

Saint Catherine's National School

Ballyhack, Arthurstown, New Ross, Co. Wexford.

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Substance Use Policy

Name of School: Saint Catherine's National School

Address: Ballyhack, Arthurstown, New Ross, Co. Wexford.

Telephone No.: (051) 389368

Type: Diocesan mixed national school, under the patronage of the Bishop and funded by the Department of Education

Enrolment: 43 pupils (2021/2022)

Description: Currently comprising of 3 class teachers and Principal (Special Education Teacher)

Scope of Policy

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. An original Substance Use Policy was drafted in 2003 and amended in 2005, 2007, 2011 and 2016. This latest revision is November 2021.

Aims of Policy

The aim of the substance use policy of St Catherine's NS 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. St Catherine's National School serves the community of Ballyhack which values and respects all children equally. We aspire to provide each pupil with the skills necessary to live a full and healthy life and to provide a safe environment within which these skills may be nurtured. Our Substance Use Policy attempts to make provision for these aspirations in line with current guidelines and recommendations.

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 teachers, parents, Board of Management members in formulating this policy.
- Including reference to substance use in the enrolment policy.
- Including reference to substance use in our Code of Discipline and School Rules.

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 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 1999 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) Report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among sixteen year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 29 ESPAD countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug misused in Ireland whilst the use of tobacco and other drugs was above the ESPAD average.

For the population as a whole, alcohol consumption per capita in Ireland has increased by 41% in the period 1989 to 1999, while the other EU Member States showed either a decrease or a modest increase. Ireland now has the second highest per capita consumption of alcohol in the E.U.

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

Implementation Procedures

Copies of the policy were distributed to Board of Management members for ratification in November 2021. When ratified and amended, copies were given to:

- All staff members
- Parents' Association
- All parents on enrolment
- School Community on request

Timeframe

This policy in its final draft was ready by November 2021. It was circulated to staff members, parents and Board of Management. This policy and its procedures will be reviewed annually each November.

Monitoring and Review Procedures

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. There will be an annual monitoring and review of procedures to be held in November each year. A copy of this policy will be issued to all staff members and a reminder of its contents will be given at the first staff meeting of each year.

The school wishes to make clear that the primary role of substance misuse prevention rests with the parents.

Education concerning substance use:

Education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs will be provided through the S.P.H.E. and Walk Tall programmes which are developmental and are delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment. This education will be provided through specific modules and/or special projects (e.g. Drug Awareness Journal). Available expertise from within the community will also be drawn upon where relevant (e.g. parents, Gardaí and Health Board).

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

Young people are most at risk in relation to substance use in recreational areas, on the way to and from school and at out of school related activities supervised by staff members.

A drug can be defined as a chemical, which causes change in the way the human body functions mentally, physically or emotionally. For the purpose of this policy we are concerned with drugs which the taker may become physically, or more often psychologically, dependent upon.

Categories of drugs include over the counter substances, high-caffeine content drinks, alcohol, tobacco and all other drugs. Spray deodorants are not allowed, roll-on deodorants are acceptable.

The term "school" and "school premises" refers to all people who use the building/grounds. This policy applies during school hours, tours, after-school hours use of premises and any occasion when the child is in the company of an adult/parent engaged in a school related activity. The school sees itself as having a role in the process of enabling students to increase control over and improve their health. We endeavour to promote the well being of students by:

1. Providing a safe and healthy environment.
2. Promoting positive health behaviours.
3. Increasing knowledge about health.
4. Promoting the self-esteem and self-awareness of students.
5. Working in partnership with the parents and pupils.

To this end, in response to the encroaching drug culture in our society we feel the need to implement a comprehensive policy to address the problem of substance misuse.

This policy will focus on:

1. Strategies for prevention of substance misuse problems i.e. Walk Tall, Grow in Love, Mindful Matters, S.P.H.E. and Drug Awareness Journals.
2. Procedures for dealing with drug incidences in the school.
3. Guidelines and information for teachers to improve their response to the problem of substance misuse.

This document should be read with the Code of Behaviour / Discipline Policy of the school.

SMOKING

School Policy:

- The school is a non-smoking area.
- Staff/students are not permitted to smoke, possess cigarettes on the school premises or in any other place during school hours and activities.
- Visitors will comply with the non-smoking policy.
- Pupils found smoking on school premises will be reported to the Principal and parents will be informed.
- Tobacco will not be permitted as a prize for school raffles.
- The child will be disciplined within the Discipline Policy.
- Class Teacher will address the problem under S.P.H.E. lesson.

ALCOHOL

School Policy:

- Staff not to be under influence of an intoxicant in the workplace.
- Pupils are not allowed to consume alcohol in school or during any school activities.
- Pupils may not bring alcohol onto the school premises for any purposes (e.g. raffles, etc.)
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of alcohol, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.

- Where a student comes to school under the influence of alcohol, their parents will be called in to take them home.
- Students breaking these rules will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary procedure.
- If a teacher suspects or is made aware of possible substance abuse by one of his/her pupils the Principal must be informed. Under the Child Protection Guidelines the matter will be referred to the Social Worker in the Health Board.
- If adults under the influence of alcohol, come to collect child/ren our staff are legally bound to take reasonable care of the child/ren and the adult will be encouraged to let a non-intoxicated adult take over. If the intoxicated adult refuses to co-operate the gardaí and health board will be informed.
- If it is suspected that a child is in possession of a banned substance all the children will be asked to remove the contents of their bags for inspection. If an illegal substance is recovered the Principal will inform the Gardaí and the health board.
- If alcohol is required for an adult only school function, permission shall be sought from the Board of Management.
- Alcohol will not be given to under-18's at the bottle stall on the Field Day and I.D. may be requested. A notice to this effect will be placed on the stall.

ILLICIT DRUGS AND SOLVENTS

School Policy:

- All persons are forbidden from being in possession of or using illicit drugs or solvents in the school premises.
- Illicit drugs found on school premises will be locked away and the Gardaí contacted to dispose of them. Teachers are advised not to transport illicit substances at any time.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Where the school suspects trafficking of illicit drugs, an investigation will be carried out. Parents of any student involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer will be sought.
- The school Board of Management will expect parents to inform the Principal or teacher if they suspect their child of drug taking.

An incident involving tobacco, alcohol and/or drug use may include referral to a support agency. In certain cases the Board may deem it necessary to seek legal advice.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS AND OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUGS

Children are not allowed to be in possession of any of the above. Parents may visit the school to administer same. If a child is found to be in possession of the above, the drugs will be confiscated and the parents informed. Any necessary medication must be handed into class teacher who will release this on an emergency basis only. Clear instructions and parental consent must accompany medication. This medication is stored in the staffroom at all times. Please note that this includes inhalers for asthma sufferers.

Incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use are addressed in the school's Code of Behaviour and the Enrolment Policy and 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 or illegal drugs.
- The sale or passing on of tobacco, alcohol or any illegal substance.
- The possession of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs on school grounds or at school related activities.
- Disposal of drugs or related items (e.g. syringes) found on school property.

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

- Step 1:** Witness to drug related incident informs teacher/staff member/Principal.
- Step 2:** Principal inform parents/guardians.
- Step 3:** Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management.
- Step 4:** Gardaí informed depending on seriousness of incident.
- Step 5:** Area Health Board/Gardaí informed for disposal of items.

Parents will be involved by accepting the school's Code of Behaviour and Enrolment Policies. They will be informed of an incident involving their own child and will be asked to

accept responsibility, co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardaí if necessary.

Parents will be involved in incidents involving another child only if deemed necessary by the school authorities; if parents are aware that another child is involved in drug-related incidents under the scope of this policy they should inform the teacher, Principal or a Board member.

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Ratify this policy.
- Implement this policy.
- Monitor and evaluate it.
- To sponsor/provide training for staff members.
- Make decisions involving critical incidents.
- To deal with the media in the event of a critical incident.

This policy puts the following procedures in place to deal with an incident requiring medical intervention:

- "Universal Precautions" will be applied; e.g. wearing of proper protective gloves etc., washing and making safe an area after an incident; provision of a yellow bin to dispose of needles or other drug related items.
- First Aid training has been given to staff members who are now qualified and certified to assist with medical emergencies.
- Copies of all relevant phone numbers are appended ([see Appendix 1](#)).
- A local doctor from a local practice has agreed to respond to a medical emergency in the school.
- Critical Incident Policy.

The school has established an excellent rapport with the local Garda station and will invite representatives from the local Garda station to speak with senior pupils. Whether or not to inform the Gardaí of minor incidents will be at the discretion of the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management, but they will be involved in any serious substance abuse incidents.

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

- N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous)
- Child Care & Family Support Services
- Drug Education Officer
- Drug Helpline - **1800 341 900**
- Juvenile Liaison Officer
- Community Garda

In the event of 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.

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 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 including the Principal/Deputy Principal 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 employees 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@yhics.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.

THE LEGISLATION INFORMING THIS POLICY INCLUDES:
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- Misuse of Drugs Act, 1977 and 1984
- Education Act, 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- Non-Fatal Offences against the Persons Act, 1997
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989
- Public Health (Tobacco) Act, 2002

Appendix 1

Important Contact Numbers

Drugs Advisory and Treatment Centre,
Trinity Court, 30/31 Pearse Street, Dublin 2.

01 677 1122