

St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, Roll No: 01125B

Substance Use Policy

1. Mission Statement

Children are the messengers we send forward to a future we may not see.

2. Policy Committee Members

This policy was first developed in 2007. In order to develop this policy a committee was formed comprising of: -

B.O.M.: Fr. Michael McGrath

Mr. Michael Blake

Teacher: Patricia Duignan

Richella Kelly

Parents: Christena McDermott

Ursula Cullen

With the exception of Fr. Michael McGrath and Patricia Duignan, all of the above committee members are still involved with the school. A new committee was not developed to review this policy. This policy was reviewed by staff members between September and December 2016.

3. Ethos

This policy will reflect the overview Catholic Ethos of the school. It will be dedicated to the care of the whole school community, providing a safe and secure environment for learning while supporting those who are experiencing difficulties.

4. Definition of a Drug

In the following policy the term drug refers to any substance which when taken into the body changes the way the body works or how the person behaves or feels. This policy will refer in particular to medicines, tobacco, alcohol, solvents (solvent based markers, correction fluids and thinners, aerosols, nail varnish and removers) and illegal drugs. This list is not exhaustive.

5. Rational

This policy is necessary for the following reasons:-

1. The National Drugs Strategy, 'Building on Experience', is now Government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.

2. The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education to them.

3. 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. 4. 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.

6. Scope

This policy will apply to: -

1. All pupils, on the school premises, during school time and all school related activities.

2. All staff while in charge of and in view of pupils during school time and on all school related activities.
3. Parents/ Guardians while visiting the school premises or helping out with the supervision of pupils during school activities e.g. swimming.
4. All other visitors to the school premises.

7. Aims and Objectives

1. To promote positive health behaviour.
2. To promote the self esteem and self awareness of pupils
3. To raise the awareness among the whole school community re the dangers involved on substance abuse.
4. To help pupils develop healthy attitudes and skills towards the use of substances.
5. To promote a healthy environment.
6. To set out clear procedures for dealing with any incident of substance use.

8. Content

The content of this policy will be divided into three sections:-

8. 1. Education concerning substance use
8. 2. Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents
8. 3. Provisions for training and staff development

8. 1. Education concerning substance use

Substance misuse prevention education will be taught throughout the school in the overall context of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum. The core programme for substance misuse prevention education will be the Walk Tall programme. It will be supported by the Stay Safe, RSE and Grow in Love/ Alive-O programmes.

The Walk Tall Programme hopes to give children the confidence, skills and knowledge to make healthy choices. Social, Personal and Health Education is time-tabled into the curriculum and taught for 30 minutes per week by the class teacher. The methodologies used include discussion, art work, co-operative games, circle work, stories, poems, songs and rhymes, role play and mime, visualisations, group work, project work, brainstorming and movement.

Parents are informed that substance misuse prevention education is taught throughout the school as part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme and are notified when outside agencies deliver programmes or presentations to support substance misuse prevention education.

Best Practice Guidelines

- Class teacher has the primary role in the delivery of substance misuse prevention education in the school setting
- Substance misuse prevention education must be delivered in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)
- Scare tactics are ineffective
- People's drug use must not be normalised
- Information must be age, developmentally, culturally and environmentally appropriate
- An active learning approach is recommended
- Consistent implementation is crucial to effectiveness.

- Supplementary education must compliment and not replace or duplicate the school curriculum.
- The teacher must be present and actively involved at all times.
- Expectations of school based programmes need to be realistic.

Resources

In recent years, many resources relevant to education on substance use have been developed. These include:

- Walk Tall Programme, a Social, Personal and Health Education Programme for the prevention of substance misuse.
- SPHE Primary School Curriculum and Teacher Guidelines.
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.
- Substance Misuse Prevention information booklet.
- Directory of Alcohol, Drugs and relevant services in the Republic of Ireland.

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

A. Medicines

Pupils should not have or use a medicine in school unless a teacher has been informed of it in writing. As stated in the school administration of medicines policy, staff members do not administer medication, unless instructed by the BOM to do so and are indemnified, in writing, by the parent(s). Any parent who feels that their child requires medicine in case of an emergency should contact the principal. Procedures outlined in the Administrations of Medicines Policy will be followed. All medicines on the premises will be stored safely to ensure the well being of the pupils.

Staff, parents, guardians and visitors to the school premises are asked to avoid taking medicine during school hours/ on the school premises, if possible. If a medicine must be taken on the school premises, s/he is asked to do so out of the view of the children and to keep such medication locked away and out of reach of the children.

B. Smoking

Smoking is prohibited on or in the school premises. Pupils, staff and all visitors to the school are prohibited from having tobacco based products, lighters or matches on or in the school premises.

C. Alcohol

Alcohol is prohibited on the school premises except for special occasions or events, in the absence of pupils, and with the permission of the Board of Management. Pupils are prohibited from having alcohol based products, cans or bottles on/ in the school premises. Staff, parents and visiting personnel are prohibited from having or using alcohol on / in the school premises and during school related activities.

D. Solvents

Pupils are prohibited from having correction fluids or thinners, aerosols, solvent based markers, lighters, nail varnish or removers. If parents feel that their child needs to use a deodorant after P.E., sports or swimming they will be asked to provide their child with a stick or roll on deodorant or roll. Water based (xylene free) markers, when needed, will be provided by the school. Staff using solvent based products such as markers will take all reasonable precautions to ensure the well being of the pupils.

Storage of Solvents

All solvents on the premises will be stored safely. Varnish, paint, cleaners, toilet cleaners etc will be locked away.

E. Illegal Drugs

The use of, or possession of illegal drugs is prohibited at all times on/ in the school premises. Pupils and staff are prohibited from having or using illegal drugs on the school premises and during school related activities. Parents/ guardians and all visitors are prohibited from having or using illegal drugs on the school premises.

Procedures

The school will respond to incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use in a planned and considered way. (Confiscate, investigate, and communicate). In certain cases it may be necessary to seek legal advice. Due care will be important in deciding on the balance between pastoral and a disciplinary response.

1. Pupils found in possession of a prohibited substance

The substance will be confiscated. The incident will be investigated and communicated to the principal and the pupil's parents. If the offence is repeated without regards for the school rules any further disciplinary action as required will be taken. This may include suspension.

2. Use or suspected use of prohibited substance

The substance will be confiscated. The incident will be investigated and communicated to the principal and the pupil's parents. Medical assistance may be required and this will be treated as a medical emergency. Further disciplinary action will be taken if required.

3. Disclosure about a pupil and substance use

If the incident took place within the school premises, during school hours or during a school related activity, then the principal, B.O.M. and teaching staff of the school will be responsible for imposing disciplinary action on the pupil.

If the incident did not take place within school hours and during school related activities then the principal, B.O.M and teaching staff of the school will not be responsible for imposing disciplinary action on the pupil involved.

Any disclosure of illegal activity will be reported to the Gardaí immediately. Any disclosure of illegal activity may also be a cause of concern for the Health Board, under the Child Protection / Children First Guidelines.

4. Substances found on the premises e.g. cans/ cigarette butts etc

These items will be disposed of safely to ensure pupil well being. The Gardaí will be informed. An incident book, with photographs, will be kept, recording all such incidents. The Gardaí will also be informed if it is felt that the school premises is being used for substance use.

5. Any substance found which is suspected to be illegal, will be reported to the Gardaí. It will be removed, the spot where it was found marked, and the Gardaí will be asked to remove it from the school premises.

6. Persons on the premises under the influence will be asked to remove themselves from the premises. The Gardaí will be informed.

7. Care of Employee

The BOM, as employer, had a duty of care to the employee. Employees under the influence of a substance will not be allowed to come into contact with pupils and will be asked to leave the school grounds with the permission of the BOM. They will be facilitated home.

8. Any staff member in breach of this policy will be reminded of the policy, receiving a verbal warning, followed by a written warning if required. Any further disciplinary action as required will be taken by the BOM.

9. Parents under the Influence

If any staff member becomes aware of a parent, coming to collect a child, obviously under the influence of a substance, and incapable of caring for the child, then all reasonable steps will be taken to ensure the well being of the child. The Gardaí may be informed. If it is a repeated occurrence then it may also be a cause for concern for Tusla, under the Child Protection procedures for Primary and post Primary Schools/ Children First Guidelines.

8. 3. Training and staff development

There is a shared understanding among the staff of the contribution that SPHE can make to the prevention of substance misuse. Each staff member is aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of substance misuse in their own class. Staff members are aware of, and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse. Staff members are aware of the laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they apply to themselves, to the school and the students. Further training will be organised as the need arises.

- All staff will get a copy of this policy.
- Talks will be organised for parents, as the need arises.

9. Ratification, Review, Communication and Implementation

This policy was reviewed in December 2016. It will reviewed again in 2018, or sooner should the need arise or if new legislation or an incident requires so. This policy will be presented to the BOM for discussion and ratification in early 2017 and will be implemented immediately.

Phone numbers

Drugs Advisory and Treatment Centre, Trinity Court, 30/31, Pearse Street, Dublin 2	01 677 1122
National Helpline for alcohol or drug abuse	1850 459459
HSE Information	1850 241850
Alcohol & Substance Abuse Helpline, Sligo	071 914 3316
F.A.D.E project (Foroige's Alcohol & Drug Education Project) Address: Hilldrum House, Leitrim Rd, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim.	086 1702340
Substance Misuse Prevention Programme	01 4528017