

Substance Use Policy Star of the Sea Primary School

The Substance Use Policy of Star of the Sea Primary school was formulated by the following committee representing parents, teachers, the Board of Management.

Star of the Sea Primary School is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school regarding substance use.

- The school has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and handling drug related incidents but its role is to support the parents/guardians who have a primary responsibility with respect to substance use education.

Our working definition of a drug is

- Any substance which changes the way the body functions mentally, physically or emotionally.
- Any chemical which alters how the body works or how the person behaves or feels

Relationship to School's Mission/Vision /ethos

The **Mission Vision/ethos** of this school states that we value the uniqueness of all individuals within a caring Community. We envisage pupils who feel safe accepted and happy in our school.

The substance use policy reflects the school Mission/Vision/ethos because it also aims;

- to provide a safe, secure and healthy environment for learning
- to promote self-esteem and self awareness of students
- to promote positive health behaviour
- to increase knowledge about health
- to engage the partners in the education process.

Rationale Circular 13/02

This policy is necessary because

- The school wishes to provide for the needs of their students and respond appropriately
- The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges in relation to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs which affect their health and well-being.
- 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 of Experience' is now Government policy and it requires schools 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 policies
- The 1999 European School Survey project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) Report- 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.

Aims/Objectives

The aim of this policy is the welfare, care and protection of every young person in line with the Education Act 1998.

Our objectives are to enable the child to

- Develop skills such as valuing themselves and others, communication, co-operative, decision-making and critical awareness skills.
- Be aware of attitudes that affect people's decisions and exploration of what seems to be the acceptability of certain drugs such as alcohol.
- To acquire accurate, age-appropriate information about drugs and to distinguish between myths and facts about drugs.

Scope of Policy

The policy applies

- To the entire school community including students, all school staff, parents/guardians, users of the school building and all visitors to the school building and premises.
- At all times to school buildings and yard, all school related activities, sports and games field, school bus and other places where school activities take place.
- To the possession, use or supply of drugs in the above mentioned places- the only exception is for legitimate medicinal use and the school principal has to be informed

Policy Content

Our policy is focused on these three areas:

- (i) Education concerning substance use
- (ii) Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents
- (iii) Provision for staff awareness-raising, training and development

(i) *Education concerning substance use*

Our school will provide education concerning Substance Use within the broad context of Social, Personal and Health Education which is timetabled on our curriculum since September '03.

The teachers will:

- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills, be aware of values and attitudes and acquire knowledge regarding substance misuse prevention through the SPHE curriculum
- Teach the content objectives as set out over a two year period in the School Plan
- Provide age-appropriate information
- Use the Walk Tall Programme as our primary resource in providing education concerning Substance Use. The main themes in this programme are Self Esteem, Feelings, Influences, Decision Making and Drug Awareness. These themes are developed in a systematic way to each class level.
- Ensure a value system which supports primary prevention in a holistic, caring and supportive environment and provide as far as possible a positive school climate and atmosphere which seeks to nurture, care and support the pupils.
- Use an active learning approach as far as possible
- Will consider drawing on the expertise available within the community and invite outside visitors/speakers to work with the pupils, in the presence of teachers. These may include members of the Garda Schools Programme

Parents/Guardians and Local Community will

- Support the substance use policy and the teaching of SPHE

The Board of Management

- Will support teaching initiatives by providing funding and.....where necessary
- (ii) Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug- related incidents

The school's position on alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents include the following:

(Over the counter drugs (solvents, glue, caffeine based etc)

- The school does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances
- All chemicals on school premises are locked away and prohibited for student use unless under a teacher's supervision
- The Principal and parents of the child found to be using/passing drugs are to be informed immediately.

Smoking and Tobacco

- Students and adults are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on school premises on school activities or on school trips
- All persons on the school premises are required to comply with the restricted smoking policy.
- The Principal and Parents are to be informed if smoking by child/children is discovered

Alcohol

- The school is an alcohol-free zone
- Students and adults are not permitted to possess or consume alcohol on school premises, on school activities or on school trips.

Illegal Drugs

- Students are prohibited from possession, use or supply of illicit drugs on school premises on school activities or on school trips.
- Selling/supplying legal/illegal drugs
- School grounds being used for drug activity/ use on the school premises (smoking on school premises/pupils experimenting with solvents, aerosols sprays etc)
- Drug paraphernalia found on school property / finding substances
- Disclosure about use

Medication

- Procedures are in place for dealing with incidents requiring medical intervention as laid out in our school's policy on Administration of Medication or our Health and Safety statement (cf. INTO Members Handbook p. 181) see appendix 2
- All use of medication on school premises, on school activities or on school trips comply with this policy (or statement))
- A student may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medication
- Incidents requiring medical intervention will be dealt with by Mrs. Geraldine Conroy who is suitably qualified in First Aid
- Parents/Guardians are aware of the procedures

Managing Drug-related incidents

- The welfare, care and protection of the young person will at all times inform our actions
- We will only deal with the facts as they present
- Disciplinary procedures will be considered if school rules are broken, in line with our Code of Behaviour
- We will endeavour, however to ensure there is a balance between our pastoral and disciplinary response
- Confidentiality will be considered of paramount importance. Information concerning drug incidents will only be disclosed on a *need to know* basis, However, where a child makes a direct disclosure in relation to drug use, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in line with the 'National Guidelines on the Protection and Welfare of Children ' and the Department of Education Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures
- When faced with issues pertaining to child protection we will consult and follow the 'National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children' and the 'Department of Education and Science Guidelines and Procedures for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

The case of a substance misuse incident (suspected, witnessed or reported) the following procedures will be adopted

- **Assess the situation to determine if medical intervention is necessary**
 - If the person is in immediate danger we will endeavour to contact the child's parents. However if we cannot reach them, or if the situation is an emergency, priority will be given to the health and welfare of the child. If we decide that medical intervention is necessary, medical treatment will only be given by the person qualified to do so. If necessary we will determine the nature of substance if possible and contact call 999 or one of the relevant services as in appendix 3. (These local medical personnel have been contacted and have agreed to respond in case of emergency)

Dr. Maire Corr	-	4841895
Dr. Greg Murphy	-	4891865

Under the Safety Statement

- If no immediate danger to a person – we will take time to listen and separate fact from rumour
- We will assess whether the incident is confirmed or suspicious misuse of drugs /possession or supply

Recording of drug related incidents

- We will keep a factual, written account (incident report card) in keeping with our agreed written recording procedure.
- All written documentation will be held confidentially by Mr Brendan Mc Cormack (Principal)

Who will be informed?

- People will be informed on a 'need to know' basis so that confidentiality can be respected, however, total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to a young person who discloses drug involvement
- The principal will be informed and his role will be:
 - To inform parents in any drug related incident which involves their own child or in an incident or accusation relating to another child but involving their child.
 - To inform the pupil about what is happening and why
 - To inform the Chairman of the Board of Management on a 'need to know' basis in situations involving an employee, pupils and others when an incident requires that the Gardaí are contacted

Other agencies may also be involved such as

- Gardaí (JLO) in the event of an incident involving what are considered to be illegal drugs or a confirmed drug-related incident (disposal of drugs etc) or
- The Health Board (if seeking advice on Child Protection Issue)
- The Law, (legal @ippn.ie ;Dept. of Education solicitor CPSMA and their solicitor INTO; if necessary for advice.

(ii) Disciplinary Procedures

- Incidents will be handled sensitively- we will endeavour at all times to have a balance between a pastoral and disciplinary response.
- We will address the needs of the student(s) involved, the other students and the school
- Sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature and severity of the offence
- Pupils will be dealt with in accordance with school procedures regarding serious misbehaviour as in this school's Code of Behaviour/Discipline.

In our areas support agencies are available to which a student involved in substance use could be referred. (See Appendix 3)

If responding to the media

- The school will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.
- Principal or Deputy Principal is designated to respond to the media in relation to drug-related incidents.

(iii) Provision for training and staff development

- The Staff have a shared understanding of the contribution an SPHE programme can make to the prevention of substance misuse
- The Staff are aware that by developing and maintaining a positive climate and atmosphere in our local school and our individual classrooms and by following an activity based drugs education programme. We are playing a vital role in the prevention of substance misuse.
- The Staff are aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse (see appendix1)
- The Staff are aware of the laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they relate to themselves, to the school and the students
 - Scope of policy –duty of care
 - Expelling of pupils
 - Illegal drugs issues: drugs on property, handling of drugs and related paraphernalia

This policy will be effective only if there is a strong commitment made to ongoing training of the whole school community.

This school Star of the Sea Primary School undertakes to provide the following

- Opportunities will be provided for the staff to avail of training when necessary. This may include:
 - In-service training in SPHE(PCSP)
 - First aid training (Health Promotion Unit. Order of Malta, Red-Cross.
 - Drug awareness training and skills development(Substance Misuse Prevention Programme/ Health Promotion Unit/Gardaí)
 - Information on the legislation relating to Schools and drugs
 - An audit of training needs will be undertaken at the June Staff Meeting every second year. The SPHE co-ordinator will undertake this and organise the training.
 - New Staff will be Briefed on the substance use policy of the school by the Principal

The school, in conjunction with the Parents Association, will provide opportunities for Parents/Guardians to avail of training such as

- Drug awareness and information sessions
- Courses or sessions on aspects of Social, Personal and Health Education

Parents will be consulted on their training needs and referred to community courses. The school will display literature on courses and/or co-operate with parents who wish to organise them.

Success Criteria

The following indicators will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the substance use policy in this school;

- Look out for behaviours.
- Children - skills (decision making, self-awareness, etc)
- Adults – No smoking in school etc.,

Monitoring Procedures

The Policy will be reviewed regularly in the context of changing information, legislation, developments in the school based programme and feedback from parents/guardians, teachers and students.

Review of Procedures

This policy will be regularly evaluated and updated where necessary.

The following action will be taken every two years to evaluate the effectiveness of the substance use policy to ascertain what changes, if any, are necessary.

- Questionnaire to parents/pupils and staff
- Pupil related questions via parents questionnaire.

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 16th October 07

*Marian Mullis
Chairperson*

Implementation Programme

Brendan McCann will distribute copies of this policy to the whole school community and will ensure it is available within the school. On enrolment of new pupils in Star of the Sea Primary School, parents and guardians will be given a copy of the policy and will sign on acceptance.

Details will be circulated to all concerned by B. McCann, Principal

The following will carry out the procedures once they have been devised
B.O.M., Principal + staff (class teachers i.e)

This policy was developed by representatives of the Board of Management, parents and staff of this school.

Carina O'Halloran and Deirdre McGranaghan (Parents)

Áine Corrigan and Mary Herlihy (Staff)

Pat Dermody and Brendan McCormack (Board of Management)

Dr. M. Ni Chorra

M.B.,D.C.H., Dip. Obst., M.I.C.G.P., H. Dip. Couns.

22nd September, 2006

Mr. Brendan Mc Cormack.
Principal,
Star of the Sea Primary School,
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Co. Cork.

Surgery:

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Co. Cork.

Phone: 4841895

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Dear Mr. Mc Cormack,

I am quite willing to be on your list of G.P.'s, in case of need during school hours.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



DR. M. NI CHORRA.

Star of the Sea Primary School

BUNSCOIL REALT NA MARA

Passage West, Co. Cork.
AN PASÁISTE THÍAR, CO. CHORCAÍ

Telephone/Guthán: 021-4842072
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Uimhir Rolla: 20105C



Dr. Greg Murphy
The Square
Passage West
Co Cork

14th September 2006.

Dear Dr. Murphy,

Further to the schools work on its Substance Misuse Policy I am requesting that it be possible to include you on a list of professionals on whom we can call in a situation where the pupils own doctor is unavailable.

I enclose a copy of our Substance Misuse Policy for your information.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,


Brendan McCormack
Principal



Dr. Greg Murphy
Dr. John O'Donnell
Family Doctors
The Square
Passage West
Tel. (021) 891865


18/9/06.