

S.N. Chnoc na Graí,



Substance Use Policy

The Substance Use Policy of Knocknagree National School

This policy addresses the education of children in relation to alcohol, tobacco, solvents and drugs and the procedures for managing incidents relating to these substances.

A drug can be defined as a chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels.

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. Our school needs to reflect on how we might provide for the needs of our pupils 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 EU.

The school authority in Knocknagree N.S. has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law. The central objective of our policy is the welfare, care and protection of every young person in line with the Education Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Knocknagree NS acknowledges that it has an important role to play in drugs education particularly in terms of prevention. We believe that the entire school community needs to work together and that cooperation is essential to the acceptance and implementation of the policy.

This policy links in with other policies in our school which include our Child Protection, Health and Safety and Code of Behaviour Policies.

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 the policy
- This policy should be read along with the Enrolment/Admissions policy and the Code of Behaviour

School Ethos

The school believes that the personal and social development of each member of the school community is important. Good relationships are fostered, people feel valued and respected and there is genuine tolerance, fairness and support for those in difficulty.

As a health promoting school we have an important role in enabling students to increase control over and improve their health.

The wellbeing of students is enhanced by:

- providing a safe and healthy environment
- promoting positive attitude towards health
- increasing knowledge about health
- actively promoting self-esteem and self-awareness
- working in partnership with the parents/guardians and pupils

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.

The Policy focuses on:

1. Strategies for the prevention of substance use problems, i.e. relevant topics are covered from Walk Tall, Grow In Love, Social Personal and Health education (SPHE) and dealt with in an age appropriate manner.
2. Managing drug related incidents in a planned manner.
3. Guidelines and information for teachers to improve their response to substance use.

This document should read with the Code of Behaviour of the school.

Education about the use of substances, prescription and over the counter drugs, alcohol, tobacco, solvents is best carried out by teachers thorough the inclusion of SPHE in the curriculum. Parents also have a pivotal role to play in this regard.

Goals/Objectives of the Policy:

The aim of the substance use policy of KnocknagreeN.S. 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

This policy also 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 of the Policy:

1. Education concerning substance use.
2. Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents.
3. Provision for training and staff development.

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.

Parents are informed that substance misuse prevention education is taught throughout the school as part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme and are notified when outside agencies deliver programmes or presentations to support substance misuse prevention education.

2.Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

The policy committee members believe that young people are most at risk in relation to substance use in Knocknagree N.S. in recreational areas, on the way to and from school and at out of school related activities supervised by staff members of Knocknagree N.S.

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 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 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.

3.Provision of Training for staff

An effective policy needs to be supported by an ongoing commitment from the Board of Management and School Trustees to training and staff development.

All staff will be offered drug information and awareness training.

Relevant courses, offered by the Department of Education and Science, will be offered to staff. Where and when available, First Aid Training will be made available to staff

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 unsuitable appliances
- 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
- Refer to Critical Incident Policy.

The Community Garda visits Knocknagree N.S. annually to speak with the 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/Tusla
- Drug Education Officer
- Drug Helpline
- Juvenile Liaison Officer
- Community Garda

1800 341 900

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 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) 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 counseling 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.

Implementation Procedures

Copies of the policy were distributed to Board of Management members for ratification on the _____ 2022. When ratified and amended, copies were made available to:

- All staff members
- Board of Management members
- School Community on request

Timeframe

This policy in its final draft was ready by the _____ 2022. It was circulated to staff members, parents and Board of Management by the _____ 2022 and procedures will be reviewed annually or when deemed necessary.

Monitoring and Review Procedures

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. 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. A Board of Management member has agreed to take responsibility to monitor procedures annually and ensure they are being adhered to.

Appendix 1

Important Contact Numbers

Drugs Advisory and Treatment Centre
Trinity Court, 30/31 Pearse Street, Dublin 2 01 677 1122

Drugs/AIDS Services:
South Western Area Health Board,
Bridge House, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10 01 620 6400

East Coast Area Health Board,
Centenary House, Dun Laoghaire 01 280 3335

Northern Area Health Board,
Phisboro Tower, Dublin 7 01 882 0300

Alcohol Services
East Coast Area Health Board:
Baggot Street Community Alcohol Treatment Unit 01 660 7838

