



St. Brigid's B.N.S.
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Substance Use Policy

Introduction

The School Position:

St. Brigid's B.N.S. is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs. The school community consists of pupils, teachers, ancillary staff, Board of Management, parents, guardians, visitors and all personnel working in the school. The school is part of our local community. Both legal and illegal drugs are part of community life. The school acknowledges that it has an important role to play in drugs education, both in terms of prevention, and in offering support to those who come in contact with drugs.

Parents are encouraged to support the school's efforts to educate pupils in substance misuse prevention and to manage substance use incidents.

Definition:

"A drug is any substance which changes how the body functions, mentally, physically, emotionally". When we talk about drugs in this policy, we are including legal and illegal drugs.

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. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their student cohort 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, Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery: a health-led approach to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025' is now Government policy. It recommends actions such as supporting Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) by promoting effective communications between schools and Drug and Alcohol Task Forces.
- The 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 years olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 29 ESPAD countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland whilst the use of tobacco and other drugs was above the ESPAD average.
- The policy will enable the school to provide suitable age-appropriate education for our pupils on the subject of drugs.
- The policy will enable the school to respond appropriately to an issue involving alcohol, tobacco and other legal and illegal drugs.

Relationship to School Ethos:

This policy is informed by and in harmony with our school ethos. We aim to develop each child personally, academically, socially and spiritually. The development of each child's self-esteem is of prime importance. We aim to provide a safe and secure environment for all pupils as well as the wider school community.

Aims:

The aims of our Substance Use Policy are as follows:

- The development of a framework for education concerning substance abuse.
- The development of a framework for the management of alcohol, tobacco and drugs related incidents.
- The provision for training and staff development

Objectives:

The objectives of this policy are as follows:

- To develop positive self-esteem in our pupils and to give them the confidence, skills and knowledge necessary to make healthy life choices.
- To help the children to appreciate their worth and the worth of others. To establish in the children a sense of responsibility for themselves and others.
- To help the children to develop strategies to assist in the prevention of substance misuse.
- To provide staff training in the various education programmes which relate to substance abuse.
- To provide information for parents in relation to substance abuse. (See Appendix 1)
- To ensure that the school has correct procedures in place for dealing with any substance misuse incident which may arise in the school.

Policy Content:

The policy focuses on four areas

- Education regarding Substance Use
- Management of substance-related issues in the school
- Training and staff development
- Review and evaluation

Education regarding Substance Use

A comprehensive and integrated alcohol, tobacco and drug education programme, is provided for all students from Junior Infants to Sixth classes. It is delivered through the Social, Personal and Health Education programme (SPHE). Through SPHE which is spiral in nature and also integrates well with many other curricular areas, our pupils practise and develop specific skills. The content objectives relating to substance use are addressed in an age appropriate manner which supports primary prevention in a holistic, caring and nurturing environment.

Our programme draws on a wide range of resources- Walk Tall, Stay Safe Programme, RSE Programme as well as the Grow in Love programme. Sometimes it may be appropriate to use outside speakers to supplement or reinforce the work done in school. In these cases, the school will take care to ensure that the talk be age and developmentally appropriate, and that the class teacher see and approve the content in advance. The speaker should have experience of working with young people, and the class teacher will be present while the talk is being delivered. If the need arises, the school will facilitate and support an information meeting for parents.

Management of drug-related incidents:

St. Brigid's B.N.S. does not accept the possession, use, or supply of drugs, legal or illegal in the school, or on school trips. The only exceptions are for legitimate medical use, where the B.O.M. has been informed and authorised their use. An Administration of Medicine Form must have been received from the parent and prior approval given by the BOM. before any medicines can be administered by school staff.

All cleaning agents on school premises are stored in a locked environment.

If a staff member or other adult were to come to the school under the influence of alcohol or other substances, the Principal would take appropriate action. 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 for that pupil. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the pupil and safeguard their best interests.

Incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use are addressed in the school's Code of Behaviour. The response will always be in line with a pastoral welfare approach, and the best interests of the child will be paramount.

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

It is important that a limited number of people are involved in managing a suspected or confirmed drug related incident. People will be informed on a 'need to know' basis. Parents/guardians will be involved unless reporting would pose a threat to the child.

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

Step 1: Witness to drug/alcohol related incident informs the Principal and the incident will be documented, signed and dated.

Step 2: The Principal will inform parents/guardians if it is a pupil related incident

Step 3: Principal informs Chairperson of the Board of Management

Step 4: The Gardaí will be informed depending on seriousness of the incident

Step 5: The H.S.E (TUSLA) may also be informed.

Follow-Up Procedures:

Guidance and support will be given to pupils and parents on the availability of specialist advice from relevant support agencies. (See **Appendix 1**)

Training and Staff Development:

The Board of Management has an ongoing commitment to training and staff development. At present the school is assisted in this by the PDST. The HSE also provides a wide range of supports for schools including Health Education and Health Promotion programmes. The school is also able to draw on contributions from local Gardaí and Junior Liaison Officers.

At all times teachers are encouraged to:

- Appreciate the contribution that the SPHE programme can make to the prevention of substance abuse
- Develop a supportive classroom environment - Be aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse
- Become aware of the laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they relate to themselves and their students

If parents require further information, advice, or training, the school can be the conduit between the Parents' Association (or individual parent) and an appropriate agency who will provide the service.

Reviewing and Evaluating the Policy:

Review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information, legislation, development in the school-based programme and feedback from parents/guardians, teachers and students. The school may also consult with the wider school community including the Gardaí, community and support agencies in reviewing this policy.

Review/Ratification/Implementation:

The policy was reviewed, ratified and implemented by the Board of Management in November 2021.

Signed: *Seán Moran*

Chairperson – Board of Management

Date: *24th November 2021*

APPENDIX 1

SUPPORT AGENCIES:

Health Board Services in the Eastern Region

Freephone Drugs/HIV Helpline 1800 459 459

PDST 01 435 8587

Coolock Primary Care Centre 01 8160366

National Drug Treatment Centre 01 648 8600

Trinity Court, 30-31, Pearse Street, Dublin 2

HIV Ireland 01 873 3799

70 Eccles Street, Phibsboro Tower, Dublin 7.

Alcohol Action Ireland 01 878 0610

Baggot Street Community Alcohol Treatment Unit

TUSLA 01 7718500

MEDICAL SUPPORT INFORMATION

Beaumont Hospital 01 809 3000

Mater Misericordiae Hospital 01 803 2000

Garda Siochána

Clontarf Garda Station

01 666 4800

Raheny Garda Station

01 666 4300

Dublin North East Drugs and Alcohol Task Force 01 846 5070