

6.5 Substance Use Policy

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to students, teachers, auxiliary staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the school building/grounds. It is applicable during school time, including breaks and to all school related activities. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place.

Aims

The aim of this policy is primary prevention. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs. We aim to develop in our pupils' better self-esteem, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils age-appropriate information from educational programmes.

Relationship to School's Mission Statement/ Vision/ Aims

In Scoil Choilm CNS we want to provide an opportunity to grow up and learn in a drugs free and safe environment. This policy reflects the school ethos in that it is dedicated to the care of the whole school community and it aims to provide a safe and secure environment for learning.

Rationale

- The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of this reality. As a school we need to reflect upon how we might provide for the needs of our 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 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' underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.

Objectives

- To provide a comprehensive programme of education for all students in substance use issues.
- To help us deal with issues relating to substance use in a planned and considered way and in accordance with its statutory responsibilities.
- To reinforce the role of the school in contributing to local and national strategies in relation to substance use education and prevention.

- To minimise the dangers caused to young people by substance misuse within our school.
- To manage incidents of substance misuse in a clear and consistent manner to support parents and pupils in understanding and addressing substance misuse.

Policy Content

1. Education concerning substance use

Education, concerning substance use in Scoil Choilm CNS will be provided through the subject, 'Social, Personal and Health Education'. The core programme for substance misuse prevention education is the 'Walk Tall' programme. It will be supported by the 'Stay Safe' and the RSE programme. The 'Walk Tall' programme aims to give children the confidence, skills and knowledge to make healthy choices.

SPHE is timetabled and taught for 30 minutes per week by the class teacher. Active learning strategies are advocated in the SPHE curriculum and will inform our selection of methodology. Our work will be reinforced by project work and the possibility of talks from local Gardaí. All teachers will follow 'Best Practice Guidelines' which are outlined in *Appendix A*.

Parents are informed that substance misuse prevention education is taught throughout the school as part of the SPHE programme and are notified when outside agencies deliver programmes or presentations.

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

Scoil Choilm CNS 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.

A balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary approach will be used. It may be an appropriate response to an incident to also make a referral to a support agency. All incidents will be recorded.

Smoking Policy

- Scoil Choilm CNS is a non-smoking area and visitors, staff and parents will comply with the national non-smoking policy.
- Pupils are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on the school premises or in any other place during school related activities.
- Pupils found in possession of tobacco products on school premises will be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal and his/her parents will be informed. The incident will subsequently be dealt with in accordance with our 'Code of Behaviour'.
- Adults who have tobacco products in their possession for their own use must keep them in their possession at all times and out of sight and reach of children.
- A written record should be kept of any incident which occurs.



Alcohol Policy

- Pupils are not allowed to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol on the school premises or during any school activities.
- If a teacher suspects that a student is under the influence of alcohol, she will immediately inform the Principal or Deputy Principal and consult on what action should be taken. The child's parents will be notified and the incident will subsequently be dealt with in accordance with our 'Code of Behaviour'.
- If a staff member appears to be under the influence of alcohol, it will be reported to the Principal who will act in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy. The school's 'Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment' and Section 24 of the Education Act will be consulted accordingly.
- If an adult appears to be under the influence of alcohol when coming to collect a child, it must be reported to the Principal or the Deputy Principal. The child's safety is paramount and our 'Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment' will be consulted accordingly.
- A written record should be kept of any incident which involves the misuse of alcohol on the school premises or grounds. The DLP or the DDLP will keep the record filed away securely.

Illegal Drug Use Policy

- Students, staff, parents and visitors are forbidden from being in possession of or using illegal drugs or solvents in the school premises.
- Illegal drugs found on the school premises will be locked away and the Gardaí will be contacted to dispose of them. Teachers are advised not to transport illegal substances at any time.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of illegal drugs or solvent, he/she will immediately inform the Principal or Deputy Principal and consult on what action should be taken. The child's parents will be notified and the school's 'Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment' will be consulted.
- If a staff member appears to be under the influence of a substance it will be reported to the Principal who will act in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy. The school's 'Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment' and Section 24 of the Education Act will be consulted accordingly.
- If an adult appears to be under the influence of a substance when coming to collect a child, it must be reported to the Principal or the Deputy Principal. The child's safety is paramount and our 'Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment' will be consulted accordingly.
- A written record should be kept of any incident which involves illegal drugs on the school premises or grounds. The DLP or the DDLP will keep the record filed away securely.



Procedures in dealing with alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents may include some or all of the following:

- Assess the situation – the primary focus being the safety of the child that may be under the influence of the above named substances
- Contact Principal – the principal is informed and then parents/guardians. Others are informed on a need to know basis i.e. BOM, Gardaí, outside agencies
- Contact Parents
- Seek medical help
- Record Incident – written factual account
- Referral to outside agency
- Contact Gardaí
- Sanctions – refer to ‘Code of behaviour’
- Report – refer to ‘Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment’

Confidentiality

People will be informed on a ‘need to know’ basis. Parents/ Guardians will be involved unless reporting would pose a threat to the child. In the case of illegal drugs the Gardaí will be informed by the principal.

Provision for training and staff development

- Staff will have access to training from different agencies. At present primary schools are assisted in this area by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST).
- Drug Information and Awareness Training (HSE etc.)
- First Aid Training
- Courses which are run in the local education centre are made known to the staff in the school

Parental Involvement

All parents have access to this policy on our website and other related policies including; ‘Health and Safety’, ‘Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment’, ‘Administration of Medicines’, ‘Code of Behaviour’, ‘Anti-Racism’ and ‘Anti-Bullying’. A hard copy of this policy is available on request from the school office. Parents are encouraged to support the school’s efforts to educate pupils in substance misuse prevention and to manage substance use incidents.

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Success Criteria of this policy

- Feedback from all parties
- Education programme evident throughout the school
- Effectiveness of policy in dealing with incidents

Review/Ratification/Communication

- This policy was created, ratified and communicated in June 2017.
- This policy will be presented to all teaching staff annually in September.
- This policy was last reviewed in June 2021 and will be reviewed again in June 2023 or sooner if necessary.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Principal (Ms. Laura Maher)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairperson of BOM (Mr. John Walsh)

Last date reviewed: June 2021

Next review date: June 2023



Appendix A – ‘Best Practice Guidelines’

- The class teacher has the primary role and responsibility for the delivery of drug education in the school setting.
- Drug education must be delivered in the context of SPHE and must always include a balance of skills, values and age appropriate information.
- Scare tactics are ineffective and must not be used.
- Young people’s drug use must not be normalised. We must never give pupils the impression that all young people drink, smoke and use drugs.
- Information must be age, developmentally, culturally and environmentally appropriate. Information that is inappropriate may encourage experimentation/use
- An active learning approach is recommended.
- Sensationalist approaches including testimonials are not appropriate and can be counterproductive as they glamorise drugs and drug users.
- Consistent implementation is crucial to effectiveness.
- Supplementary education must complement and not replace or duplicate the school curriculum.
- All resources used must be approved in advance by the Principal/BOM and be in line with the ethos of the school and the school’s ‘Substance Use Policy’.
- The teacher must be present and actively involved at all times.
- Any intervention without the direct involvement of the class teacher is inappropriate.
- Expectations of school based programmes need to be realistic.
- All personnel engaging with pupils must use appropriate language, behaviour, operate in tandem with the ethos of the school, and in line with the ‘Substance Use Policy’, and work under the guidance and supervision of the class teacher at all times.