or on a school-related outing or activity.

The School Position

- St Oliver Post Primary School does not accept or tolerate the possession, use or supply of banned or prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia by any person in the school, or on a school related outing or activity.
- A legitimate exception is the use of a prescribed drug in accordance with medical advice and prescription. There is a responsibility on parent/ guardians to inform the school if/ when a pupil is using prescribed medicines and/or any form of medication.
- The school will follow LMETB's policy and procedures for the administration of medicine. Health plans will be gathered from parents and medicines stored onsite where necessary.
- A student or teacher should not give any student any prescribed or 'over the counter' medicine.
- Chemicals in school laboratories will be held under lock and key and will only be handled by students under their teacher's supervision.
- This policy is focused in four key areas:
 - Education concerning substance use.
 - Management of alcohol, tobacco/vape/e-cigarette, solvents, aerosols, nitrites, gases, chemicals, medicines or other drugs incidents.
 - Provision for training and staff development
 - Monitoring, review and evaluation

Education Concerning Substance Use

St Oliver Post Primary School is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco/vape/e-cigarette and Drug Education Programme for all students.

Our educational aims are to:

- provide information and education, within the resources available to the school, to the entire school community including all staff, students, their parents/guardians about the effects of substance misuse and its prevention.
- provide students with the knowledge and skills which would enable them to make informed decisions
- increase the self-confidence, self-esteem and well-being of pupils
- help pupils to identify sources of support and intervention
- help adult members of the school community to recognise the symptoms of substance misuse:
- guarantee the safety of the whole school population in accordance with the Code of Behaviour
- provide a planned and considered response to incidents involving substance misuse with a view to the protection of the person involved and the maintenance of a safe environment for the wider school community

These aims will be achieved by:

- A coordinated approach to the issue of substance misuse through a taught curriculum within SPHE, CSPE, RE, Science, Home Economics and First Aid (in TY).
- CPD – SPHE teachers are provided with opportunities to attend Substance Misuse Awareness training e.g. Know the Score
- Sanctioning those involved in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour in order to protect the health and welfare of the school community.
- Outside speakers are used where appropriate
- The school views parents/ guardians as essential partners in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance use.
- Parents/Guardians are expected to acknowledge the potential importance of this issue in the lives of their children and the importance of the school's substance use policy in supporting their children.
- The school expects the active support of parents/ guardians as it seeks to deal fairly and effectively with any incidents of substance misuse that might arise.

Management of incidents

- The school anticipates the full co-operation and active assistance of the parents/guardians in facilitating an investigation of a substance misuse incident.
- If any member of staff is of the opinion that a student is unsafe/a threat to others due to suspected substance misuse, the teacher may not allow the student to participate in class and the incident will be reported to the Year Head / Deputy Principal / Principal and if necessary, the parents will be contacted.
- If the staff member believes that there is a Child Protection concern, this should be reported to the DLP and Child Protection procedures should be followed.
- In discharging its duty of care, the school may need to make contact and/or disclosures to outside agencies such as an Garda Síochána, Tusla or other agencies.
- The school may need to engage the expertise of an appropriate third party in properly investigating the incident.
- The school recognises the importance of limiting, as far as is practicable, the number of people involved in investigating a substance misuse incident. The duty of teachers and other staff to the school community preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any pupils when they come into contact with a substance misuse incident or a suspected substance misuse incident. The school will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the pupil(s) involved and the welfare of the school community as a whole and the reputation of the school.

Procedures for managing and investigating a substance misuse incident:

- Where it is suspected that there is an immediate danger to pupils or the school community, the school reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school any pupil involved in a suspected substance misuse incident pending a full investigation of the incident.
- The school will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any substance misuse incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this. Where there is any incident of illegal or illicit substance use or any incident of the supply of illegal or illicit substance, school authorities may involve the Gardai.
- The school will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances and drugs paraphernalia associated with the incident, carefully recording all such items and retaining them pending completion of the investigation, unless otherwise instructed by appropriate outside agencies. Any suspect illegal substances in possession of the Principal/Deputy Principal may be handed over to the Gardaí.
- Pastoral supports may be offered to the pupils affected by the incident of substance misuse.
- Any incident will be investigated and sanctions applied in accordance with the school's code of behaviour and LMETB's suspension and expulsion policy.

The Role of Various Parties in an Incident Investigation:

- The Principal or Deputy Principal is responsible for dealing with substance misuse incidents arising in the school.
- All reports of substance misuse or suspected misuse incidents must be made to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- The Principal may nominate the Deputy Principal or Year Head or another member of staff to act on his behalf in the investigation of a substance misuse incident.
- The Principal makes all decisions regarding the investigation of the incident; communication with the relevant parties and disclosure of the information regarding the investigation.
- The Principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any written documentation and records associated with the incident.
- The Principal or Deputy 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.
- The Principal may seek the advice of the Deputy Principal, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor or any other relevant person in conducting the investigation.
- Where substance misuse is suspected the Principal or Deputy Principal should immediately inform parents/guardians, particularly where there is a concern regarding the health and welfare of a pupil and share any available information that may help parents/guardians in attending to their child's health and well-being. This action will be taken without prejudice to the school's separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage any substance misuse incident.
- In the absence of the Principal/Deputy Principal, a designated acting Principal may assume the responsibilities outlined in the points above.

Provision for Training and Staff Development

- The school will facilitate training for staff involved in the SPHE programme.
- First Aid training will be made available to all staff who wish to do it.

Monitoring, Reviewing and Evaluating

- This policy will be subject to review at regular intervals.
- Ongoing monitoring of the policy will occur to ensure that its provisions are adequate to meet the challenges posed by substance misuse and to ensure congruence with other relevant school policies such as the school Code of Behaviour.

BOM & LMETB Ratification / Resolution Process

BOM Ratification

Date Ratified by the Board of Management:	11/3/2026.
Proposed By:	NICKY KENNY
Seconded By:	MARTIN O'REILLY
Signed:	Martin O'Reilly (Chairperson, BOM) Brendan Bowman (Principal)
Scheduled Date for Review of the Policy:	

LMETB Ratification/Resolution of the ETB Board

Date of Resolution of ETB Board	
Signed	(Chairperson)

Date of next review: 2029

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Board of Management Policy Consultation Log

Please present this form to your BOM when considering the policy at BOM level for ratification

School:	St Oliver Post Primary School
Policy:	Substance Use Policy

Staff Consultation:

Date of Final Consultation:	
Proposed By:	<i>(Staff Member)</i>
Seconded By:	<i>(Staff Member)</i>

Student Consultation:

Date of Final Consultation:	
Proposed By:	<i>(Student)</i>
Seconded By:	<i>(Student)</i>

Parents Consultation:

Date of Final Consultation:	
Proposed By:	<i>(Parents Association Member)</i>
Seconded By:	<i>(Parents Association Member)</i>

