



ST. KILIAN'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL POLICY ON THE USE AND ABUSE OF INTOXICANTS

Adopted by the Board of Management February 2007. This document has 2 pages.

General

St. Kilian's aims to contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the local community, and to provide education in academic and practical subjects, and ongoing education. According to its mission statement, St. Kilian's works to ensure that each pupil is enabled to learn to the best of his/her ability and to mature with confidence and dignity. The use of intoxicants -- tobacco, alcohol or drugs -- runs directly counter to the mission of the school. The school rules therefore expressly forbid their use.

Policy Aims

The school has a duty to educate students about the complex issues relating to intoxicants, mainly through the Social Personal and Health Education programme, as well as in other curricular areas such as Social Education. Cross-curricular approaches are also encouraged in the school. Education on these issues aims to:

- increase self-esteem and confidence in students
- equip students with social and personal skills
- provide appropriate information and enable students to make informed choices about intoxicants.

St. Kilian's is committed to protecting the school community from intoxicants, and infringements are dealt with in the school's *Code of Behaviour*, including the *School Rules*, Department of Education and Science guidelines on codes of behaviour and *Staff Guidelines on the Discipline Code*. These provide for a step-by-step response to negative behaviour and an immediate response to gross misbehaviour. The Principal has the power to determine what constitutes gross misbehaviour. The Board of Management, or the Principal acting on its behalf, may impose conditions governing the return of any suspended student, so as to prevent a repeat of this behaviour and to ensure the safety of others.

The school's rules, numbers 8 (f), 8 (g) and 8 (h) cover these areas:

8 (f) Pupils may not possess, consume, sell, pass, prompt the use of, or access electronically any alcohol, drugs, or pornographic materials, on/in school property, or in the school's name. Those who do so render themselves liable to the severest penalties including those of the courts ...

8 (g) Pupils found smoking anywhere in the school grounds may be fined or penalised. Those found smoking in school toilets may incur more severe penalties ...

8 (h) Activities or behaviour of students likely to bring the school into disrepute may incur the severest penalties.

Procedures

Self-Referral: When a student (or his/her parents or legal guardians) confides that (s)he has a problem with intoxicants, the matter will be treated in confidence and with understanding. Parents or legal guardians of students will be informed and the school will co-operate with and facilitate medical or other professionals involved, insofar as reasonably possible, having regard to the welfare of the student and of others.

Reports of Alcohol, Drug or other Intoxicant Abuse: Students who breach the rules in relation to any intoxicant are subject to a range of sanctions, up to and including suspension and expulsion. When a student is reported to be in breach of the rules, the parents or legal guardians of the student, or the student if aged 18, has the right to have his/her version of events heard. The school reserves the right to search any student's belongings or to require that pockets be emptied in such a case (more than one staff member should be present where possible), and to question the student pending a meeting with parents. Parents/legal guardians, or students of 18 or over, may appeal any decision to expel, or to suspend for 20 school days or more, to the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998, Section 29).

The school will make reasonable efforts to get corroboration of any allegations. Staff will normally treat any statements in confidence, though there is no absolute guarantee of confidentiality. The Principal or delegate will, as appropriate, inform and co-operate with the Garda Síochána and/or the judicial authorities in these matters.

Tobacco: Students are not allowed to smoke tobacco anywhere in the school grounds or close to the school gates, or on any school trips or outings. St. Kilian's deals with breaches of this rule, reported by the school staff, by a scale of fines, and a suspension on the third offence. Parents should be informed unless there is good reason not to do so. The school may confiscate tobacco products, lighters, etc. and dispose of them without compensation.

Alcohol or other intoxicants: The school particularly discourages any abuse of these. Students in possession of, or suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants, may be removed from classes, and suspended from school immediately, if 18 or over, or otherwise once parents have been informed. The school will view any evidence of the sale or deliberate distribution of alcohol or illegal or misused prescription drugs with particular seriousness, and will act promptly to ensure the safety of all in the school community. The Principal, or staff with the Principal's approval, may confiscate any intoxicants or related materials without compensation and dispose of them as necessary to ensure the safety of pupils.

Medical Testing: Where the Principal has reasonable grounds to conclude that a student may have taken intoxicants of any kind, he may require the parents/guardians, or the student if 18 years or over, to arrange for a medical test from a doctor nominated by the Principal/Board. The Board of Management may also require medical evidence that a student is clear of intoxicants before allowing him/her to return to school.

School Trips, Functions or Extra-Curricular Activities

Organising staff should warn students in advance of the consequences of breaches of the rules concerning intoxicants on school trips. The possession, circulation or consumption of alcohol or other intoxicants on school trips is forbidden, regardless of a) local customs, in other countries for example, which might permit it, or b) the age of the student. The supervising staff shall act for the Principal in these cases and may arrange for students who have breached these rules to be returned home at the expense of the parents or guardians. The matter may then be referred to the Board. Staff may also, with another staff member present if possible, require students to empty pockets or baggage, turn out socks or shoes, may search rooms and may confiscate and retain or dispose of intoxicants without compensation. The supervising staff should where possible consult with the school authorities in these cases. The school will inform parents as soon as practicable. Staff may, taking account of the known circumstances, have to decide whether to refer the matter to local police, judicial or medical authorities. The staff should have regard for the health, safety and welfare of all staff and students on the trip in these cases.

