

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY



TITLE OF POLICY

Substance Use Policy

WHO WAS INVOLVED IN DRAWING UP THE POLICY

The following were involved in drawing up this policy:

- Teachers
- SNAs and Ancillary Staff
- Policy Committee (led by Orla O’Keeffe, Mary Ahern, Ber Downey (B.O.M.), Helen Houlihan (B.O.M.), Fatchna McCarthy (Parent’s Representative), Fiona O’Reilly (Parent’s Representative) and Barth Harrington)
- Parents
- Board of Management

SCOPE

This policy applies to the following:

- Children
- Teachers
- Part-time teachers
- Special Needs Assistants
- Secretary and Caretaker
- Parents
- Users of the school building

When does it apply:

- Throughout the school day, including break times and to all school related activities

RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL’S MISSION

Our mission statement

MONITORING PROCEDURES

- Ms. Orla O’Keeffe (Post of Responsibility Holder) will monitor the progress of the Substance Use Policy and to ascertain what changes if any, are necessary. This will be done at staff meetings and at School Development Planning Meetings.

RESOURCES/IMPLICATIONS

- Copies of this policy will be sent to all families in the school and thereafter will be available for any parent/guardian who may want it.
- The Board of Management will be asked to cover the cost of outside professionals (if necessary).
- Copies of this policy will be given to all outside professionals.

MONITORING/EVALUATION/REVIEW

- This policy to be reviewed at intervals to assess its effectiveness.
- Parents/pupils will be consulted occasionally for feedback on the programme.

December 2005, February 2006, October 2008

- Staff members have been made aware of laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they relate to themselves, to the school and the its students by attendance at Inservice Courses. Also Post of Responsibility holder, Ms. Orla O’Keeffe will endeavour to answer any query that staff may have in this area - herself or by accessing the information for the staff member.
- New staff, in particular, will be briefed on the substance abuse prevention use policy of the school by Ms. Orla O’Keeffe (Post of Responsibility Holder).
- Parent education on SPHE and issues relating to substance misuse be promoted in the school community by the Board of Management and the Parents’ Association.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Teachers, parents and the Board of Management all have a role in

- Policy development
- Policy implementation
- Policy evaluation

SUCCESS CRITERIA

The following indicators will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the Substance Use Policy in Scoil na mBuachaillí:

- The children’s self-esteem will be enhanced
- Children will better equipped to deal with peer-pressure
- Children will be critical of media portrayal of Substance Use/ Misuse

1. Scoil na mBuachaillí, Cloich na Coillte has a Catholic Ethos, promotes Irish language and culture, is caring-centred and respects different colours, creeds and intellect.
 2. Every pupil is encouraged to achieve his full potential – socially, personally and intellectually – in a happy, secure learning environment.
 3. The discipline in our school encourages and fosters respect and self-esteem among the pupils.
 4. We endeavour to develop supportive and open communication among pupils, teachers, parents, Board of Management and the community.
 5. We aim to have a staff that will continue to be committed, progressive and creative.
- Our policy has an understanding of the characteristic spirit of the school and reflects the school’s ethos.
 - It has been developed and agreed with the partners in the school community.
 - By its implementation we will provide a safe and secure environment for learning and teaching and provide support for those who are experiencing difficulties.

RATIONALE

- “The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges that affect their health and well being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs is part of this reality. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their student cohort 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 schools to have a substance use policy in place.
- The recent report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled ‘Drug use prevention’ (November 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.
- The 1999 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) Report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among sixteen year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 29 ESPAD countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland whilst the use of tobacco and other drugs was above the ESPAD average.
- For the population as a whole, alcohol consumption per capita in Ireland has increased by 41% in the period 1989 to 1999, while the other EU Member States showed either a decrease or a modest increase. Ireland now has the second highest per capita consumption of alcohol in the EU.”

*Taken from the Guidelines for Developing a Substance Use Policy ,
Department of Education and Science*

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

- To equip the child with the skills to deal with peer pressure and to be able to say no if and when the occasion warrants it.
- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well being of the child.
- To help the teaching staff and ancillary staff be aware of the signs of substance abuse.
- To clarify issues relating to confidentiality and appropriate reporting procedures.
- To clarify an agreed procedure for involving parents/guardians,

- The shared understanding among the staff regarding the contribution that an SPHE programme can make to the prevention of substance misuse is vital to the success of this programme.
- Staff members are aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of substance misuse within their own class by developing a supportive class environment and by developing each child’s self esteem.
- Staff members have been made aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse by attendance at inservice courses and all teachers have access to the following resources in their classroom via the internet access available in each room:
 - S.P.H.E Primary School Curriculum and Teacher Guidelines.
 - Walk Tall Programme.
 - Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Primary Schools.
 - Substance Misuse Prevention Information Booklet.
 - On my own two feet.
 - Directory of Alcohol, Drugs and related services in the Republic of Ireland. (Health Promotion Unit)
 - Facts about drug abuse in Ireland, compiled by Dr. Des Corrigan (HPU)
 - “Drinking – know the score” – An Garda Síochána.

-All above are available on www.pesp.ie and www.sphe.ie

- The National Drugs Strategy, “Building on Experience” is available at www.pobail.ie
- The Report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled “Drug Use Prevention” is available at www.nacd.ie

Ms. Orla O’Keeffe (Post of Responsibility Holder for SPHE) can be contacted to access any of the above resources if necessary.

tact number of their GP in the event of a medical emergency. Parents in this instance will be contacted as well as the GP.

- *What support agencies are available at local level to which students involved in substance misuse might be referred?*
 - A.A
 - SHB
 - G.P.
 - NEPS Psychologist

- *Who in the school is designated to respond to the media?*

The school principal / vice-principal are designated.

- *How will the school follow up on incidents that may take place?*
 - Liaise with the children concerned on a regular basis.
 - Liaise with their parents.
 - Liaise with any support agencies that may be involved.
 - Discrete lesson - if appropriate.

3. Provision for Training and Staff Development

An effective policy needs to be supported by an ongoing commitment from the Board of Management and School Trustees to training and staff development. At present, schools are assisted in this at primary level, by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme and Walk Tall Support Office (for Local Drugs Task Force Area Primary Schools). Health Boards also provide a wide range of supports for schools including Health Education and Health Promotion, Smoking Cessation Support and Adolescent Counselling Services. Parents/Guardians are to be made aware and informed of what is happening in the school with regard to both drug education and policy from the time of enrolment of the student.

liaising with Gardaí and responding to media inquiries.

- f. To ensure that all new staff members are aware of this policy.
- g. To ensure that access to training is available to staff members.

POLICY CONTENT

This is divided up into three sectors:

1. Education concerning substance abuse
2. Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents
3. Provision for training and staff development

1. Education concerning substance abuse

Education concerning Substance use in Scoil na mBuachaillí will be provided within the broad context of SPHE (Social Personal and Health Education), through

- Specific module or programmes e.g. Walk Tall, RSE, Stay Safe, SPHE, Bí Folláin, North West Health Education Programme (First Steps, Up and Away, Out and About and Look after Yourself)
- Existing school subjects
- Special Projects

Considerations which inform the selection of content and methodologies include:

- The age, maturity and needs of the class
- The work covered in previous classes
- The knowledge and skills already acquired by the class
- The size of the class

Approaches to co-ordinate, involve teachers and allocate time include

- Regular review of policy at staff meetings

- Time allotted on School Development planning days to share experiences of the programme.
- Allocate special time for Substance Use to be covered in the school year.

The use of an outside visitor/speaker to enhance the work done in the class will always be considered in the context of the full SPHE programme and will only be undertaken in the presence of a teacher.

2. Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use might include

- Use or suspected use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco on the school premises or during a school-related activity
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour
- Disclosure about use
- Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia
- Possession and/or supply on the school premises or during a school-related activity
- Other

We will respond to incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use in a planned and considered way. In certain cases it may be necessary to seek legal advice. Due care will be important in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use may include referral to a support agency.

It should be stressed that the ultimate sanction of expulsion can have the effect of alienating a student from mainstream sources of help and may result in this student becoming more involved in the culture of drug misuse. Where a member of staff requires support, we will facilitate links

with an Employee Assistance Scheme.

- *How are incidents relating to (a) alcohol, (b) tobacco and (c) drug misuse addressed in the school's code of behaviour?*
The Code of Discipline will be adapted in the light of this policy.
- *What is the reporting procedure for 'a drug related incident'?*
 - All suspected 'drug related incidents' must be reported to the principal immediately. If the principal is absent the incident must be reported to the vice-principal.
 - The principal (vice-principal) will investigate the incident.
 - Records will be kept of all investigations and their outcome.
 - The principal will liaise with the Chairperson of the Board of Management initially and if necessary with the entire Board. The Board of Management will be kept informed throughout.
 - The parents of the child(ren) concerned will be contacted at the earliest opportunity and a meeting arranged with the Principal and the Chairperson.
 - If a child makes an accusation against another child, both sets of parents will be contacted and meetings arranged.
 - The local Garda liaison officer may be contacted and his/her advice sought.
 - In certain cases legal advice may be sought.
- *Are procedures in place for dealing with incidents requiring medical intervention?*
The parents of each child have given the school the name and con-