SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

St. Patrick's Boys' N.S.
Dublin Road, Limerick Roll no: 16443A

Introduction

This policy was developed by the staff, parents and Board of Management of St Patrick's Boys N.S

St Patrick's Boys National School is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to substance use, noting that a drug is 'any substance that changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally'. The school recognises that drugs, both legal and illegal, are available in the wider community and that the school, as part of the community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, and of supporting those who are affected by drugs. The school proposes to work closely with parents/guardians to implement this policy, to ensure their child's health and safety. It is emphasised that the primary role of substance misuse and prevention rests with the pupils' parents/guardians.

Scope

This policy applies to parents, pupils, all staff in St Patrick's Boys N. S., the Board of Management as well as persons involved in school related activities.

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. St Patrick's Boys N.S. aims to provide for the needs of our pupils and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.
- The Education Act (1998) states that schools should promote the social, personal and health development of children.
- The National Drugs Strategy 'Building on Experience' is Government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.

Relationship to School Ethos, Mission Statement & Vision

As stated in the school's mission statement, St Patrick's Boys N.S. is committed to enabling children to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, social, cultural and physical potential. Our school believes that education flourishes in an environment where positive relationships are encouraged, where people feel valued and respected and where there is genuine tolerance, fairness and support for those in difficulty. This philosophy underpins and informs all the work we do and is central to this policy document.

St Patrick's Boys National School endeavours to promote the well-being of students by:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment.
- Promoting positive healthy behaviour.

- Increasing knowledge about health.
- Promoting self-esteem and self-awareness of students.
- Working in partnership with parents and pupils

Policy Content:

1. Education Concerning Substance Use.

- Education concerning substance use will be provided in the broad context of a Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as outlined in our SPHE School Policy, specifically the Walk Tall programme.
- Grow in Love Programme
- Use of an outside speaker/ visitor to enhance the work done in class e.g. Gardaí, Health Board Personnel.

2. Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug-related incidents

2.1 Alcohol

- The school is an alcohol free area. If alcohol is required for an adult only school function, permission shall be sought from the Board of Management.
- Pupils are not permitted to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school activities.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a pupil is under the influence of alcohol, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Where a pupil comes to school under the influence of alcohol, his/ her parents will be contacted and asked to take him/ her home.
- School's disciplinary procedure to be invoked where considered necessary.
- Parents may be advised to seek referral for child to an appropriate support agency.
- Confidentiality to be respected by teachers concerned notwithstanding obligations to liaise with Garda Siochána and HSE where necessary.
- All media inquiries regarding the use of alcohol by pupils to be referred to the Principal.

2.2. Tobacco

- The school premises is a no-smoking area. The school operates a ***No Smoking Policy*** in accordance with present national legislation.
- Pupils are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes/e cigarettes on the school premises or at any school related activity.
- Visitors will comply with the no-smoking policy

- Staff should not smoke in view of pupils either in school or on outside school activities including sporting events and school tours.
- Pupils found smoking on school premises will be reported to the principal and parents will be informed.
- School's disciplinary procedure to be invoked where considered necessary.
- Confidentiality to be respected by teacher notwithstanding obligations to liaise with Garda Síochána where necessary.

2.3. Illicit Drugs and Solvents

- Pupils are forbidden from being in possession of or using illicit drugs in the school premises or at any school related activity.
- Illicit drugs found on school premises should be locked away and the Garda contacted immediately to take possession of them.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a pupil is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Parents of pupils involved will be informed and the advice and assistance of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer will be sought.
- Where the school suspects trafficking/ selling illicit drugs, Chairperson of BOM will be informed. Parents of any pupil involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer will be sought. HSE will be informed where appropriate.
- Where illegal substances are involved, the Gardaí Juvenile Liaison Officer will automatically be involved. The Board of Management will be notified.
- The B.O.M expects parents to inform the principal if they suspect their child of drug taking.
- School's disciplinary procedure to be invoked where considered necessary.
- Parents may be advised to seek referral for child to an appropriate support agency.
- All media enquiries regarding the use of illicit drugs and solvents to be referred to the Principal.

- If an incident occurs when children speak inappropriately about misuse of any substance teachers will seek to redress the situation through the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme.

2.4. Adults:

- No member of staff should present themselves for work under the influence of alcohol or an illicit drug.
- A staff member presenting under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be allowed take part in his/her normal duties. The matter will be referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management to be dealt with in accordance with DES procedures.

- Any concern a staff member may have regarding a Parent or Guardian related to substance misuse will be brought to the attention of the Principal.
- A parent or other adult presenting under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be afforded an interview with any member of staff. He/she will be asked to leave the premises by the principal. Failure to do so will result in the Gardaí being called. A formal letter of complaint will be issued by the Board of Management in such instances and where necessary a legal injunction will be sought to prevent a re-occurrence of such an incident.

Confidentiality

It is important that the limits of confidentiality are made clear to pupils making a disclosure with regard to substance use. The well-being of the child and teacher must be a primary focus. It is important that in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents that a limited number of people are involved in managing the incident. People will be informed on a 'need to know' basis.

Media

The Principal will handle all media enquiries. There will be no comment on individual cases, refer to the school policy and procedures in place.

Disciplinary Procedures

The school aims to respond to incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use in a planned and considered way. In certain cases, it may be necessary to seek legal advice. Due care will be important in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. An appropriate pastoral response to an incident may include referral to a support agency. It should be stressed that the ultimate sanction of expulsion can have the effect of alienating a student from mainstream sources of help and may result in this student becoming more involved in the culture of drug misuse.

The administration of medicine to pupils during school hours is covered by the school policy on same.

Provision for Training and Staff Development

The B.O.M is committed to training and staff development. At present, the school is assisted by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and Walk Tall Support Office. HSE also provides support. Staff members are encouraged to avail of in-service provision with a view to becoming sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the signs

and symptoms of substance misuse.

Success Criteria and Monitoring Procedure

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

In order to gauge the effectiveness of the policy, instances of substance misuse will be recorded, investigated and studied by the parties concerned, maintaining confidentiality in respect of identities of pupils concerned.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Teaching staff, Parents and Board of Management collaborate and support each other in the development, implementation and evaluation of this policy.

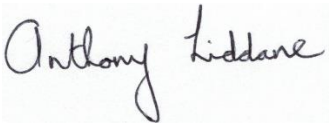
Review

The policy will be reviewed every three years. All the stakeholders will be involved in the review.

Ratification:

This reviewed policy was ratified by the Board of Management on

03/03/2022

Signed: Signed 

(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: 03/03/2022

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