ST STITHIANS COLLEGE

POLICY: SUBSTANCE ABUSE

(September 2025)

1. DEFINITIONS

In this Policy, unless clearly indicated otherwise, the following words and phrases bear the meanings set out below:

1.1 **"The Act"** means the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.

1.2 **"The College"** means St Stithians College, collectively consisting of all the schools within the St Stithians College group of schools.

1.3 **"College Premises"** means the physical premises upon which the College and/or any of its facilities are situated, or any premises upon which a College Activity is conducted.

1.4 **"The Constitution"** means the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

1.5 **"Head of College School"** means the head of any school in the St Stithians College group of schools.

1.6 **"Illegal Activity"** means the wilful possession, use or transmission of an Illegal Drug or a Prohibited Substance and/or any derivative and/or by-product of any such substances, including the cultivation of cannabis or similar substances on the College Premises.

1.7 **"Illegal Drug"** means any drug defined in the Drugs and Drug Trafficking Act 140 of 1992, that is used or possessed in contravention of section 4 of this act.

1.8 **"Indicator"** means a noticeable emotional, physical or psychological change, including but not limited to a decline in academic achievement, a lack of willingness to participate in College School Activities, a change in behaviour and/or irregular attendance at College school.

1.9 **"Parent"** or **"Guardian"** means a parent or legal guardian of a Student enrolled at the College.

1.10 **"This/the Policy"** means this Substance Abuse Policy.

1.11 **"Prohibited Substance"** means any substance that has the potential of being abused, which includes but is not limited to Illegal Drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, e-cigarettes/vapes and/or related products, anabolic steroids, and cannabis and/or any derivative and/or paraphernalia associated with these substances and/or products. Students are strictly prohibited from being in possession and/or under the influence of any Prohibited Substance.

1.12 **"Reasonable Suspicion"** means any suspicion created by any of the following circumstances:

1.12.1 a whistle-blower's informing the Head of School of an Illegal Activity;

1.12.2 a report or reports from Parents/Guardians or other school stakeholders;

1.12.3 suspicious closed-circuit television (CCTV) or camera footage;

1.12.4 substantiated rumours that a Student is in possession of or is using a Prohibited Substance;

1.12.5 the discovery of a Prohibited Substance on the College Premises; or

1.12.6 any other reasonable Indicators.

1.13 **"School Activity"** means any educational, cultural, recreational sporting or social activity of the College within or outside the College Premises, including virtual and/or online College-related activities.

1.14 **"Student"** means a student enrolled at the College.

2. PURPOSE AND AIM OF THIS POLICY

2.1 The increase in the use and distribution of drugs throughout South Africa, in particular among the country's youth, is a cause for concern for all Parents/Guardians. The availability of a variety of drugs is widespread and affordable, and the media continue to reflect the seriousness of the situation regarding addiction and substance abuse.

2.2 In this context, the Purpose of this Policy is to, *inter alia*, without limitation:

2.2.1 protect, support and assist Students by outlining the College's approach to drug testing, rehabilitation and counselling;

2.2.2 protect Students and the College by making provision for the procedures that are necessary to effect this Policy, including disciplinary procedures, as detailed in the St Stithians College Code of Conduct; and

2.2.3 create an awareness of substance abuse and promote healthy decision-making among all Students.

3. PROHIBITION

Except under exceptional circumstances, such as staff events during which certain substances such as alcohol may be consumed with the express permission of the College, no person, including Parents/Guardians, Students or members of staff at the College, may possess, sell or distribute a Prohibited Substance of any kind on the College Premises at any time or during any School Activity. This includes trips and tours where Students may be away from the St Stithians College campus.

4. TESTING FOR PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES

4.1 General

4.1.1 The College may search a Student for Prohibited Substances, in accordance with the Search and Seizure Policy, or test a Student for the use of a Prohibited Substance, after considering all relevant factors, including:

4.1.1.1 The best interests of the Student in question and of any other Student at the College;

4.1.1.2 the safety and health of the Student in question and of any other Student at the College;

4.1.1.3 any Reasonable Suspicion of Illegal Activity; and

4.1.1.4 any Indicators or evidence available to the College.

4.1.2 Individual symptoms may be considered as Indicators, but a pattern of Indicators will be investigated.

4.1.3 Marked changes in physical appearance may be grounds for suspecting the use of performance-enhancing drugs such as anabolic steroids.

4.2 The Testing Process

4.2.1 In accordance with section 8A of the Act, the College may subject a Student to a urine or other non-evasive test for a Prohibited Substance, subject to fair and reasonable grounds to do so and due regard to the applicable factors set out in this Policy. The Head of School may require a report from a medical establishment as proof of the required test results.

4.2.2 A test for a Prohibited Substance, as contemplated above, must:

4.2.2.1 be conducted by a person of the same gender as the Student concerned;

4.2.2.2 be undertaken in a secluded area and not in view of any other Student; and

4.2.2.3 be witnessed by another adult of the same gender as the Student.

4.2.3 The details of when such tests occur will be kept strictly confidential and disclosed only to those persons who are required to know such details, to ensure that Students cannot determine or anticipate when testing will take place or who will be selected for a test.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

5.1 Confidentiality is essential to building the trust required between different parties to support individuals with substance abuse problems.

5.2 For that reason, the College will consider the confidentiality of the Student and/or the family concerned throughout any procedures contemplated in this Policy, so long as it serves the best interests of the College as a whole, and depending on the severity of the case.

6. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

6.1 In keeping with the core values of the College and principle that prevention is better than cure, the College seeks to ensure that it educates all Students, Parents/Guardians and members of staff at the College about the problems of substance abuse through, *inter alia*:

6.1.1 regular talks, workshops and other informal activities, including special assemblies at the College;

6.1.2 lessons during appropriate subjects in the school curriculum; and

6.1.3 proactive involvement with other professional and community-based organisations.

7. REHABILITATION AND COUNSELLING

7.1 In accordance with the principles of corrective discipline, it is policy not to condemn Students but to support those who need help in relation to substance abuse. Where possible, this will be managed in a manner that has the least negative impact on the Student's school career.

7.2 The College will refer a student who requires help with a substance abuse problem to a medical doctor, an educational psychologist, a clinical psychologist, or other relevant expert. A Student may ask for help voluntarily, or their Parent/Guardian or a member of staff may ask for help on their behalf.

7.3 The College's approach will be non-judgemental and corrective in recommending the best possible rehabilitation course. The confidentiality of the Student and their family is paramount throughout this process.

7.4 During a search or a drug test, if a Student is found to be using Illegal Drugs, depending on the prevailing circumstances, the College may require the Student to submit to a rehabilitation programme, which may include:

7.4.1 a treatment option determined by all parties;

7.4.2 urine testing or other non-invasive testing on a regular or ad hoc basis;

7.4.3 an expectation that the Student will improve with respect to their behaviour, academic achievement and/or College school attendance;

7.4.4 the Parent's/Guardian's authorising and supporting the treatment;

7.4.5 that the designated institution providing rehabilitation and treatment will supply the College with progress reports addressed to the Head of School. the designated institution will provide such reports with the Student's or Parent's/Guardian's written consent; and

7.4.6 if necessary, the rehabilitation programme may be adapted after negotiation with the relevant parties.

7.5 If, in the reasonable opinion of the College, the rehabilitation programme as previously mentioned is not sufficient in the circumstances or is failing to achieve the desired results, the College reserves the right to implement further disciplinary measures against the Student concerned.

8. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

8.1 In addition to and/or failing rehabilitation and considering the relevant circumstances of each case, the College reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action against a Student who has been found to have engaged in an Illegal Activity, as defined in this Policy.

8.2 Save as otherwise provided in this Policy and/or relevant laws, any evidence obtained against the Student because of a drug test or search, whether in the form of a positive drug test or the seizure of a Prohibited Substance, will not result in criminal proceedings being instituted against the Student.

8.3 Each case will be dealt with confidentially, but the College will inform and involve the Parents/Guardians of the Student in question.

8.4 The College may appoint a professional external organisation for the investigation and intervention process.

8.5 If the College finds that a Student has transgressed, it will refer the Student to an identified organisation for assessment and treatment. The Parents/Guardians of the Student will be responsible for any expenses incurred. If the Parents/Guardians and/or Student take it upon themselves to stop treatment, The College the Head of School will consider the rehabilitation programme suspended, and reserves its their right to implement Disciplinary Procedures, in terms of the College's Code of Conduct: Students.

8.6 The College will keep a record of transgressions in the Student's file, be it electronic or digital, and may share such records with the South African Police Service (SAPS), if required.

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