



Substance Misuse Prevention Policy

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Our Lady of Lourdes NS Substance Misuse Prevention Policy

Introduction

This policy was formulated by the staff of Our Lady of Lourdes NS in consultation with members of the Board of Management and Parents Association. The policy applies to pupils, teachers/staff, parents/guardians and users of the school at all times and to all school related activities.

Definition of a Drug

A drug can be defined as any chemical which causes changes in the way the human body functions mentally, physically or emotionally.

Rationale

Our Lady of Lourdes NS is a Health Promoting school and therefore we would endeavour to promote the wellbeing of pupils in a structured approach as part of Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) by:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment.
- Promoting positive health behaviours.
- Increasing knowledge about health.
- Promoting pupil's self-esteem.
- Working in partnership with parents/guardians and pupils
- Adopting a pro-active rather than a reactive approach.

Having a policy that offers guidance on managing an incident involving alcohol, tobacco or drug use will ensure that the school responds in a planned and considered way.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

Background:

Our school, Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. is situated in the parish of Ballinlough. It is a catholic school with pupils and a staff complement of teachers plus ancillary staff. It is situated in a suburban area and caters for pupils from Infants up to Sixth Class inclusive varying in ages from 4 to 12 or 13 years of age.

A group of teachers drew up this policy. Input from outside agencies was also received. Staff and the Board of Management reviewed the policy.

School Ethos

Our Lady of Lourdes NS manifests a strong sense of community within the school and promotes a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents. The positive ethos permeates the activities of the school, creating social inclusion and cohesion with a happy, learning environment.

The holistic development of our pupils to their full potential, spiritually, educationally, morally and physically is our focus in Our Lady of Lourdes NS. We would endeavour to help them to develop good skills with respect for themselves, their peers, parents/guardians, staff and the wider community. This school has a positive school climate and warm atmosphere. This enables pupils to have a sense of belonging to a group they can trust and in which their thoughts and feelings are valued.

Aims

This school is committed to providing a comprehensive Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs Education Prevention Programme for all pupils, which will be incorporated into the S.P.H.E. programme currently running in the school. Its main aims are outlined below.

- To increase the self-esteem and confidence of the young people.
- To equip the pupil's with personal and social skills.
- To enable the pupil's to make informed, healthy and responsible choices.
- To provide honest, age appropriate information on alcohol, tobacco and legal/illegal drugs.
- To minimise the harm caused by drug use by offering supportive interventions.

What is a Drug Related Incident?

The following are examples of a drug incident:

- Possession, selling or supplying alcohol, tobacco and legal/illegal drugs on the school premises or on a school related activity.
- School grounds being used for alcohol, tobacco and drug activity.
- Drug paraphernalia found on school property.
- Suspicion of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, possession or dealing.
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour.
- Disclosers about alcohol, tobacco or drug use, possession or dealing.
- Individuals under the influence of alcohol or drugs including emergency situations where the individual may be unconscious or seriously ill.

How do you spot drug taking?

Because the symptoms are similar a drug taker can be mistaken for someone who is merely off form.

However the following list provides a useful guide.

- Abnormally sleepy or drowsy.
- Sudden mood changes.
- Lack of concentration, memory loss, black-outs, hallucinations.
- Lack of interest in work, friends and hobbies.
- Keeping unusually late hours.
- Secrecy about activities and whereabouts.
- Telling lies and/ stealing.
- New and strange friends.
- Unusual smells, strains or marks on body and/or clothes.
- Unusual powders, capsules, tablets, syringes, needles and or scorched tin-foil.

It is important to consider all possibilities before concluding that someone is taking drugs.

The School Response to a Drug Incident

The response the school makes will address the needs of the student(s) involved, the other students and the school. The appropriate balance between care and discipline is essential. Incidents will need to be handled sensitively and issues of confidentiality will need to be addressed.

Assessing a Drug Incident

- Assess the situation and decide if the person involved is in an acute/emergency situation.
- In all cases it is important to assess whether the incident is confirmed or suspicious use/possession/supply of alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

Managing a Drug Incident

1. Who needs to be informed?

Details should be reported to relevant members of staff. The Principal, class teacher, parents/guardians and health services if necessary will be informed. The Principal will inform all parties of any drug incident. All details will be recorded on an Incident Report Form. In the event of a confirmed drug incident, the Principal will contact the Gardaí and the Juvenile Liaison Officer, in order to clarify what the legal position is and what support can be offered to the school. HSE may also be contacted in regard to the disposal of items.

2. Confidentiality:

The wellbeing and welfare of the young person will be the prime focus. Total confidentiality cannot be offered but the information will only be disclosed on a strict "need to know" basis.

3. Disciplinary:

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding alcohol, tobacco and drugs are broken the sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature and severity of the offence. These will be consistent with the school rules regarding other breaches of conduct. See *Enrolment & Admissions & Code of Behaviour*

The school acknowledges that in certain cases it may be necessary to seek legal advice.

4. Administration of Medicine:

The school must be informed in writing by parents or guardians of any special requirements that students may have regarding all medication. See *Administration of Medication Policy*.

Educational Programme

Education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs will be provided in the broader context of a S.P.H.E. Programme under Department of Education and Skills guidelines. This is a development programme and will be delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment. Furthermore, as a Health Promoting School the following educational programmes may be used as resources:

- Walk Tall
- Stay Safe
- Circle Time
- Outside Speakers (Only undertaken in the presence of a teacher)

The educational programme should aim to provide the pupil with a broad range of life skills and building up of self-esteem as well as age appropriate related knowledge about alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

Role of the Board of Management

- 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 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 a staff member who is now qualified and certified to assist with medical emergencies
- A local doctor from a local practice has agreed to respond to medical emergency in the school
- The Board of Management has devised a 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:

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| • N.A, Cork. (Narcotics Anonymous) | • HSE Drug Helpline |
| • Child Care & Family Support Services | • Juvenile Liaison Officer |
| • Drug Education 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.

Training and Staff Development

An effective policy needs to be supported by an ongoing commitment from the school community to training and staff development. The school has availed of Primary Curriculum In-Service to assist in delivering S.P.H.E. Programmes. Staff have also received training in the areas of "Walk Tall", R.S.E. and First Aid. The HSE has provided a wide range of supports to this school in relation to Health Promotion.

Parents/Guardians and Board of Management

On occasions the school will provide opportunities for parents to attend information evenings on issues relating to alcohol, tobacco and drugs use. Talks are given by the National Parent's Council, the local community Garda and the Drugs Liaison Officer. Other speakers who have expertise in this area may be employed to speak.

Pupils

The school will offer all its pupils an alcohol, tobacco and drugs education programme within the context of their S.P.H.E. classes.

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/SNA, 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 or any contractor 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. The Principal may need to make arrangements for that person to travel home, if they are under the influence of an intoxicant. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented.

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 (Freephone 24/7/365: 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 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.

Implementation Procedures

It will be available for the general school community on our school website.

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

The Principal will monitor aspects of the policy to ensure that it is practical benefit to the school.

The policy will be reviewed biannually or sooner in the light of changing information, development in the educational programme and feedback from parents/guardians or the local community.

Teachers/staff, parents/guardians, pupils and Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of this policy. The three main areas of the policy we will evaluate are:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs Education/Prevention Programme.
2. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug related incidents.
3. Training and Staff Development.

Dissemination & Communication of Policy

The BOM has been made aware of this policy and has examined it carefully before ratifying it. This policy was fully reviewed, approved and adopted by the Board of Management on
Each staff member will have access to a copy of this policy and the policy will be available to view for parents and the school community on our school website. All new entrants will be made aware of this policy at our open night.

Signed:

Mercedes Campion
MERCEDES CAMPION
Principal

Signed:

Mandy Fogarty
MANDY FOGARTY
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date:

16/7/21