

6.5 Scoil Choilm CNS

Substance Use Policy

The central objective of Scoil Choilm Community National School's Substance Abuse Policy is the welfare, care, and protection of every student, in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Scoil Choilm CNS acknowledges that the school has an important role in terms of the education and welfare of children in relation to alcohol, tobacco, solvents, and drugs. This policy reflects our school ethos and seeks to promote self-reliance, knowledge, and skills to enable individuals within our school community to make healthy and safe choices. The school will endeavour to work closely with parents/guardians in the implementation of this policy to ensure the health and safety of each child.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to students, teachers, SNAs, caretakers, cleaners, secretaries and all staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e., every person who enters the school building/grounds. It is applicable before, during and after 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 main 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. This policy aims to outline the steps involved in dealing with substance misuse.

Relationship to School's Mission Statement/ Vision/ Aims

In Scoil Choilm CNS we want to provide an opportunity for the children 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. Children can be exposed 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 Social Personal and Health Education curriculum, of which substance misuse prevention education is an integral part, is a mandatory subject on the primary curriculum and must be taught to all primary pupils from junior infants to sixth class (DES Circular 022/2010).
- 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 talks from local Gardaí.

The SPHE curriculum states that a drug can be defined as a chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels.

'Drugs' mentioned in this policy refer to any one or all of the following:

- Over the counter (OTC) medicines
- Prescription medicines
- Tobacco/Nicotine/Vaping products
- Alcohol
- Solvents
- Illegal Drugs

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. Please refer to our critical incident policy for more information.

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/Vaping Policy

- Scoil Choilm CNS is a strictly no smoking or vaping area and visitors, staff and parents will comply with the national no-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 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 always keep them in their possession and out of sight and reach of children.
- A written record should be kept of any incident which occurs, in line with our critical incident policy.

Alcohol Policy

The child's safety is paramount, and our 'Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment' will be consulted accordingly.

- 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 drugs or alcohol, she will immediately inform the 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 drugs or alcohol, it will be reported to the principal, who will act in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy.
- If an adult appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when coming to collect a child, it must be reported to the principal.
- 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 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.

Medication

Any administration or use of medication on school premises during school activities or on school tours must comply with our policy on '*Administration of Medication*'. School staff will take responsibility for administering medication only when a written request has been made to the Board of Management and an Indemnity Form completed, indemnifying the board. Students are not permitted to share their medication under any circumstances.

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

Incidents involving pupils:

- Assess the situation – the primary focus being the safety of the child that may be under the influence of the above-named substances
- The Class teacher will speak to the student about the incident, record details of the conversation and inform the principal.
- The principal will meet with the student and discuss the incident further.
- Student's parents/guardians will be notified and asked to attend a meeting with the principal.
- Others are informed on a need-to-know basis i.e., BOM, Gardaí, outside agencies
- Due care will be important in deciding on a balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. In keeping with our '*Code of Behaviour*', the above incidences would be considered serious offences and will be dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- Referral to outside agency if required.
- Depending on the severity of the incident, the Gardaí may have to be notified.



- A report may need to be made to Tusla Child and Family Agency– refer to ‘*Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment*’. If unsure, the principal will seek advice from Tusla.

Incidents involving staff members:

- The staff member may be asked to leave the premises if he/she presents in school as being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- The principal will speak with the staff member about the incident and record details of the conversation. If the staff member is a teacher reference will be made to the Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers.
- Depending on the severity of the incident, the Gardaí may have to be notified.

Incidents involving parents/guardians:

- The parent/guardian may be asked to leave the premises if he/she presents school under the influence of drugs or alcohol.. Pupils will not be released to parents/guardians who are under the influence.
- The principal will speak with the parent/guardian about the incident and record details of the conversation.
- Depending on the severity of the incident, the Gardaí may have to be notified.

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.

Success Criteria of this policy

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



Scoil Choilm Community National School

Porterstown Road, Clonsilla, Dublin 15.

Ph: 01-8213352 (JS) Ph:01-8218010 (SS)

Roll No: 20241K

www.scoilchoilmcns.ie scoilchoilm@sccns.ie



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 November 2021 and will be reviewed again in June 2023 or sooner if necessary.

Signed: Principal (Laura Maher)

Date: 9th February 2022

Signed: Chairperson of BOM (John Walsh)

Date: 9th February 2022