

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

Introductory Statement

The policy was drafted as a result of consultation between staff, B.O.M., Parents Association and pupils.

Rationale

It is necessary to devise a policy on substance use at this time in consideration of the following;

- The National Drugs Strategy, 'Building on Experience', is now Government Policy and it requires schools to have a drugs policy in place (Action 43)
- The recent report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drug Use Prevention' underlines the importance of schools developing drugs policies.
- To develop a shared understanding of the term 'drugs' and to define the school's agreed position in relation to drug related issues.
- To equip the school to deal with issues relating to substance misuse in a planned and considered way and in accordance with their statutory responsibilities
- To assist teachers in their classroom experience

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

We see St Brendan's P. S. as a place where pupils enjoy learning in an atmosphere of contentment, fulfillment, respect and positive affirmation. We encourage curiosity, cooperation and active participation so that pupils will appreciate their own worth as physical and spiritual beings and of their potential contribution to society. Central to this philosophy must be the creation of a secure and safe environment for learning and the provision of support for those experiencing difficulties.

- This understanding of the school ethos has been developed and agreed with the partners in the school community (teachers, parents/guardians, pupils, trustees/ Board of Management) through the involvement of the partners in the development and delivery of school policy.
- The school ethos is expressed in the day-to-day working of the school and in respect of all school activities.
- The school climate is a supportive one where the needs and well-being of all members of the school community are considered and respected including those students who may be particularly vulnerable.

Aim

- We hope the implementation of this policy will ensure the welfare, care and protection of every young person as provided for in the Education Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.
- We wish to ensure that the school complies with legislative requirements and principles of good practice.
- We wish to make a contribution, in the area of education and prevention through the SPHE programme.

- We wish to minimise the dangers caused to children by drug misuse and drug misusers within schools/communities
- We wish to manage drug related incidents in a planned manner
- We wish to support parents and pupils in addressing drug misuse.

Guidelines (content of policy)

The substance use policy will address issues in relation to

- 1. Current provision regarding alcohol, tobacco, and drug education**
- 2. Current practice in relation to drug use**
- 3. The management of alcohol, tobacco and substance-related incidents**
- 4. Relevant legislation**
- 5. Training and Staff Development**
- 6. Parental Involvement**

General:

This policy applies to all students, teachers, parents and all who use our school premises. It applies to all periods during school time whether in classrooms or recreation grounds and to all school related activities.

The school does not accept the possession, use or supply of drugs, alcohol and tobacco on the premises or grounds, by any member of the school community. The only exception is for legitimate medicinal (essential long term) use. In such cases the school has to be informed by the parent/guardian and must furnish to the school, written verification from authorised medical personnel.

Under our Health and Safety policy the school also ensures that all medicines/chemicals/solvents/cleaning agents/aerosols etc. are stored in a safe and appropriate manner.

Any breaches of these policies will be dealt with under the code of discipline for pupils/code of behaviour for teachers (Teaching Council/INTO/Dept. of Ed).

1. Current provision regarding alcohol, tobacco, and drug education

- Education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs will be provided in the broader context of a Social, Personal and Health Education Programme?
- SPHE includes a component on drug education? (The programme is school-based, developmental and delivered as recommended in the SPHE Curriculum for primary schools.)
- Education concerning substance use will be provided – through specific modules, and integration with existing subjects across the curriculum. Where relevant, such education will also be dealt with through specific programmes such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall, R.S.E. and 'The Copping On' programme.
- Time allocation will be in accordance with the provisions of the S.P.H.E. programme.
- Outside visitors/speakers will be invited to enhance the work done in class in the context of the full SPHE programme. Where possible recommendations for such speakers will be sought from H.S.E. or Gardai.
- Visitors contribute to drug education in the context of a supportive school environment.

- Visitors will have a specific focus on the particular need as assessed by the Principal. There is a special duties post allocated to administering and monitoring such visits.
- Visitors work will be undertaken in the presence of a teacher where appropriate.
- Information on alcohol, tobacco and drug education is disseminated through the S.P.H.E. programme.
- The whole school environment is supportive of a drugs policy as it is supportive of all school policies.

2. Current practice in relation to drug use

- The school understands 'drugs use' to mean;
'Any substance which changes the way the body functions – mentally, physically or emotionally'; 'A drug is any chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels'.
- The school is aware of the level and range of drug use in the immediate community and environs of the school.
- The school promotes awareness with the assistance of the Gardai, Health Board or other relevant agencies
- The school has links with the Gardai Liaison Officer and Local Health Nurse.
- The staff believes the school has a realistic and balanced approach to drug issues.
- The policy is aimed at students, teachers, parents/guardians, and all users of the school building.

3. The management of alcohol, tobacco and substance-related incidents

- Types of incident which are likely to occur may be as follows;
Use or suspected use on the school premises
Intoxication/unusual behaviour
Disclosure about use
Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia
Possession and/or supply on the school premises or during a school-related activity
Use and/or supply off the school premises
- An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use may include a referral to a support agency. While it may be necessary to use the sanction of expulsion care will be taken to avoid the alienating of a pupil from mainstream sources of help, which may result in this pupil becoming more involved in the culture of drug misuse.
- The school policy will seek to inform teachers about issues relating to confidentiality and appropriate reporting procedures.
- The school will clarify an agreed procedure for involving parents/guardians, liaising with Gardai, and responding to media inquiries.
- It is the school view that situations and locations in which young people are most at risk in relation to drug use will occur in the wider community and off the school premises.
- At present incidents relating to (a) alcohol, (b) tobacco and (c) drug misuse are currently considered as contravening the school's code of behaviour and are dealt with accordingly.

- The school staff have a shared understanding of 'a drug related incident'.
- The reporting procedure for such incidents is the notification of the Principal.
- Parents be involved in incidents involving their own child through a process of information and consultation.
- Where appropriate parents will be consulted re incidents relating to an accusation against another child.
- In the event of serious incident outside medical help will immediately be sought.
- Students involved in substance misuse may be referred to the H.S.E. or its agents after consultation with their parents or guardians.
- The principal or Chairperson of the B.O.M. are designated to respond to the media.
- As far as possible the school will follow up on incidents, which may take place.
- The Board of Management through its agent the Principal is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the policy.

4. Relevant Legislation

The laws that are most relevant to the school are:

- Misuse of Drugs Acts, 1977 and 1984. Offences under these acts include Possession with intent to supply and Possession for personal use.
- There are other laws controlling tobacco, alcohol, solvents and medicines.

5. Training and Staff Development

- As far as possible staff will avail of training and information evenings provided.
- Teachers will be asked to become familiar with the contents of the NDP 'Handbook For Teachers' Understanding Substances and Substance Use.
- There is a shared understanding of the contribution that an SPHE programme can make to the prevention of drug misuse.
- All staff are aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of drug misuse within their own classrooms (e.g. by developing a supportive class/school environment).
- It is the responsibility of all staff to make themselves aware of all policies including the substance abuse prevention policy of the school. These policies are available for inspection in the principal's office.

6. Parental Involvement

- As with other aspects of the Curriculum Parents/Guardians are to be made aware of and informed of what is happening in the school with regard to both drug education and policy.
- Through the cooperation of the Parents' Association Information evenings may be held from time to time to educate and inform on issues relating to drug misuse.

Success Criteria

Indicators of the success of the policy will be as follows;

- Awareness by the pupils of the consequences of substance, alcohol abuse and tobacco consumption for their physical and emotional health of themselves and others.
- Feedback from teachers, pupils, parents/ community/Gardai/Health Boards/others
- Reduction of incidents relating to substance misuse
- Efficient and sensitive dealing with any incidents, which arise.

Roles and Responsibility

The school wishes to make clear that the primary role of substance misuse prevention rests with parents. In the school context the responsibility for the development, implementation and evaluation of this policy rests with the teaching staff, under the guidance of the B.O.M. and supported by the Parents' Association.

Implementation Date

These procedures will apply from September 2008

Timetable for Review

The operation of the new procedures will be reviewed every two years and, if necessary, amended. in the light of changing information, legislation, or feedback from parents/guardians/pupils/teachers/community/ Gardai/ Health Boards.

Ratification & Communication

The B.O.M. ratified the policy on ----/----/---- Members of the school community and new applicants are informed of the existence and availability of the policy on enrolment.

Reference Section

- Curriculum books for SPHE
- Building on Experience National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation
- Guidelines for developing a School Substance Use Policy. DES
- Facts about Drug Abuse in Ireland compiled by Dr Des Corrigan Department of Health and Children
- Primary Curriculum. Your child's learning. Guidelines for Parents
- NCCA Draft Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities, 2002
- Looking at our School. 2003, DES
- Map of SPHE Resources for Primary Schools. North Eastern Health Board
- Relationships & Sexuality Education in Catholic Schools. Veritas
- Relationships and Sexuality Education. A Partnership Between Home and School. DES
- Walk Tall. Programme for the Prevention of Substance Misuse
- On My Own Two Feet DES
- Substance Misuse Prevention Information Booklet DES 1997
- Bí Folláin. A Programme for Social & Personal Education for Primary School. Standard Printers
- Primary School Health Education Programme. Health Education Office. Donegal.
- Action for Life. Irish Heart Foundation
- Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures. 2001, DES
- Children First. National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children. 1999, Dept. of Health and Children
- Our Duty to Care. Dept. of Health and Children
- Stay Safe Programme. Health Promotion Unit. Dept. of Health & Eastern Health Board
- Be Safe. National Safety Council
- Quality Circle Time in the primary classroom. Jenny Mosley
- Working towards a Whole School Policy on Self-Esteem & Positive Behaviour. Jenny Mosley
- Stop it! Steps to address bullying. Wexford Education Network
- Responding to Bullying. First Steps for Teachers. The Cool School Programme. NEHB
- Investigating and Resolving Bullying in School. Further Steps for Teachers. NEHB
- INTO Intercultural Guidelines for Schools
- Trócaire – Development Education resources
- Bereavement Counselling for Children. Barnardos
- Responding to Critical Incidents – Advice and Information Pack for Schools, National Educational Psychological Service

▪ Websites

PCSP	www.pcsp.ie	NPC Primary	www.npc.ie
DES	www.education.ie	Department of Health and Children	
NCCA	www.ncca.ie	Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation	www.tourism-sport.ie
SDPS	www.sdps.ie		www.nacd.ie
INTO	www.into.ie		
IPPN	www.ippn.ie		