

St. Mochulla's



Substance Use Policy

Substance Use

Introduction

This policy is relevant to students, teachers, parents and to users of the school building to whom it applies. It is applicable to all school related activities.

Vision

St. Mochulla's is a co-educational, Catholic Primary School which strives to provide a caring, happy and secure environment where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral, social and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and address.

Motto : Oiliúint agus Omós
Training and respect.

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.

Rationale

The characteristic spirit of the school has been developed and agreed with the partners in education as we are dedicated to the welfare of our school community and in providing a caring, happy, secure environment. The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which effect 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 students 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 pupils 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 misuse policy in place.

The Board of Management of St. Mochullas has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.

Aims

The substance use policy of St Mochulla's is intended to heighten awareness among the school community of drug use. 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.

Definition of Drug : ' A drug is any chemical which alters how the body or mind works or how the person behaves or feels'.

Policy content

Education concerning substance use in St Mochulla's will be provided within the broad context of SPHE through our SPHE policy/plan.

Considerations which inform the selection of content and methodologies include, the Walk Tall Programme, Grow in Love, Visiting speakers, our SPHE Policy and Active learning.

Approaches to co-ordinate, involve teachers and allocate time include choosing 5 strand units bi-annually, half hour allocated time per week, school climate and atmosphere and integration.

Other considerations, include, SPHE, as on going in our school and incorporated into all aspects of school life.

Due care will be important in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use may include referral to a support agency.

Management of alcohol, tobacco, drug-related incidents.

Young people are most at risk in relation to substance use in St. Mochulla's in the area of solvents, aerosols, tobacco and alcohol.

Incidents relating to (a) **alcohol**, (b) **tobacco** and (c) **drug uses are** addressed in the school's **Code of Behaviour by the following procedures.**

Alcohol/Tobacco/Illegal drug incidents involving pupils:

1. Confiscate
2. Contact DLP
3. Contact parents
4. Decide appropriate action with parents.
5. (Contact Gardai and follow legislation where necessary).

Repeated incidents will be dealt with by contacting TUSLA under Child Protection and Safeguarding..

Alcohol /Illegal Substance Incidents involving staff.

1. Bring member of staff to staff room.
2. Bring home.
3. Discuss the next day.
4. Repeated incidents will be reported to BOM.

Alcohol/Illegal Substance involving parents/guardians:

When a parent in an intoxicated state arrives to collect a child from the class the following guidelines are suggested :

- Class teachers consult with Principal.
 - Isolate parent from class.
 - Speak with Parent and express concerns.
 - Offer any of the following solutions.
1. To contact any other family member.
 2. To contact neighbour.
 3. Provide tea/coffee.
 4. Provide alternative travel arrangements.
 5. If parent refuses to co-operate the Principal contacts Gardai, and informs Parent.

The finding of possible illegal substances on school ground/premises:

- a. Put on gloves and remove to a secure location in the school.
- b. Contact gardaí to come and collect/act on gardaí advice.

If the dealing of illegal drugs is suspected in the school, an investigation will be carried out. Parents of any students involved will be informed and the advice and assistance of the local J.L.O. of the gardaí will be sought.

The school's shared understanding of a 'drug related incident' is any person who abuses a drug as defined in the policy. The finding of an illegal substance, or a person found in possession of an illegal substance.

The role of Board of Management/Trustees is to be involved in policy formation and supportive of the action.

Incidents requiring medical intervention will be dealt with under policy number 100. Where necessary, Gardaí will be involved in 'drug related incidents'.

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

- Their GP
- Health Promotion
- Officer, Juvenile Liaison Officer

The principal/chairperson is designated to respond to the media in relation to 'drug related incidents' they may be enquiring about.

Provision for training and staff development.

The shared understanding among the staff regarding the contribution that an SPHE programme can make to the prevention of substance misuse is that the most successful results will be attained through school/home co-operation.

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 and by following the School SPHE Plan.

Staff members have been made sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse by their Walk Tall Training.

Staff members are aware of laws relating to alcohol, tobacco, and drug use and how they relate to themselves, to the school and the students.

Further training needs we may have in relation to the implementation of the substance use policy include:

- a. Visit by a cuiditheoir from PDST where staff would be made aware of most recent legislation and the substance use policy up-graded. This service, provided by the local Education Centre.
- b. Further training in relation to the signs and symptoms of drug use.
to be provided by Health agencies, Education Centre.

Training can be accessed from : Clare Education Centre, The Health Board, PDST

New staff, in particular will be briefed on the substance use policy of the school by providing them with a copy of the policy.

Parent education on S.P.H.E. and issues relating to substance misuse will be promoted in the school community by issue of this policy.

In the past we have had guest speakers from the "Walk Tall" programme and the "Stay Safe" programme.

Success Criteria

The following indicators will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the substance use policy:

- A greater awareness of drug use among the school community.
- Staff knowing and following the said procedures.

The policy will come into force with immediate effect. It will be subject to review as circumstances change.

Implementation Programme

A copy of the policy will be available on the school website.

Implementation and review.

This policy is a working document and will be reviewed every two years by the Board of Management, Principal and staff of the school.

Update and review.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management of St. Mochulla's at its meeting on September 30th 2020.

Signed: *Angela Byrnes* (Chairperson Board of Management)