

## **Policy on Substance Use**

### **Introductory statement**

This policy was re-drafted in May 2008 after a member of staff attended a recent seminar on THE SUBSTANCE MISUSE PREVENTION PROGRAMME. It was reviewed in June 2015

### **Definition of a drug:**

"A drug is any chemical which alters how the body works or how the person behaves or feels."

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, and drugs which cause physical or psychological dependence.

These include:

- Medicines.

- Solvents(correction fluids, aerosol deodorants and nail varnish/nail varnish remover, perfumes)

- Alcohol

- Nicotine.

- Illegal drugs.

### **Relationship to characteristic spirit of school**

St Brigid's school is committed to the health and safety of all the children in its care and will take action to safeguard their well-being. The school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral care role in the welfare of its children and will encourage those in need of support to come forward. Parents/Guardians will be informed of services available to them.

### **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 the reality. The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health 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 Public Health(Tobacco) Act came into force on March 29<sup>th</sup> 2004

### **Scope of policy:**

This policy applies to:

The school premises at all times.

**Students:** on school premises and all school related activities.

**Staff:** on school premises and all school related activities.

**Parents:** while visiting school premises or when asked to help out with children during school related activities.

**All other visitors:** visiting school premises on any occasion and all school related activities.

**Aims/Objectives:**

1. To provide a healthy safe environment for the children.
2. To enable children to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and developing and practising skills particularly in relation to self-esteem.
3. To provide age appropriate information about Substance Abuse at the teacher's discretion and in accordance with S.P.H.E curriculum.
4. To increase understanding, if/when appropriate about the implications and consequences of Substance Abuse.
5. To help the children develop healthy attitudes and skills around substances.

These aims are fulfilled through aspects of the child's experience in the taught curriculum and the informal curriculum i.e. the school ethos.

**Policy Content.**

**Strategies for prevention of substance misuse problems.**

**Education concerning substance use.**

Education concerning substance use will be provided within the broad context of S.P.H.E under the following Strand Units: *Safety & Protection*  
*Taking Care of my body.*

Junior/Senior Infants.

Care to be exercised on the occasion of taking medicine.

Dangerous substances in the home and school.

First/Second Class.

Care to be exercised on the occasion of taking medicine.

Dangerous substances in the home and school.

Third/Fourth Class.

Care to be exercised on the occasion of taking medicine.

Dangerous substances in the home and school.

Use of nicotine.

Use of Alcohol

Fifth/Sixth Class.

Care to be exercised on the occasion of taking medicine.

Dangerous substances in the home and school.

Use of nicotine.

Use of alcohol.

Use of illegal drugs.

These units will be taught every second year using a variety of methodologies.

The use of an outside visitor speaker to enhance the work done in class will be considered in the context of the full S.P.H.E programme and will only be undertaken in the presence of the class teacher.

**Resources:**

- (a) Primary school curriculum handbooks: S.P.H.E
- (b) Walk Tall: Teachers Manual(Junior Infants – Sixth Class)
- (c) N.W.H.B: Teacher's Manual & workbooks(Junior Infants – Sixth Class)

It will be left to the discretion of the class teacher to modify content to meet the needs of the children in multi-class situation, children with special educational needs and non-nationals.

**Rules relating to Substance use:**

**Medicine ( Prescription)**

**Pupils:** No medicine will be administered to a pupil by a teacher without:

- (a) Teacher's consent.
- (b) A written request from parents to teachers and Board of Management.
- (c) Board of Management approval
- (d) Letter of indemnity from the parents and Board, in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of the medication. Children will not have or use any medication that a teacher is not made aware of it in writing.

**Storage of Medicine:**

Medicines that may be required should be locked away safely.

*(See Policy on Administration of Medicines)*

**Staff:**

- (a) Should avoid taking medicine during school hours.
- (b) If it is to be taken, it should be out of view of the children and they must ensure that children under their care are supervised by another adult.
- (c) Should ensure that medicine is locked away safely or on their person at all times.

**Solvents.**

**Pupils:** all solvents based products will be prohibited on school premises and all school related activities. As new "Tippex" is water based it is allowable. All crayons, markers and pens must be non-toxic.

**Staff:** must ensure that all solvent based products are locked away safely and out of the reach of children.

**Smoking:**

"The school premises is a **NO SMOKING ENVIRONMENT.**

**Pupils:** are prohibited from having nicotine/cigarettes/lighters/matches on school premises or school related activities.

**Staff:** are prohibited from smoking on school premises or when asked to help out with school related activities.

**Parents:** are prohibited from smoking on school premises or when asked to help out with school related activities.

**Visitors to the school:** are prohibited from smoking on school premises or when asked to help out with school related activities.

**Alcohol:**

Use of alcohol based products on school premises is prohibited at all times.

**Pupils:** are prohibited from having alcohol on the school premises and during school related activities.

**Staff:** members are prohibited from having or using alcohol products on the school premises and during school related activities.

**Parents:** are prohibited from having or using alcohol products on the school premises and during school related activities.

**Visitors:** are prohibited from having or using alcohol on the school premises and during school related activities.

N.B. Cigarettes or Alcohol **CANNOT BE INCLUDED IN ANY SCHOOL RAFFLE.**

**Illegal Drugs:**

Use of illegal drugs on the school premises is prohibited at all times.

**Pupils:** are prohibited from having or using illegal drugs on the school premises.

**Staff:** are prohibited from having or using illegal drugs on the school premises.

**Parents:** are prohibited from having or using illegal drugs on the school premises.

**Visitors:** are prohibited from having or using illegal drugs on the school premises.

### **Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents**

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use might include:

- Use or suspected use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco on the school premises or during a school-related activity.
- Intoxication/unusual behavior.
- Disclosure about use.
- Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia
- Possession and or supply on the school premises or during a school related activity.

### **Management of Incidents.**

#### **Use or suspected use of nicotine, alcohol or illegal drugs on the school premises.**

1. The class teacher/teacher brings the child to the principal/deputy principal.
2. The principal/deputy principal clearly outlines the allegation(s) to the child.
3. Investigate
4. Confiscate (if appropriate)
5. Inform parents and request them to come to the school.
6. If the principal deems it appropriate, the child will remain out of class under the supervision of a parent/guardian at home or the supervision of the principal/deputy principal while at school until the investigation is complete.
7. Parents will be requested to attend any further interviews with the child in the school with regard to the matter under investigation.
8. Inform the Board of Management. Repeated action may include suspension.
9. Information on local support services will be made available to the parents and the child.
10. Record incident.

**Intoxication/Unusual Behaviour** (which may be the result of substance Abuse – e.g inability to focus properly, incoherent, sleepy etc.)

1. The class teacher/teacher brings the child to the principal/deputy principal.
2. Investigate
3. Inform parents and request them to come to the school.

4. Seek medical advice.
5. Record incident.
6. Inform the Board of Management.

**Disclosure about use by a child, adult or another parent.**

1. Investigate. Ask when and where it happened. If it happens in school or on school grounds, the principal/deputy principal, BOM and teaching staff will be responsible for imposing disciplinary action.
2. If there is a disclosure about use outside school, it would be inappropriate for school authorities to discipline. The information will then be passed on to the child's parents.
3. Information about illegal activity will be passed on to the Gardaí. Any such disclosure may be reported to the HSE under The Children First Protection Guidelines.
4. Record incident.

**Staff:** If a staff member is found to be in breach of the policy:

1. The Principal/Deputy Principal leaves the staff member home immediately and provides for substitution.
2. The following day the staff member will be cautioned orally and will be referred to the policy signed by them.
3. In repeated cases a written warning will be issued.
4. Persistent incidents will be reported to the Board of Management.

**Parents/Visitors:** Any parent found to be in breach of the policy will be reminded.

If the Principal/teacher becomes aware of a parent/guardian collecting a child, under the influence of substances and deems that the adult is incapable of caring for the child:

1. The child will not be handed over and that person will be asked to leave the premises.
2. The next of kin will be contacted and asked to collect the child.
3. If another adult cannot come to the school, the Principal/Deputy Principal will leave the child home.
4. If necessary the Gardaí will be notified immediately in a case where the parent (under the influence of a substance) has already driven off with the child.
5. If it is a repeated occurrence, then it may also be a cause of concern for the HSE under the Children First Guidelines.

A person appearing on the school premises under the influence of substances, will be asked to leave the premises to ensure the safety of the children.

**Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia on school premises**

1. Bottles, cans etc found on school premises will be reported to the Gardaí.
2. Substances found that are not easily recognized/a suspicion that the substance is illegal, Gardaí will be called to investigate.
3. All incidents will be recorded.

**Possession and or supply on the school premises or during a school related activity.**

1. The substance is confiscated and secured by a member of staff.
2. The Principal/Deputy Principal is informed.
3. The details of the incident are recorded.
4. Parents are informed and requested to come to the school to meet with the Principal and teacher involved.
5. Inform the Gardaí and the substance will be handed over.
6. If deemed appropriate the child will remain out of class under the supervision of the parent at home or the supervision of the Principal/Deputy Principal while in school until the investigation is completed.
7. The issue will be forwarded to the Board of Management for their deliberation.
8. Parents will be requested to attend any further interviews with the child in the school with regard to the matter under investigation.
9. Information on local support services will be made available to the parents and child.

Fr. Thomas Flynn is designated to respond to the media if the situation arises.

**Provision for training and staff development.**

1. The Board of Management accepts that ongoing training and staff information is needed in the area of education.
2. In-service training for staff was provided in the Primary Curriculum SPHE and Walk Tall Programme.
3. The school is committed to establishing ongoing contact with the relevant services in the area of Substance education/ awareness.
4. A quick reference sheet for this policy will be available to each staff member for quick access and to allow for prompt action. The policy will be explained to new staff who will be asked to sign up to it when taking up their new position.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The staff, Board of Management and wider community all have a role to play in development, implementation and evaluation of the policy.

**Success Criteria**

In the event of an incident arising, the policy will be adhered to strictly. Effective communication and co-operation with parents/guardians is essential for the successful implementation of the policy. All members of the school community will sign up to the policy

**Ratification and Review**

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This policy was reviewed in June 2015 and ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_. It replaces the existing policy and is implemented forthwith.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson, Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Review: May/ June 2018**

**Communication:** This policy is available on the school's website. It is also available on request from the Principal / Secretary.