

Substance Use Policy

1. Introduction

The entire staff of the school in collaboration with the Board of Management & Parents Association devised the following policy statement with valuable assistance being provided by the Garda Síochána.

2. Rationale: Why is this policy necessary?

- Responding to the challenges modern society presents to young people in the form of easy availability of drugs, alcohol and tobacco, and as educators, we have a duty to respond to this challenge.
- The Education Act of 1998 obliges a school to promote Health Education and the social and personal development of students.
- Ireland has the second highest per capita consumption of alcohol in the E.U. – it being the prominent drug of misuse.
- Schools are required to have a policy in substance use in place under the National Drugs Strategy.

3. Relationships with School Ethos

The school ethos undertakes to create a Christian atmosphere of compassion, mutual respect and honest endeavour. Within this framework the school endeavours to enable each child to reach his/her potential, spirituality, emotionally, socially, aesthetically, culturally, physically and intellectually. Children are encouraged to become considerate, respectful, **confident** and self-disciplined.

This policy attempts to reinforce those ideals through;

1. Providing a safe and healthy environment.
2. Promoting health awareness.
3. Promoting respect and self-esteem.
4. Working in partnership with parents and pupils

4. Aims and Objectives

In addition to providing and promoting secure environments, respect and health awareness, the school strives towards raising awareness of substance abuse amongst the student population.

- Developing a framework for education relating to substance use and for the management of incidences that may arise.
- Provision of adequate staff training and development using outside expertise to ensure early detection of possible substance use.

5. Roles and Responsibilities.

- I. The Board is responsible for all issues relating to Health & Safety in the school.
- II. The Principal has responsibility for implementation of Policy.
- III. Mrs. McLoughlin as S.P.H.E. co-ordinator will provide resources to all class teachers.
- IV. The class teachers have responsibility for the delivery of the S.P.H.E. programme.
- V. Parents As the prime educators have the greatest influence and as such carry the main responsibility in this area. The following points may be helpful when endeavouring to provide guidance for children:

- a) Personal example and lifestyle.
- b) Developing self-esteem in their children
- c) Monitoring their children's activities, i.e. their whereabouts and activities.
- d) Become well informed on such topics and always endeavour to keep lines of communication open with their children.
- e) Encouraging children to participate in sporting and other recreational activities and to help with the organisation of same.
- f) Teaching self-control and respect for others.
- g) To be aware of the necessity to keep prescriptive drugs secure.

6. Policy Content

Education Concerning Substance Use

(i) The S.P.H.E curriculum programme provides the cornerstone of the schools internal provision. Within the broad context of S.P.H.E. specific programmes such as Walk Tall, Alive-O and The North Western H.S.E. Programme are used.

(ii) Guest Speakers

The Policy welcomes guest speakers on issues relating to illicit substances. All guest speakers will work under the following parameters;

- a) The teacher must be present during the talk.
- b) The speaker must come with a recommendation from other Principals or the H.S.E.
- c) The speaker must have an understanding of the level of maturity of the children.
- d) The speaker will be conscious of the fact that a sizeable percentage of parents smoke and drink and will keep this in mind during all interactions with children.

(iii) Training and Staff Development

The school has been assisted in professional development by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (P.C.S.P.) The S.P.H.E. programme The Walk Tall Support Office.

Management of alcohol, tobacco or drug related incidences.

Tobacco

Clonlara National School is a restricted smoking area.

Visitors must comply with the restricted smoking policy and adults may smoke only in the designated external smoking area. Students found smoking on the school premises will be reported to the Principal by the teacher and parents will be informed. The child will be dealt with in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures.

Alcohol

The school is an alcohol free area and students are forbidden to bring alcohol into the school premises or consume alcohol on the school premises or during out of school activities. If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence the teacher will talk to and listen to the child in question, probe behaviour and then inform the Principal who will decide on what action is required, which will normally involve contacting parents/guardians.

Drugs & Solvents

Being in possession of, using or supplying illicit drugs/solvents on school premises is strictly forbidden. The school will endeavour to strike a balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response should an incident occur and support agencies are available to the school should the need arise.

These support agencies include;
H.S.E., Family Doctor, Social Worker, Gardai, Clergy, Educational Welfare Officer, Junior Welfare Officer, Teacher, Pharmacist.

Sanction and Disciplinary Issues:

The school will, as stated, endeavour to strike a balance between a disciplinary and pastoral response should an incident occur. However, it must be noted that the primary responsibility of the B.O.M. is to protect the safety and well being of the student body. Therefore a student who knowingly places another child at risk by offering him/her an illegal substance must be clearly aware that he/she is committing a serious breach of code of discipline and therefore will be sanctioned accordingly. Students are expected to co-operate with school authorities by emptying school bags and pockets for inspection. Such inspections must be overseen by class teacher and principal. Students will be given the opportunity to hand over the substance voluntarily in the first instance. If they refuse, parents may be notified and the Gardai may be called. Accordingly, as per code of discipline, a graded system of firm and consistent sanctions up to and including expulsion will apply to students in breach of substance use rules.

It is the policy of the school to contact the Gardai when drugs are found on the school premises. Where there is disclosure investigation may be left in the hands of the Gardai. Where there is no disclosure all parents will be informed by letter and an emergency meeting of parents may be convened if deemed appropriate. Parents will always be contacted in individual cases. If medical intervention is required a designated teacher will monitor the student until a doctor/ambulance arrives.

Note: The Board of Management will not entertain any media enquiries in the event of any issue of national concern occurring on the school premises and there is absolutely no onus on the Principal to deliver a statement on behalf of the school unless the B.O.M. in consultation with the Principal and staff consider it appropriate to do so.

Illicit drugs/solvents found on the school premises will be stored in the Secretary's Office under lock and key until handed over to the Gardai.

7. Curriculum Planning

A suitable syllabus has been drawn up to be implemented in each class from 3rd – 6th.

8. Success Criteria

- I. Monitoring of behaviour in classrooms, corridor, yard and on out of school activities.
- II. Appropriate intervention when an incident occurs.
- III. Openness in discussing issues relating to substance use.
- IV. Positive feedback from all parties.

9. Implementation

The policy has been implemented as from June 14th 2007.

10. Ratification and Review

The Board of Management approved the substance use Policy on 11 May 2007 and will review should an incident/feedback make such a review necessary.

11. Resources

1. Walk Tall Class Programme
2. Understanding Substances & Substance Use (Walk Tall) N.D.P.
3. Stay Safe
4. S.P.H.E. Curriculum Strands.

5