



## **Substance Use Policy**

### **Scope of Policy**

This Policy applies to all pupils, teachers, parents and other users of the school premises. It applies during school time (including breaks) and to all school related activities.

### **Relationship to Schools Ethos and Mission Statement.**

The substance use policy reflects the school ethos in that it will help towards the provision of a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are addressed. Also it will help to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community and imbue in the pupils respect for people and property and encourage in them the idea of being responsible.

### **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 pupils in this area 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 pupils 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” (Nov. 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.
- 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.**

### **Goals/Objectives:**

To set out in writing the framework within which the whole school community manages issues relating to substance use.

1. To reflect the unique ethos of our school.
2. To develop a shared understanding of the term “drugs”
3. To gain an understanding of why children and young people use drugs
4. To influence people towards healthier activities and away from the need to use drugs
5. To help develop sensible attitudes to drugs
6. To help prevent the child from becoming a drug misuser
7. To help the child develop personal strengths and values that can reduce the likelihood that he will become involved in drugs.
8. Develop in the child an awareness of the issues surrounding substance use
9. Through our S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal & Health Education) Programme we seek to develop a framework for education concerning substance use in terms of providing information to help the child develop a common sense approach to alcohol, drugs and everyday substances that can be abused.

### **Policy Content:**

The policy content is divided into 3 sections

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

#### ***(i) Education concerning substance use:***

The education of alcohol, tobacco and drugs is provided within the broader context of a Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) programme which is developmental and delivered within the context of a supportive whole school environment. We believe the “WALK TALL” programme to be of optimum value in

addressing these issues across the whole school community in an age-appropriate manner.

The use of an outside visitor/speaker (nurse, garda, social worker, Dept of Education facilitator) to enhance the work done in class may be considered in context of the full SPHE programme.

***(ii) Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents;***

**Smoking**

***School Policy***

- The school is a restricted smoking area.
- Pupils are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on the school premises or in any other place during school related activities.
- Staff / 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.
- Pupils 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 pupil is under the influence of alcohol, he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Where a pupil comes to school under the influence of alcohol, their parents will be called in to take them home.
- In the case where the child is under the influence of alcohol and where the parent/guardian is unable or unwilling to remove the child/children the local doctor or medical services will be contacted.
- The above will be reviewed in the context of the School's Child Protection Policy.
- If alcohol is required for an adult only school function, permission shall be sought from the B.O.M.
- Alcohol will not be used as prizes for School Raffles.
- Should an employee of the B.O.M. appear to be under the influence of alcohol when presenting for work/while at work, appropriate action will be taken by the B.O.M.

**Illicit Drugs, Paraphernalia and Solvents**

***School Policy:***

- Pupils are forbidden from being in possession of or using illicit drugs or misusing solvents on the school premises.
- Teachers are advised not to transport illicit substances at any time.
- In the case of suspected or actual possession or use of illegal drugs on the school premises or on a school related activity, every effort will be made to locate the offending substance and/or associated paraphernalia and remove same to locked secure location.
- The following Parties will be informed immediately:

- Chairperson of Board of Management
  - Gardai
  - Parents/Guardians will be contacted and requested to present themselves at the school or location of the school related activity where they will be informed of the incident.
- In the case where the child is under the influence of drugs, and where the parent/guardian is unwilling to remove the child/children in question, the local doctor or medical services will be contacted
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of illicit drugs or misusing solvents, she /he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Where the school suspects trafficking of illicit drugs, an investigation will be carried out. Parents of any pupil involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the 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 will endeavour to 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 taken in deciding on the nature of the response i.e. pastoral or disciplinary. An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving alcohol, tobacco or drug use may include referral to a support agency. Expulsion is the ultimate sanction and it is stressed that this measure is only used as a last resort as it can have the effect of alienating a student from mainstream sources of help and may result in this pupil coming more involved in the culture of drugs abuse. Where a member of staff requires support, schools may consider facilitating links with a support agency. The school policy will seek to inform teachers about issues relating to confidentiality and appropriate reporting procedures. Parents and / or Guardians will be informed of the incident and where deemed necessary, the Health Board and Gardaí also.
- Child protection issues will be viewed in the context of the School's Child Protection Policy

### **Solvents**

We aim to keep the school as free of solvents as possible. In the interest of health and Safety we shall actively discourage the use of aerosols e.g. spray deodorant in so far as it is practicable and possible.

We discourage children from carrying over the counter drugs (see school policy on administration of medicines).

### **Prescription Drugs**

- Please refer to school policy on administration of medicines.
- In the event of a child being found to have prescription medicine in their possession, it will be confiscated and parents will be reminded of school policy.

## **Over the Counter Substances**

- Children are not allowed to have in their possession over the counter substances (e.g. Lemsips, Disprins, Panadol etc) or drinks with a high concentration of caffeine (e.g. Red Bull).
- In the event of a child being found with same, the substance will be confiscated and parents will be informed and reminded of school policy.

### ***(iii) Provision for Training and Staff Development***

Teachers have already undergone training in the Walk Tall and S.P.H.E. Programmes. An effective policy needs to be supported by an on-going commitment from the Board of Management to training and staff development. At present primary schools are assisted in this area by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (P.C.S.P.) and Walk Tall Support Office (for Local Drugs Task Force Area Primary Schools) Health Boards also provide a wide range of support for schools including Health Education and Health Promotion, Smoking Cessation Support and Adolescent Counselling Service.

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

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

#### **The Teacher's Role:**

The role of the teacher in the active learning environment is like that of a facilitator. This may initially involve planning and setting up the structures for an active learning approach by initiating ground rules for discussions/debates.

- Listen when someone else is talking
- Put-downs are not allowed
- No one is named in a negative way

However as important as what is done is how it is done. Important considerations are the building of trust, respect and positive regard for all, developing and maintaining good relationships between teacher and pupils, and among the pupils themselves, and having clear goals, expectations and learning objectives. The teacher as facilitator encourages children to share ideas and opinions, ask questions, and, as appropriate, devolve responsibility to the group for answers and outcomes. The value of discussion during or after an activity should not be underestimated as it can deepen understanding leading to better learning for all. However the teacher is also a leader and the entire process is one of leading children towards valuing what is good.

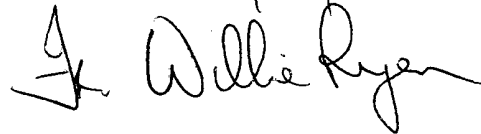
**Success Criteria:**

Substance Misuse Prevention is a complex and demanding task which needs to be approached in the context of increasing drug use among young people. No one group holds the key to prevention; rather a co-operative approach is required. The importance of schools in the context of an overall prevention strategy is acknowledged in the development of school-based programmes such as Walk Tall. The success of any programme will be influenced greatly by what is happening both inside and outside school to support young people to make healthy lifestyle choices.

**This Policy will be reviewed regularly.**

**Ratification**

This policy was ratified by Board of Management on 16/12/2010.

Handwritten signature of Willie Ryan.

Handwritten signature of Carol Joyce with date 14/1/11.



**St. Joseph's Primary School**

**Policy Review Record**

Policy being reviewed: Substance Use Policy

Date originally ratified: 10/1/11

The above policy was reviewed by the staff, Parents' Council and Board of Management of St. Joseph's Primary School during the period May 2014.

The policy in its current form is still relevant to procedures that are carried out in the school. No changes to the policy are required at this time.

The next review of this policy will be due in May 2015

[Signature]

Principal

10/5/14

Date

Mona Keeney

BOM Chairperson

22/5/16

Date

[Signature]

Parents' Council Chairperson

25/5/14

Date