

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

This policy applies to pupils, teachers, parents, non-teaching staff, visitors to the school and those using the school building. It applies at any time when the school building is in use.

ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

Our substance use policy reflects the ethos of our school and its mission statement in that it endeavours to provide a safe and secure environment for the working partners in education both in the process of compiling the policy and the implementation of same.

Visitors are expected to uphold the ethos of the school. It also applies at all times outside the school when pupils are representing the school e.g. competitions, school outings etc

RATIONAL

- The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs is part of this reality. School needs to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their students and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.
- The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- The National Drugs Strategy, 'Building on Experience' is now Government policy and it requires school to have a substance use policy in place.
- The report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drug use prevention' (November 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policy.
- The 2003 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (E.S.P.A.D.) report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among 16 year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 34 E.S.P.A.D. countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland, with girls ranking higher than boys in terms of regular alcohol use. In terms of drug use in Ireland, there was a notable increase in lifetime use of any illicit drug between 1999 (32%) and 2003 (40%), up eight per cent.

DEFINITION OF 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 drugs which have the power to change a previous mood and the way a person thinks about things and drugs or which the taker may become physically or more often psychologically dependent.

The school recognises that drugs both legal and illegal are available in the local community and that, being part of this community, at least some pupils will be aware of drug related incidents or may have contact with drugs or be involved in a drug related incident. The school also acknowledges that it has an important role to play in drugs education both in terms of prevention and offering support to those who may come in contact with drugs.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The substance use policy is intended to:

- Develop a framework for education concerning substance use.
- Develop a framework for the management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents.
- To enable the school to provide for the needs of our children and staff and to respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues involving alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Our objectives are to enable each child to:

- Develop a sense of personal responsibility
- Develop an understanding of healthy living, an ability to implement healthy behaviour and a willingness to participate in activities that promote and sustain health.
- Make decisions, solve problems and take appropriate actions in various personal, social and health contexts.
- Become aware of and discerning about the various influences on choices and decisions.

POLICY CONTENT

Education concerning Substance Use

Education concerning Substance Use will be provided within the broad context of Social Personal Health Education which is timetabled on our curriculum. It will be integrated with English and Religion and the daily life of the school.

We will endeavour to ensure that by the time each child leaves sixth class, all content objectives of the SPHE curriculum which deal with Substance Use, will have been covered in an age appropriate manner, as determined by the staff taking cognisance of diverse needs as they present.

All education concerning Substance Use will be provided in the context of the positive climate and atmosphere of our school which seeks to nurture, care and support.

We intend to use the Walk Tall Programme and the Educare project as our primary resources.

Junior & Senior Infants: page 19 Curriculum statement

- Realise that many substances used at home or in school are dangerous and that permission should be sought before exploring the contents
- Identify some of the substances or things that are put onto the body and their associated functions (plasters, cream)
- Explore occasions when medicines, infections or pills are needed and the safety rules that apply when taking medicine.

Resources: Walk Tall (J. Inf.) Pages 92-106; Walk Tall (S.Infs.) Pages 87-98

First & Second Class: page 27, 30 Curriculum Statement

- Recognise and examine some of the substances that are taken into the body and the purpose and function of each one.
- Recognise and examine occasions when medicines are needed. (who administered the medicine, the safety rules that apply when taking medicines)
- Distinguish between substances in the home or school that are safe and those that are dangerous and seek permission before using them. (fertilisers, alcohol, detergents)

Resources: Walk Tall (1st) Pages 60 – 65 ; Bi Follain Pages 160, 161
Walk Tall (2nd) Pages 43 – 47, 77-91;

Third and Fourth class. pages 39 and 43 Curriculum statement.

Taking care of my body. Health and well being (pg.39).

- Be aware of the dangers in using tobacco or alcohol and explore the reasons why people may choose to smoke or drink.
- Know and understand the meaning of the word 'drug' and when it is appropriate or inappropriate to take drugs.
- Learning that drugs are substances that change the way the body and often the mind works; all medicine are drugs but not all drugs are medicines.
- Identify and categorise a variety of substances that are taken into or onto the body, into those that are helpful or harmful, legal or illegal.
Nicotine, food, alcohol, liquids, nose drops, sprays.

Safety and protection .Personal safety.(pg. 43).

Begin to assess the consequences of risky behaviour
Smoking a cigarette, tasting alcohol.

Resources.

3rd class: Walk Tall **Unit 4 .Smoking.** Lesson 4 **Smoking** page 104-112
Lesson 5 **Drinking** page 113 to 115

Unit 5: **Choices**

Lesson 1 **Now or later** page 121 -122
Lesson 2 **Who influences me** page 123 -126
Lesson 3 **Acting on impulse** page 127 - 132
Lesson 4 **Making a choice** page 133 - 137

4th class.

Unit 4 **Substances**

Lesson 1 **Feeling the air in our bodies.** Page 87-89
Lesson 2 **Smoking. What do you think ?** Page 90 to 93
Lesson 3 **Being offered a cigarette.** Page 94 to 96
Lesson 4 **Forming and breaking habits** ,page 97 to 100
Lesson 5 **Alcohol** page 101 to 104
Lesson 6 **What is a drug ?** page 105 to 107

Unit 5

Standing up for myself.

Lesson 2 **Decision making.** page 118 -123
Lesson 3 **Practising decision Making.** Page 124 -127
Lesson 4 **What do I say to myself** page 128 -133.

Fifth and Sixth class. Pages 55,56 Curriculum statement.

Taking care of my body. Health and wellbeing. (pg. 55)

- Recognise and examine behaviour that is conducive to health and that which is harmful to health.
Using prescribed drugs appropriately.
- Distinguish between legal and illegal substances, identifying those that are most commonly used, examine and understand the effects they can have.
Alcohol, nicotine, prescribed and non prescribed substances, cannabis.
- Explore some of the reasons why people smoke, drink alcohol, misuse any kind of substances or take drugs that have no medical use.
Peer pressure, influence of advertising, to feel good, to impress others, to make one feel grown up.
- Explore the role of personal choice, risk factors and the influence of others when choosing to use non-prescribed substances.
Danger of experimentation leading to addiction.
- Explore and examine attitudes towards the misuse of substances and towards those who misuse substances of any kind.

Taking care of my body. Knowing about my body. (pg. 56)

- Recognise the importance of treating his/her body with dignity and respect. (Avoiding harmful substances)

Resources.

5th class: Walk Tall.

Unit 4 **Decision making.** Lesson 4 Risky situations. Pages 104- 108

Unit 5 **Alcohol** Lesson 1 Alcohol – How we see it. Pages 111-115
Lesson 2 Alcohol-Information pages 116 -120
Lesson 3 Alcoholism and the family. Pages 121-126

6th class: Walk Tall

Unit 3 Decision Making

Lesson 3 A way of deciding. Strategies for making difficult decisions. pages 80 -85

Unit 4 Smoking

Lesson 1 The smoking bottle page 93-96
Lesson 2 Smoking Page 97-102
Lesson 3 Lets do something page 103- 107

Unit 5 Drugs

Lesson 1 The bag. page 111-114
Lesson 2 What is a drug ? page 115-119
Lesson 3 What do I think about drugs and drug taking? Page 120-122
Lesson 4 What can they do now ? page 123-130
Lesson 5 Making decisions about situations involving drugs page 131-133
Lesson 6 Addiction page 134-136
Lesson 7 Action on Drugs page 137-139.

Management of Drug-Related Incidents

Le Chéile NS. endeavours to ensure that a proper balance will be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents/carers and families. Factors such as the child's family circumstances, gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race will be considered when taking protective action. Any intervention will not deal with the child in isolation, the child's circumstances will be understood within the family/environmental context. (Child Protection and Welfare Practice, 2011)

(i) **Tobacco**

It is illegal to smoke in a school.

Le Chéile NS. is a smoke free zone.

Staff may smoke outside the school grounds, out of view of the children.

Should a child be found to have cigarettes/tobacco they will be confiscated and parents informed.

(ii) **Alcohol**

Alcohol is not allowed on the premises except when the Board of Management gives exemption for special occasions e.g. staff party or prize for raffle.

If a child is found to be in possession of alcohol it will be confiscated and parents informed. If the child actually becomes intoxicated at school they will be withdrawn from class and parents requested to take them home. Parents of the other pupils will be written to and asked to monitor their children for any signs of alcohol consumption. We will not be naming the child who was intoxicated manner in our general communication with the various parents.

Should a parent come to the school and appear to be under the influence of a substance, the Principal will be informed and the other named contact people will be contacted to come and collect the child. If failure to contact the named contact people occurs, contact will be made with the Gardaí or the duty social worker.

Should a member of the Board of Management/member of staff appear to be under the influence of a substance he/she will be asked to excuse themselves from work for the day and the Chairperson of the Board of Management will then adhere to the Rules for Primary Schools with regard to this issue.

(iii) **Solvents**

We will aim to keep the school as free from solvents as possible. Should anyone become concerned about a child advice will be sought and the issue discussed with parent/guardian. Advice given by speakers, trainers and the principal on recording evidence should be taken. All aerosols, e.g. air fresheners and cleaning agents, e.g. detergents/bleach, will be stored safely. The use of spray deodorants will be prohibited, only roll ons will be allowed.

Teachers will be responsible for the safe storage of materials such as glues and tipex. Teachers will be responsible for the supervision of children when using glues and pastes.

(iv) **Over the Counter Substances**

Children are not allowed to have in their possession over the counter substance or drinks with high concentration of caffeine. Confiscation of these items will follow if found and parents notified.

Should the need arise for a child to be in possession of such an item e.g. calpol/ nurofen parents must advise the school i.e. the principal.

(v) **Prescription Drugs**

Issues involving prescription drugs will be dealt with in line with our Administration of Medicines policy. Confiscation of these substances will also follow and parents notified.

Individual members of staff will be responsible for the safe-keeping of any medicines required for their personal use. Where a pupil suffers from a severe medical condition (e.g. asthma, epilepsy, anaphylaxia, haemophilia etc) the parents may request the class teacher or other staff to administer the medication in the event of that child suffering an attack while in attendance at school. On other occasions pupils may need to take prescribed medication. The medication must be handed to the teacher and kept in a secure place.

Any medication will be administered in line with our school's Administration of Medicine Policy, and only on completion of the form associated with this policy.

(vi) **Illegal Substances**

If what appears to be an illegal substance/syringe is found on the premises it will be removed by the Principal and stored in a safe place. The gardaí will be informed and asked to remove it as soon as possible. In the event of a child being found in possession of what appears to be an illegal substance it will be confiscated and stored safely and parents will be informed. Due regard will be taken of the school's Discipline policy.

In the event that any person refuses a reasonable request to remove themselves from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question. In this event all necessary steps will be taken to safeguard the child and their best interests.

The chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed on all occasions when it has been deemed necessary to call the gardaí.

All incidents or findings will be recorded.

Confidentiality regarding the identity of pupils will be maintained where possible, when dealing with any suspicion of drug abuse.

Roles and Responsibilities

The development, implementation and evaluation of this policy will be the responsibility initially of the policy committee and ultimately that of the Principal teacher and the Board of Management. In terms of curricular work – that will be the remit of staff teachers and the principal teacher and informally supported by parents/guardians, all ancillary staff and visitors.

Training and Staff Development

- As a staff, we have a shared understanding of the contribution the SPHE programme can make to the prevention of substance misuse.
- We are all aware that by developing and maintaining a positive climate and atmosphere in our school and in our individual classrooms we are playing a vital role in the prevention of substance misuse.
- All staff will be given the opportunity to avail of Drug Awareness training as provided by the DES when same is offered.
- If the staff require additional support external experts will be engaged.
- The Juvenile Liaison Officer of An Garda Síochána will be asked to address the students on an annual basis.
- Other agencies, which provide information or work shops will be invited to the school to speak to staff or pupils as appropriate e.g Drugs Task Force.
- 4th/5th/6th Classes will be involved in the Educare project
- Staff members have been made sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse by the D.E.S. and Health Executive publications.
- Teachers have been made sufficiently aware of laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they relate to themselves, to the school and the students by informed reading and Department publications.
- Some teachers have had training in the Walk Tall programme and Educare programme, through summer courses or courses run through the Limerick Education centre throughout the year.
- Any staff member requesting training will be facilitated by the Board of Management.
- New staff, in particular, will be briefed on the substance use policy of the school and encouraged to access training in Walk Tall programme when available.
- The SPHE co-ordinator who has completed training in the Walk Tall programme is willing to help and advise all members of staff.
- Parent education on SPHE and issues relating to substance misuse will be promoted in the school community by correspondence from school.

Support

Support may need to be put in place to help a child to give up alcohol, smoking or drugs. The local H.S.E social worker will be of assistance in this area and also the Home School Liaison teacher may be of support too.

Parents who suspect that their child is taking illegal substances should be encouraged to inform the school. The school may be able to advise where support is available for their child in Consultation with the relevant health Authorities.

Success Criteria

The following indicators will be used to indicate the effectiveness of the substance use policy.

- School community to be well informed in relation to Substance use
- Clarity regarding procedures to be followed in any drug related incident in the school
- Views and opinions of staff
- Views and opinions of Board of Management
- Views and opinions of parents/guardians
- Views and opinions of relevant others e.g. Health Board representatives, pharmacist, doctor.

Review Procedures

The following actions will be taken by Principal and staff at certain junctures to evaluate the effectiveness of the substance use policy and to ascertain what changes, if any, are necessary

Review of policy

Review of current legislation

Analysing feedback from interested parties.

Implementation Programme

The draft policy will be circulated to all staff members, Board members and parent's association members.

All suggestions and comments will be requested in writing and must be signed. Revision of the draft will be informed by this process.

The Principal will take responsibility for the communication of the policy to parents and to ensure that the review outlined takes place.

RATIFICATION

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____ and will be subject to review in 2 years time.

Signed: - _____
Chairperson

Date : - _____