

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY OF INCH NATIONAL SCHOOL

SCOPE

This policy applies to students, teachers, auxiliary staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the building. 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, e.g. school tour.

RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL'S MISSION/VISION/AIM

Inch N.S. is a Catholic School under the patronage of the Bishop of Killaloe. As such, we recognise the unique place that each child plays in the school and greater Christian community and we endeavour through our SPHE policy to assist all children to grow in that role. We hope to provide the children with an awareness of drugs and the harm which arises from their misuse. This involves the promotion of self-esteem and self-confidence in our pupils and empowering them self-protection skills. We seek to promote healthy lifestyles for all in a safe, supportive and non- threatening environment. This vision of a Health Promoting School is promoted and enhances by the implementation of an agreed policy governing substance use. We also recognise and encourage the important role of parents in implementing this policy and supporting the staff.

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. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their 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 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*' (November 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.
- 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 (interim) 2009-2016 requires every school to have a substance use policy in place
- Action 21 of the National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 mandates the Department of Education and Skills to monitor the implementation of substance use policies in schools through the whole school evaluation process as operated by the Inspectorate. It is also mandated to ensure that best practice is disseminated to all schools
- 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.

- The school authority in Inch National School has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with criminal law.

DEFINITION OF A DRUG

A drug is any substance, which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. This policy is concerned with the use of alcohol and/or of any mood-altering substances. For the purpose of this document, it includes illegal substances and the illicit use of legal substances, such as medication and solvents.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- The overall 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 environment and atmosphere
- To provide our pupils with age appropriate information from educational programmes.
- To encourage children to become responsible members of their community and to be independent, questioning and confident.
- To work in partnership with parents and pupils.
- To provide procedures for dealing with drug incidences in school. To have guidelines and information for teachers to improve their response to the problem of substance misuse.
- To reinforce the role of the school in contributing to local and national strategies in relation to substance use education and prevention.

CONTENT OF THE POLICY

- 1) Education Concerning Substance Use
- 2) Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents
 - Pupils
 - Adults
- 3) Provision for Training and Staff Development

EDUCATION CONCERNING SUBSTANCE USE

The school ensures compliance with the Best Practice guidelines in the delivery of Substance Misuse Prevention Education in line with DES Circular 0022/2010.

Education concerning substance use in Inch National School will be provided within the broad context of SPHE through specific lessons from the "Walk Tall" programme. It will be supported by the Stay Safe, RSE and Grow in Love programmes. This topic may also be brought up during existing school subjects such as English, Science, Drama and Arts. The Walk Tall programme hopes to give children the confidence, skills and knowledge to make healthy choices. S.P.H.E. is timetabled into the curriculum.

Considerations which inform the selection of content and methodologies include:

- The living environments of the pupils
- The relevancy of the subject matter to their lives.

The methodologies used include discussion, artwork, co-operative games, circle work, stories, poems and songs. The use of an outside visitor/ speaker to enhance the work done in class will be considered in the context of the full SPHE curriculum and with a teacher present in the classroom.

Parents are informed that substance misuse prevention education is taught throughout the school as part of the S.P.H.E. programme and are notified when outside agencies deliver programmes or presentations to support substance misuse prevention education.

1) MANAGEMENT OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, E-CIGARETTES, VAPING AND DRUG-RELATED INCIDENTS

PUPILS

Incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use are addressed in the school's Code of Behaviour and the Enrolment Policy. Incidents involving substance use or distribution will be dealt with as a Level 2 or Level 3 behaviour as outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour. Pupils may be suspended or expelled if involved in any drug related incident. The school's shared understanding of a 'drug related incident' is:

- Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, tobacco, e cigarettes, vaping or illegal drugs
- Use / suspected use of alcohol, drugs, and/or tobacco on the school premises or during a school related activity.
- The sale or passing on of any illegal substance,
- The possession of alcohol, tobacco, e cigarettes, vaping, illegal drugs or associated paraphernalia on school grounds or at school related activities
- Disposal of drugs or related items (e.g. syringes) found on school property.

The procedure for managing such incidents is:

- Assess the situation
- Seek medical help if necessary
- Inform and consult with the Principal
- Principal to contact parents/ guardians
- All incidents to be recorded factually on the school's incident form
- Referral to local support agencies e.g. TUSLA, CAMHS, NEPS
- Contact Gardaí
- Designate one person to deal with media enquiries, if appropriate, as per the school's Critical Incident Policy. The Principal, Conor McKenna is designated to respond to the media in relation to "drug related incidents" they may be enquiring about. The Board will prepare any statement needed.
- Sanctions or discipline procedures as per the Code of Behaviour
- Report to TUSLA as per the school's Child Protection Policy

When managing drug related incidents it is important that confidentiality be maintained. People will be informed on a need to know basis. Parents/ guardians will be involved unless reporting would pose a threat to the child.

A balance between pastoral care and disciplinary procedures will be maintained. Each incident will be dealt with on its own merits. Repeated incidents will be dealt with in a different manner.

ADULTS

The Board of Management shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that pupils and other persons in the workplace are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare from persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The term “in the workplace”, in the preceding sentence includes all school related activities taking place under the supervision of a teacher, with the Board’s approval, and both within and away from the school premises.

Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and others. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of any contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a parent or adult collecting a pupil from school or presenting themselves on the premises for another reason is unfit to be on the premises or to take care of the said pupil, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal will be informed and the duty of care will apply to the pupil. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the pupil and safeguard their best interests.

In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove him/herself from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers. An Employee Assistance Service (telephone: 1800 411 057 or e-mail: [eas@vhics.ie](mailto: eas@vhics.ie)) is available to teaching staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service.

The Board of Management also acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work

of all other staff members. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the non-teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to seek counselling or other professional intervention.

All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded and reported as soon as possible to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management shall consider all such reports and decide on the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

2) PROVISION FOR TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff members are aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of substance misuse within their own class by developing a supportive class environment and implementation of active learning methodologies as recommended in the SPHE curriculum.

Procedures are adopted in the school in relation to the administration of medicines in the school and staff are adequately informed of same through the development of the school's Administration of Medication Policy.

Staff members have been made sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse through the development of the school's Child Protection Policy and the Children First Guidelines

Staff members have been made sufficiently aware of laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they relate to themselves, to the school and the students through the development of this Substance Use policy.

The staff will continue to engage in CPD for the Walk Tall and Stay Safe Programme.

New staff, in particular, will be briefed on the substance use policy of the school as part of their induction.

The school promotes health education through a range of supports including Healthy Eating, involvement in a wide variety of sports throughout the year and the Active Schools initiative

Parent education on SPHE and issues relating to substance misuse will be promoted in the school community by organising guest speakers to deliver presentations on drug use awareness.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The entire school staff are responsible for the implementation of this policy.
- Parents are responsible for supporting the school's goals to educate pupils in substance use prevention.
- The Board of Management is responsible for supporting the implementation of this policy through staff training and resource provision.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

The following indicators will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the substance use policy in Inch National School

- Feedback from all parties
 - Effectiveness of the policy in dealing with incidents.

 - **Monitoring Procedures**
 - Implementation of the Substance Use Policy is monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that is of practical benefit to the school.

 - This process is led by the Principal and the Board of Management
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- **Review Procedures**

This policy will be reviewed annually, in the light of changing information/legislation, subsequent to a drug related incident and in consultation with the wider school community.

- **Timeframe**

The completed policy was circulated to staff, parents and the Board of Management in June 2017 through the school website

The policy was first implemented in June 2017

It will be subject to annual review, the most recent review was undertaken by staff and BOM during September 2022 and approved by the Board of Management on the 11th October 2022.

Olivia Durcan

Olivia Durcan
Chairperson of the Board of Management