

Substance Use Policy



St. Patrick's Senior National School,
Corduff, Blanchardstown,
Dublin 15.

School Substance Use Policy

Scope

This policy will apply to pupils, teachers, parents, visitors and to all users of the school building during school time and also during all school related activities (held in the school).

Vision

St. Patrick's is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school which strives to provide a well-ordered, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of our pupils are identified and addressed. As part of the S.P.H.E. programme we aim to instil in our pupils the confidence and life skills to make important decisions about drugs.

Rationale

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges that affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of this reality. We need to reflect upon how we might provide for the needs of our pupils and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.

Goals/Objectives

- To develop self confidence and a positive sense of self esteem in the pupils
- To develop a sense of personal responsibility in dealing with alcohol, tobacco and drugs
- To develop an understanding of healthy living
- To develop a sense of safety and ability to protect himself/herself from danger and abuse
- To develop an ability to make healthy decisions

Policy Content

Education concerning substance abuse

Education concerning substance use will be provided within the broad context of S.P.H.E. Three main resources will be used – The Walk Tall Programme, The Relationships and Sexuality Programme and the Bí Folláin programme. In our school planned lessons have been chosen from the above programmes under strands Myself, Myself and Others and Myself and the Wider World.

Teachers will choose a particular methodology depending on the objectives of the lesson, the needs and ability levels of the children and the resources available e.g. Drama, Co-operative games, pictures, photo, visual images, discussion and written activities. Classes in S.P.H.E. will be timetabled for one half hour per week.

The use of an outside speaker/visitor will always aim to enhance the work done in class in the context of the S.P.H.E. programme. Prior consultation with the class teacher will take place to ascertain that the visitor/speaker has suitable skills for the age-group and that the material to be delivered will be age-appropriate. When dealing with possible incidents, a pastoral approach will always be adopted.

Possible incidents covered in policy

- If children are taking over-the-counter medicines, only one dose should be brought to school
- Administration of medicines
- Storage/management of solvents in school
- Smoking: How do we deal with an incident? Fines/pastoral element
- Alcohol – Student, teacher, parent, visitor – procedure used
- Illicit substances
- Possession on school premises/school activity e.g. tours.
- Supply/selling alcohol, drugs, tobacco
- Finding substance /paraphernalia
- Suspected use / rumour
- Emergencies – person unconscious
- Disclosure about use – self or other person
- Person seeking help from staff member (Student, Parent, staff)
- School grounds being used

Medicines

Chemical solvents used for cleaning and operating machinery are stored in accordance with Health and Safety policy.

Administration of Medicines

Administration of Medicines to children with long term recurring health problems such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes and anaphylaxis.

- Clearly understood arrangements must be made for the administration of medicines **in writing and signed by the parents/guardians**.
- Parents will be encouraged to provide maximum support in helping the school accommodate the pupil.
- This would include measures such as self administration (where necessary and only after the approval from a G.P.) or under parental supervision.
- Where teachers have been given medication to administer in cases of emergency e.g. adrenaline in the case of anaphylaxis this medicine will be the smallest dose possible to ensure recovery until a medical expert can take over. Confirmation of this will be obtained from the medical practitioner responsible for the child before the school will agree to hold such a drug.
- Parents will be asked to outline clearly in writing, what can and cannot be done in a particular emergency situation.
- Parents will be asked to write to the Board of Management.
- A teacher should not administer medication without the specific authorisation of the Board.
- He/she should be properly instructed by the Board.
- In the event of the authorised teacher being absent an alternative arrangement will be made.
- The Board will inform the school's insurers accordingly.
- The Board will seek an indemnity in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of the medication.
- The Board will make arrangements for the safe storage of the medicine.

Medicines in General e.g. antibiotics

- No teacher can be required to administer medicine or drugs to a pupil.
- Where possible medicines should be taken outside of school hours.
- Any teacher willing to administer medicine will do so under strictly controlled guidelines as outlined above.

Accidents

- The situation will be assessed by the qualified First Aid person in the school.
- If necessary an ambulance will be called.
- The parents will be contacted.
- A teacher will accompany the child to hospital until a parent arrives.
- A record of the incident, people present and actions taken should be recorded in the accident book which is stored in the office.

Substances such as tippex, aerosol, deodorants, will be banned in the school. Only solvent-free markers will be used.

Responses to Incidents

Assessing a Drug Misuse Incident

It is important to assess the situation carefully before responding, except in cases of emergency.

Recording Procedure

In situations of confirmed use, possession, or supply, all details will be recorded and acted upon.

Managing a Drug Misuse Incident

The Principal, Class teacher and the person directly involved will be informed and the Principal will hold all written documentation.

The Principal will:

1. Set up a meeting as soon as possible with the relevant teachers, pupil and parents.
2. Agree the timing and venue of meeting.
3. Decide in consultation with relevant parties as to who else should attend.
4. Inform parents that they have an option of attending with a supportive friend.
5. Agree with parents on a course of action and disciplinary sanctions, if any.
6. Refer to appropriate services e.g. The Local Drugs Team.
7. In the case of an illegal drug, the Gardaí will be contacted.

In the event of non-agreement the matter will be referred to the Board of Management. The parents have the right of appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (section 28 of the Education Act).

Gardaí

Where deemed necessary the principal or a designated person will contact the Gardaí. Any illegal drugs found on the premises will be dealt with by the Gardaí.

Managing a drug related item e.g. needle found in the school environment.

- An instrument will be used to pick it up.
- It will be put into a tin can or other hard container.
- The Local Drugs Team or the Gardaí will be contacted.
- If a child picks it up, it is important to ascertain if he/she has been pricked by it and if so the child will be brought to hospital.

Counselling

A support system is our first response to a drug/substance misuse incident.

- In response to all incidents support will be offered.
- In the event of a serious problem referral to the appropriate service will be made.
- Parents and staff involved will be offered support.

Provision of Training and Staff Development

Staff

- The school will make available training to staff involved in delivering Social, Personal and Health Education programmes.
- All staff will be offered alcohol, tobacco and drug information and awareness training.

- This policy will be made available to all staff and adhered to in relation to managing alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents.
- All staff will be informed of all legal issues concerning this policy and its implications.
- Courses in First Aid will be offered to the staff.
- Some training will be provided for parents/guardians and teacher in the coming year.

Parents and Board of Management

- The school will provide opportunities for parents and members of the Board of Management to attend information meetings/workshops on issues relating to alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

The school in consultation with the wider community will monitor the policy to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the school. All observations will be recorded.

The three areas to be monitored are:

1. Managing Drug related incidents.
2. Alcohol, tobacco and drug education programmes.
3. Parents/guardians, staff and management training.

Evaluation

The policy will be evaluated every two years. Teachers, parents, board of management and other community groups will be involved. Any changes will be incorporated into the amended policy.

Dissemination of Policy

Copies of the policy will be distributed to the whole school community. It will also be freely available from the Principal's office. The policy will be available to all new staff and parents of new children as part of their induction to the school.

Record of drug-related situation

Name of pupil:

Class:

Date of incident:

Report form completed by:

Time of incident: am / pm

First Aid given? Yes No

Ambulance/
Doctor called? Yes No

Drug involved (if known):
(e.g. Alcohol, paracetamol, ecstasy)

Senior staff involved?
(insert name)

Parent/carer
Informed by:

First Aid given by:

Called by?
At time: am/pm

Sample found? Yes/No

Where retained:
(or) Destroyed at time: am/pm

Witness name:
at time: am/pm

Brief description of symptoms/situation:

(continue on blank sheet if necessary)

Other action taken: (e.g. other agency involved; Ed. Psych. Report requested; C/Conf called; pupils/staff informed; sanction imposed; GP/Police consulted about drug)

(continue on blank sheet if necessary)

Drug Situation – medical emergencies

The procedures for an emergency apply when a child or young person or others are at immediate risk of harm. A person who is unconscious, having trouble breathing, seriously confused or disoriented or who has taken a harmful substance, should be responded to as an emergency.

Your main responsibility is for any pupil at immediate risk, but you also need to ensure the well-being and safety of others. Put into practice your school's first aid procedures. **IF IN DOUBT, CALL MEDICAL HELP.**

Always:

- Assess the situation
- If a medical emergency, send for medical help and ambulance

Before Assistance Arrives:

If the person is conscious:

- Ask the person what has happened and to identify any drug used
- Collect any drug sample and any vomit for medical analysis
- **Do not** induce vomit
- Keep the person under observation, warm and quiet

If the person is unconscious:

- Ensure that the person can breathe and place in recovery position
- **Do not** move if a fall is likely to have led to spinal or other serious injury which may not be obvious
- **Do not** give anything by mouth
- **Do not** attempt to make the person sit or stand
- **Do not** leave the person unattended or in the charge of another pupil

When Medical help arrives:

- Pass on any information available including vomit and any drug samples

Please complete an Emergency Record Form as soon as you have dealt with the emergency.
Appendix:

Support Services

- National Education Psychological Services (N.E.P.S.)
- Corduff Child and Family Clinic, Warrenstown House
- Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health and Children
- Director of Public Health – Health Board 1800 520520 6790700
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Corduff/ Mulhuddart Local Task Force
- Blanchardstown drugs Education Resource Centre, Coolmine
- Teacher Counselling Service – Contact I.N.T.O.
- Walk Tall Support
- S.P.H.E. Cuiditheoir

The following are the members of the working group that formulated this policy.

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