



ST JOHN'S COLLEGE

POLICY ON ILLICIT SUBSTANCES

Definition: illicit substances include alcohol and fermented beverages, nicotine-containing products, cannabis and related products, stimulants, depressants, opioids/opiates, hallucinogens, inhalants, synthetic drugs, over-the-counter and prescription medications (when misused), some traditional and cultural substances, and performance-enhancing substances.

The problems associated with what has become the almost free availability of illicit substances in society permeate all sectors of our community, and St John's is no exception. Illicit substance experimentation and use poses a threat not only to the user's well-being, but through peer group interactions, to other students in our community.

Illicit substances, therefore, have the potential to significantly undermine the ethos and achievements of our community and the individuals within it. Documented research shows that the notions of 'soft illicit substances' and 'safe illicit substance usage' are misconceptions, and that these forms of illicit substance taking are often the start of full-scale abuse.

We do everything in our power to ensure that St John's students are properly educated about the dangers of illicit substances through talks and the Life Orientation syllabus. Our random drug testing programme exists not only to identify students who use illicit substances, but also to dissuade students from accepting, if they are offered illicit substances.

Regular non-invasive urine tests are carried out in private and administered by a registered School Nurse. They provide an effective method of determining whether a student has been experimenting with illicit substances. The results are strictly confidential and are only revealed to the student's parents, Housemaster, and the Headmaster. This programme forms part of the broader pastoral role of the school. The costs of these tests are borne by the School.

The school's response to a student testing positive for any illicit substance varies depending on the circumstances.

If the student tests positive, the substance was ingested off school property and the student is not still demonstrably affected by the substance, he and his parents will be given full support by the school and be referred for counselling from professional counsellors. In cases of a second positive test, a student's illicit substance taking will become a disciplinary issue which would probably result in suspension or expulsion from the College.

If the student tests positive, the substance was ingested off school property and the student is still demonstrably affected by the substance while on school property, they will be sent home immediately and will be subjected to a formal disciplinary process with suspension or expulsion as a result.

If the student tests positive, and the substance was ingested on school property (regardless of the student being under the influence of the substance at the time of testing) they will be subjected to a formal disciplinary process with suspension or expulsion as a result.

If the student has acquired any illicit substance on school property from any person, they will be subjected to a formal disciplinary process with suspension or expulsion as a result.

If the student has provided a fellow student with any illicit substance on school property, they will be subjected to a formal disciplinary process with expulsion as a result.

Students who have tested positive are retested on a regular basis and the costs of these tests are borne by the parents.

In the case of a student being tested positive for the use of performance-enhancing substances, they will not be allowed to participate in any competitive sport for at least a calendar year, although they are expected to continue in a supportive capacity in the sporting sphere of the School. Details of our steroids testing policy are outlined on our website.

The school reserves the right to permanently expel students from boarding if found in possession or under the influence of any illicit substances, as they pose a danger to the other boarders.

Should you have any queries, please feel free to contact your/your child's/ward's Housemaster. Please note that the purpose of this programme is to be proactive and prevent illicit substance use. With the support of parents, this multifaceted approach can effectively deal with a real societal threat to our students.

(Reviewed July 2025)

Signature of student: _____

Date: _____