

## **Substance Use Policy**

### **Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to students, staff, 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.

### **Aims of Policy**

The aim of the substance use policy of Scoil Bhríde is primarily prevention. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, vaping products, 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, Vision and Aims**

The characteristic spirit of this school has been developed and agreed with our partners in education. This substance use policy reflects the school policy by:

- Drawing together staff, parents, and Board of Management members in formulating the policy.
- Linking in with other policies in the school which include Code of Behaviour, Health and Safety, Administration of Medicine and Child Protection.

### **Rationale**

#### **Why is this policy necessary?**

- The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco, vaping products and drugs is part of this reality. Our school needs 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 (interim) 2009-2016 requires every school to have a substance use policy in place.
- Scoil Bhríde acknowledges that the school has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and handling drug related incidents and proposes to work closely with parents/guardians to implement this policy, to ensure their child's health and safety. It is emphasised that the primary role of substance misuse and prevention rests with the pupils parents/guardians. We believe that the entire school community needs to work together and that cooperation is essential to the acceptance and implementation of the policy

## **Definition of a Drug**

A drug is any substance/stimulant which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. This includes alcohol, illegal drugs, prescribed drugs, tobacco and vaping products.

## **Goals and Objectives**

This policy aims to:

- Provide a comprehensive programme of prevention education for all pupils in substance misuse in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in the Primary School.
- To equip the school to deal with issues relating to substance use in a planned and considered way and in accordance with its statutory responsibilities.
- To manage incidents of substance misuse in a clear and consistent manner.
- To support parents and pupils and staff in understanding and addressing substance misuse.
- To minimise the dangers caused to young people by substance misuse within schools/communities.

## **Content**

### **1. Education Concerning Substance Use**

- Substance misuse prevention education will be taught throughout the school in the overall context of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum. The core programme for substance misuse prevention education will be the Walk Tall programme. It will be supported by the Stay Safe, RSE and Grow in Love programmes.
- The Walk Tall Programme hopes to give children the confidence, skills and knowledge to make healthy choices. Social, Personal and Health Education is time-tabled into the curriculum and taught for 30 minutes per week by the class teacher. The methodologies used include discussion, art work, co-operative games, circle work, stories, poems, songs and rhymes, role play and mime, visualisations, group work, project work, brainstorming and movement.

## **Best Practice Guidelines:**

- Class teacher has the primary role in the delivery of substance misuse prevention education in the school setting
- Substance misuse prevention education must be delivered in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)
- Expectations of school based programmes need to be realistic.

## **2. Management of Alcohol, Tobacco, Vaping and Drug Related Incidents**

The schools understanding of a drug related incident is

- Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, tobacco, vaping products or legal/ illegal drugs
- The possession of alcohol, tobacco, vaping products or legal/ illegal drugs on school grounds or at school related activities
- The sale or passing of any illegal substance
- Drugs or related items (e.g. Syringes) found on school property

The reporting procedure for such incidents is

- Witness to drug related incident informs staff member
- Principal informs parents/guardians
- Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management
- Gardaí informed depending on seriousness of incident
- Area Health Board informed for disposal of items

The Board of management believe that pupils are most at risk in relation to substance abuse in Scoil Bhríde in recreational areas, on the way to and from school and at out of school activities supervised by staff members.

Incidents relating to drugs are treated very seriously in Scoil Bhríde and pupils may be suspended or expelled if involved in any drug related incident.

Parents will be involved by accepting the schools Code of Behaviour and Admission Policies. They will be informed of any incident involving their own child and will be asked to accept responsibility, co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardaí if necessary.

Medical help will be sought if necessary and referrals may be made to external agencies such as TUSLA

At a local level the following support agencies are available to which pupils involved in substance misuse might be referred

- Community Gardai in Roscommon 090 6638300
- Education Welfare Officer 091 385302
- HSE Harm Reduction Counsellor-Olive Brannigan
- Western Drugs Task Force- Gillian Conway

In the event of a media interest in relation to a drug related incident the matter will be referred to The Board of Management and The Chairperson will issue a prepared statement to the media.

### **3. Provision of Training and Staff Development**

- First Aid training has been given to staff members
- Gloves will be worn and the area will be made safe after any incident
- 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 as recommended by the SPHE curriculum.
- Staff are encouraged to teach self-esteem based programmes such as Zippy's Friends, The Decider Programme and Walk Tall.
- Procedures are adopted in the school in relation to the administration of medicines in the school and staff are adequately informed of same.
- Staff members have been made sufficiently aware of laws relating to alcohol, tobacco, vaping products and drug use and how they relate to themselves, to the school and to the students

### **Management of Persons in the Workplace under the influence of Drugs and/or Alcohol**

- 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 by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.
- Should the 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 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 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 shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.
- If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be in the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the 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 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 may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.
- The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work for teachers. An Employee Assistance Programme-Staff Counselling ( 1800 411 057 ) 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 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.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The staff and Board of Management are responsible for the implementation of this policy

### **Review**

- This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management and shall be reviewed regularly in the light of experience by the Board of Management and changed where deemed necessary and appropriate.

### **Ratification and Communication**

This policy has been made available to school personnel and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. A copy has been provided to The Parents Association.

This policy was ratified by The Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ and is due to be reviewed in \_\_\_\_\_ or earlier if the need arises.