#### **POLICY ON ILLICIT 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 boys 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. The use of performance enhancing substances in sport is illegal, as is the underage consumption of alcohol.

We do everything in our power to ensure that St John’s boys 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 boys who use illicit substances, but also to dissuade boys 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 boy has been experimenting with illicit substances. The results are strictly confidential and are only revealed to the boy’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.

Boys who are tested are drawn randomly from a group of students who have been identified by staff on the basis of having displayed symptoms commonly associated with illicit substance use. These include, but are not limited to, a slump in academic performance, truancy or loss of interest in schoolwork, loss of interest in extracurricular activities, hobbies or sports, failure to fulfil responsibilities at school, physical symptoms such as a lack of caring for appearance, poor hygiene, track marks on arms or legs, burns or soot on fingers or lips, sudden changes in relationships with friends, mood changes or emotional instability, unusual tiredness, being withdrawn or depressed, hostile, angry or uncooperative behaviour, decreased motivation, endless excuse-making, inability to focus and lethargy.

Where a boy tests positive, he and his parents will be given full support by the school and be referred for counselling from professional counsellors. Boys who have tested positive are retested on a regular basis and the costs of these tests are borne by the parents. Only in cases of a second positive test would a boy’s illicit substance taking become a matter of public school record, and a disciplinary issue which would probably result in expulsion from the College.

In the case of a boy being tested positive for the use of anabolic steroids, he will not be allowed to participate in any competitive sport for at least a calendar year, although he is 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.

Kindly complete the consent form attached and return it to the College Secretary. Should you have any queries, please feel free to phone your son’s Housemaster or you might wish to speak to me personally. Please note that the purpose of this programme is to be proactive and prevent illicit substance abuse happening at St John’s in the future. With the support of parents, this multifaceted approach can effectively deal with a real societal threat to our boys.

P A Edey

Headmaster

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**ILLICIT SUBSTANCE TESTING CONSENT FORM**

I (parent / guardian name): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as parent / guardian of

(student’s name): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ do hereby give permission for my son /

ward to be tested at school for the presence of illicit substances, as part of a random testing programme.

* I understand that the results of such tests are strictly confidential and will be disclosed only to me, my son’s Housemaster, and the Headmaster.
* I understand that the tests are non-invasive (urine) tests carried out professionally and in private by qualified medical staff.
* I understand that the costs of these tests will be borne by the school, except for the subsequent tests which will take place regularly in the event of my son testing positive for the presence of illicit substances, in which case such costs will be for my account.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(parent / guardian)

I (student name) have read through the Illicit Substance Abuse

Policy with my parent(s) / guardian(s) and have understood its contents.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student’s annual signature

I (student name) have read through the Illicit Substance Abuse

Policy with my tutor and reacquainted myself with its contents.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_