



Scoil Chéile Chríost Rathmore NS

Rathmore, Naas, Co. Kildare. W91 VK46

Telephone: 045 862145

Roll Number: 01821v

Email: office@rathmorens.ie

Web: www.rathmorens.ie

Registered Charity Number: 20124151

Principal: Ms. Lucy Travers

Deputy Principal: Ms. Caitríona Lancaster

Scoil Chéile Chríost Rathmore N.S.

Substance Use Policy

Scope

This policy applies **to all users** of the school building inside and outside of school hours. In this policy, our understanding of 'drugs' is as follows:

'A drug is any chemical which alters how the body works or how the person behaves or feels'.

The Substance Use Policy is applicable to all school related activities and any exceptions will be discussed with the Principal and/or Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Relationship to School's Ethos/Vision/Aims.

The characteristic spirit of the school (school ethos) has been developed and agreed with the partners in education, i.e. Board of Management, Staff, Parents. The Substance Use Policy reflects the school ethos in that it is dedicated to the care of the whole school community and it aims to provide a safe and secure environment for learning.

Rationale: Why is this policy necessary?

- The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of this reality. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their students and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.
- The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- The National Drugs Strategy 'Building on Experience' is government policy and it requires schools to have a Substance Use Policy in place.
- The report from the National Advisory Committee on drugs entitles 'Drug Use Prevention' (November 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.
- The 1999 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) Report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among sixteen year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 29 ESPAD countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland whilst the use of tobacco and other drugs was above the ESPAD average.

(a) Alcohol:

The school is an alcohol-free zone and pupils are not allowed to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school related activities as per the scope of this Substance Use policy or at any stage within the school grounds.

If any member of staff thinks that a student is under the influence of alcohol, the Principal will be informed and Parents will be asked to attend at the school immediately. The parents will be required to give an undertaking that such an incident will not recur.

In general, if a student comes to school in an intoxicated manner or becomes intoxicated in school, he/she will be withdrawn from the class and parents requested to take him/her home. This will be done with regard to the right to privacy of the family concerned. Parents of the other children in the class will be written to and requested to monitor their children for any signs of alcohol consumption.

Students found breaking this rule must be cared for and may also need to be referred to the school Code of Discipline if the offence is repeated. Gardaí may be informed especially if the child/ren were supplied the alcohol – i.e. the alcohol was not stolen from the house as a one-off act of bravado. If the child continuously violates the rule, the school will have no choice but to report the matter to the duty social worker of the local Health Authority as this falls under the realm of neglect in the Children First Guidelines – guidelines all teachers must adhere to in relation to child protection. The school may be able to advise where support is available for that child in consultation with the relevant Health Authorities.

Permission to serve alcohol for a school related activity in which only adults will be present can be sought from the Board of Management.

Members of staff who present themselves for work in an intoxicated manner will be asked to excuse themselves from work for the day and the Chairperson of the Board of Management informed. The Chairperson will then decide on any action to be taken.

Parents who collect their children and are clearly under the influence of alcohol and intend driving them home will be advised that the school will seek the other parent/guardian listed on the school enrolment form to drive the child home instead.

Alcohol may only be used as prizes at school events with the permission of B.O.M.

(b) Tobacco/Vaping Products:

Scoil Chéile Chríost N.S. is a smoke-free zone in line with government legislation of 29th March 2004.

Tobacco/Vaping products will not be used as prizes in school events.

(c) Illegal drugs/Solvents:

The school is an area where illicit drugs and non water-based solvents which affect the behaviour of children will not be allowed.

Any illegal drugs found on the school premises will not be disturbed unless leaving them in the location where they were found presents a risk to pupils. Gardai will be informed immediately and asked to remove the substances. No member of staff will transport illegal substances at any time.

Further training needs of teachers and parents in relation to the implementation of the substance use policy include revision of the signs and symptoms of Substance Use, e.g. Garda visit, information pamphlet and shall be addressed through P.T.A. meetings.

New staff, in particular, will be briefed on the substance use policy of the school on commencement of employment in the school.

Ratification of Substance Use Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Romy Traves
Principal

Date: 20/4/23

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Date of next review: 2026