

## **Policy on Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use.**

### **1. Introduction**

#### **The School Position**

This school is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs.

We believe that teachers, parents, board of management and students need to work together and that co-operation is essential to the acceptance and implementation of the policy. We acknowledge that the school has an important role to play education. Prevention is our primary task but we are also aware of the pastoral needs of those who might abuse drugs.

It has been agreed that a drug is any substance which changes the way the body functions mentally, physically or emotionally.

#### **The School Ethos**

This drug policy will be carried out in the spirit of the school mission statement which aspires to the nurturing and growth of the individual. Education Flourishes in an environment where good relationships are encouraged, where people feel valued and respected and where there is genuine tolerance, fairness and support for those in difficulty.

#### **The use of Drugs in School**

**THIS SCHOOL DOES NOT ACCEPT THE POSSESSION, USE OR SUPPLY OF DRUGS IN THE SCHOOL OR ON SCHOOL OUTINGS.** The only exception is for legitimate medicinal use. In such cases, the school must be informed.

#### **The Policy**

The policy is focussed on four key areas:

- Alcohol, tobacco and drug education programmes.
- Managing drug-related incidents.
- Training and staff development.
- Monitoring, review and evaluation.

## **2. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.**

This school is committed to providing a comprehensive drug education programme for all students.

We aim to:

- Increase the self-esteem and confidence of our students
- Equip young people with personal and social skills
- Enable young people to make informed, healthy and responsible choices
- Provide honest and age-appropriate information on drugs
- Minimise the harm caused by drug abuse by offering supportive interventions

These aims will be met by the following actions:

All teachers involved in SPHE will be given the opportunity to avail of appropriate training courses. Parents are to be aware and kept informed of what is happening in the school in relation to drug education.

## **3. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug-Related incidents.**

### **The School Approach**

In all situations involving drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the young person and the needs of the school community. Listening, separating fact from myth, support-these will be our initial approach to the situation. Disciplinary procedures will be called in if rules are broken. Expulsion will be an option.

### **Drug Incidents**

Examples;

- Emergencies, when a person may be unconscious
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour
- Suspicion/ rumour of drug use, possession or dealing
- Disclosure by another person
- Possession of a legal/illegal drug on the school premises or on a school-related activity
- Selling/supplying legal/illegal drugs
- Person seeking help from a member of staff
- School grounds being used for drug activity
- Drug paraphernalia being found on school property.

### **Assessing a Drug Incident**

In all cases where there is no immediate danger to the young person/s it is important to take time to assess the situation before responding. The drug-incident report from should be completed.

## **Recording Procedure**

All staff need to be aware of the signs of drugs use and alert for changes in behaviour. Rumour must not be taken as evidence of drug use. In situations of confirmed use/possession or supply all details must be recorded and acted upon.

## **Parents**

In cases of a drug-related incident, the school may offer support to the parents/cares if deemed necessary.

## **Gardaí**

The Principal will contact the Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) in the event of a confirmed drug incident and any drugs found on the premises will be dealt with by the JLO.

## **Counselling/Pastoral Care**

The pastoral care system is an important part of our response to a drug incident. Involvement with drugs may be masking some underlying difficulties or may be phase of experimentation. In response to all incidents pastoral support will be offered. If the person has a serious drug problem referral to a drug-treatment centre may be recommended Parents and staff involved will be offered support.

## **Disciplinary/Procedures.**

Sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature and severity of the offence and will be consistent with school rules regarding other breaches of conduct.

## **Confidentiality**

Teachers cannot offer total confidentiality to a young person who discloses drug involvement. However information should only be disclosed on a strict “need-to-know” basis. The young person involved must be informed about what is happening and why.

## **Media**

The Principal or a nominated spokesperson will handle all media queries. 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.

#### **4. Training and Staff Development**

It is very important to provide the following:

- Training to staff involved in SHPE
- Drug information and awareness to all staff
- Detailed and specific training to key staff in relation to managing drug-related incidents
- First-aid training to all staff

These should be opportunities for parents to attend workshops and information evening on issues relating to drugs.

All students should be offered drug-education programmes within the context of three SPHE classes.

#### **5. Monitoring of the Policy**

The policy should be reviewed regularly by the drug policy working group on consultation with the wider school community. Copies of the policy will be disseminated to all the school community. It will be freely available from the Principal's office and will be given to all new staff and parents of new children as part of their induction to the school.

Date of Review: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_