

Substance use Policy

The central objective of this Substance Use Policy is the welfare, care and protection of every young person in line with the Education Act, 1998.

Who was involved in formulating this policy?

This policy was formulated in the spring term of 2004. All the partners in the educational process were involved in its formulation. The following is a list of the committee members and the role they played in this process:

Parents' representatives:

Board of Management representatives:

Teachers' representatives:

The process was initiated by the Board of Management and the various interested groups were asked to nominate representatives to attend a number of meetings to discuss the formulation of policy and to agree a formula for informing all parents and teachers.

Why do we need a Substance Use Policy?

- 1 The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students;
- 2 The National drugs strategy "Building on Experience 2001 - 2008" requires schools to have a substance use policy in place;
- 3 In 1999 the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Drugs highlighted Ireland as having a serious problem among 16 year olds where alcohol was identified as the dominant drug and the use of tobacco and drugs was above the ESPAD average;
- 4 Between 1989 and 1999 alcohol consumption per capita rose by 41% in Ireland alone;

5 Our school must adopt a community approach in response to the emotive issues surrounding alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

To whom does this policy apply?

This policy applies to the Board of Management, the teachers, the ancillary staff, the parents, the pupils and visitors to the school.

When does it apply?

This policy applies during school hours, at break times, during all school activities (e.g. school sports, football matches, out of school visits, school tours) and during all other school related activities.

Aims of this policy:

- 1 To develop a framework for the education of the children in substance use;
- 2 To develop a framework for the management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents;
- 3 To provide for the training and development of staff support in dealing with alcohol and drug use.

How does this policy relate to our Mission Statement?

This policy has been developed in consultation with the partners in the school community and it also reflects a means of creating a peaceful, caring and healthy environment where teachers can teach and students can learn.

What is a Drug?

A drug can be defined as a chemical, which causes changes in the way the human body functions mentally, physically or emotionally. For the purpose of this policy we are concerned with

- 1 Drugs which have the power to change a previous mood and the way a person thinks about things and
- 2 Drugs on which the taker may become physically or more often psychologically dependent.

The school sees itself as having a role in the process of enabling

students to increase control over and improve their health. We endeavour to promote the well being of students by: -

- 1 Providing a safe and healthy environment.
- 2 Promoting positive health behaviours.
- 3 Increasing knowledge about health.
- 4 Promoting the self-esteem and self-awareness of students.
- 5 Working in partnership with the parents and pupils.

To this end, in response to the encroaching drug culture in our society we feel the need to implement a comprehensive policy to address the problem of substance misuse.

The Policy will focus on: -

- 1 Strategies for prevention of substance misuse problems i.e. Walk Tall, S.P.H.E Curriculum, Irish Safety Books – Drug Awareness, North Eastern Health Board – Out and About.
- 2 Procedures for dealing with drug incidences in the school;
- 3 Guidelines and information for teachers to improve their response to the problem of substance misuse.

This document should be read with the Code of Behaviour /Discipline policy of the school.

Implementation of the Policy

The policy will be available from the principal to the B.O.M., Teachers and other staff members.

Parents and guardians will be given a copy of the policy on enrolment of their child in the school. Enrolment will be subject to the acceptance of this and other school policy documents by them.

The policy will be regularly evaluated and updated where necessary.

The school wishes to make clear that the primary role of substance misuse prevention rests with the parents.

Prevention

Education:

It is accepted amongst educationalists that education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs is best carried out by teachers through the inclusion of S.P.H.E. in the curriculum. This S.P.H.E. Programme would also draw on the expertise available from the community i.e. Parents, Gardaí, and Health Board.

Smoking

School Policy

- The school is a restricted smoking area; smoking is forbidden within the school boundaries;
- Students are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on the school premises or in any other place;
- Visitors will comply with the restricted smoking policy;
- Pupils found smoking on school premises will be reported to the Principal and parents will be informed;
- Tobacco will not be permitted as a prize for school raffles.

Alcohol

School Policy

- The school is an alcohol free area;
- Staff and students will not be allowed to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school activities;
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student or other member of staff is under the influence of alcohol, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken;
- Where a student comes to school under the influence of alcohol, their parents will be called in to take them home;
- If a member of staff comes to school under the influence of alcohol arrangements will be made to safely transport him/her home.

- Anyone breaking these rules will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary procedure;
- If alcohol is required for an in-school, adult only school function, permission shall be sought from the B.O.M.;
- Alcohol will not be used as prizes in school raffles;
- If a teacher is aware of a parent who is under the influence of alcohol arriving to transport a child home the following steps should be taken:
 - 1 Offer them a cup of tea and advise them that they should ring their partner to come and collect them.
 - 2 Offer an alternative means of transport for the child and the parent to get home safely.
 - 3 If they do not co-operate with either of these strategies, ring the Gardaí and report the incident giving the registration number of the vehicle.

Illicit Drugs and Solvents

School Policy

- Staff and students are forbidden from being in possession of or using illicit drugs or solvents on the school premises;
- Illicit drugs found on school premises should be locked away and the Gardaí contacted to dispose of them. Teachers are advised not to transport illicit substances at any time.
- The caretaker checks daily for illicit substances and associated paraphernalia being dumped on school grounds.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student or another member of staff is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken. Due care will be important in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response.
- If a member of staff is found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol they will be withdrawn from the classroom and taken to the office where they will be offered tea/coffee and be evaluated

by the principal. Supervision/substitution will be arranged for the class. Family member will be contacted and safe travel home arranged.

- Where the school suspects trafficking of illicit drugs, an investigation will be carried out. Parents of any student involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Gardaí/Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer will be sought.
- The school B.O.M. will expect parents to inform the Principal or teacher if they suspect their child of drug taking.

The school should respond to incidents involving the misuse of tobacco, alcohol and illicit use in a planned and considered way. It may be necessary to request legal advice.

Help and advice may also be sought from other outside agencies including I.S.P.C.C., INTO, Psychological Services etc.

This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis or before if deemed necessary.