

# **Substance Use Policy**

## **St. Thomas National School, Peterswell**

"A drug can be defined as a chemical, which causes changes in the way the human body functions mentally, physically or emotionally. For the purpose of this policy we are concerned with drugs which have the power to change a previous mood and the way a person thinks about things and drugs on which the taker may become physically or more often psychologically dependent".

### **Introductory Statement:**

This policy was drafted under the guidance of an S.P.H.E. cuiditheoir on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2009 and updated by staff in March 2019.

### **Scope:**

This policy applies to students, teachers, parents/carers and visitors and users of the building. It is applicable to school time, including breaks, and out of hours functions/meetings in the vicinity of the school building and grounds and on educational tours.

### **Rationale:**

We are devising this policy in order to comply with the Education Act, to aid students in making healthy choices, to provide all parties with information, guidelines and strategies to make these choices and to heighten awareness of the rising level of substance abuse in today's society.

### **Aims:**

1. To provide a safe and healthy environment
2. To promote positive health behaviours
3. To increase knowledge about health
4. To promote the self-esteem and self-awareness of students
5. To work in partnership with the parents and pupils.

### **Relationship to school mission statement/philosophy/vision:**

This policy ties in very much with our vision for the holistic development of the child and with the foundation of our SPHE plan.

### **Procedures and Guidelines:**

Procedures and Guidelines may be divided into 3 categories

- (i) Education regarding substance use
- (ii) Management of misuse incidents
- (iii) Training and staff development
- (iv) Education regarding substance Misuse

### **Education of Pupils**

Education concerning substance use in our school will be provided within the broad context of SPHE through the SPHE plan through the strands of 2 year cycle.

Considerations which inform the selection of content and methodologies include the class groupings and the individual needs of the children. Walk Tall Programme will be used which promotes active learning.

Approaches to co-ordinate, involve teachers and allocate time include integrated learning and the 30 minute discrete SPHE and Circle Time per week.

Other considerations include project work and guest speakers to the school.

- **Education of Parents**

Parents education on SPHE and issues relating to substance misuse will be promoted in the school community by encouraging involvement in SPHE homework, trying to establish a link with Secondary feeder schools, parent information nights or having leaflets available for parents.

- **Education of Board of Management**

The BOM will make arrangements for the safe storage of substances in use in the school (e.g. solvents, paint, glue, etc.) as laid out in the Health and Safety Statement.

- (ii) **Management of misuse incidents**

Young people are most at risk to alcohol and tobacco misuse in relation to substance misuse in our school.

**General Rules about Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug-Related Incidents:**

- The school is a restricted smoking area and alcohol free area.
- Students are not permitted to smoke/drink alcohol or possess cigarettes/alcohol on the school premises
- Visitors will comply with the smoking policy
- Pupils found smoking/drinking alcohol on school premises will be dealt with according to the school's Code of Behaviour
- Tobacco will not be permitted as a prize for school raffles.
- The school's shared understanding of a 'drug-related incident' is the use/suspected use or finding of a drug
- The reporting procedure for such incidents is (a) recording in the incident book and (b) informing the principal
- Parents will be involved in incidents involving their own child by being informed by the school principal
- Parents will be involved in incidents related to another child by meeting individually and then as a group, depending on the nature of the incident.
- The role of the BOM/Trustees is to be informed of all less serious incidents anonymously and serious incidents by name.

- Parents will be involved in incidents relating to an accusation against another child regarding incidents on the school premises. If the school receives a complaint it will be requested in writing and we will then investigate and take actions dependent on the findings.
- Incidents requiring medical intervention will be dealt with as per procedures in Administration of Medicines
- Gardaí will be involved in 'drug related incidents' by telephone
- At local level, the following support agencies are available to which students involved in substance misuse might be referred: The Western Health Board, The Gardaí.
- The Chairperson of the BOM is designated to respond to the media in relation to 'drug related incidents' should they arise.

### **Alcohol**

- School is an alcohol free area
- Pupils will not be allowed bring alcohol into school or consume it in school or during school activities
- Student under influence - Principal informed and Parents called in.

### **Illicit Drugs**

- Students forbidden being in possession
- If so:
  - Contact - Chairperson
  - Gardaí
  - Parents

### **Specific Incidents:**

#### **Intoxication/Unusual behaviour of child:**

- Contact parents/guardians immediately
- Monitor the child until the parents/guardians arrive

#### **Intoxication of Adult:**

- Consider safety of child/children
- Avert adult's attention and make an effort to delay the adult taking the child home/away
- Try to reason with the adult
- Try to make alternative arrangements for child's transport home
- Contact Gardaí if all else fails.

#### **Disclosure about Use, by children, parents, staff of Drugs or Alcohol**

- Contact the Health Board/Gardaí for advice and act upon such advice
- Consider the individual situation

#### **Finding Substances:**

- Pick up the substance wearing protective gloves
- Store appropriately in a locked cabinet

- Contact local Gardaí to collect evidence
- Teachers never transport illicit substances at any times

#### Possession and/or Supply

- Report to Gardaí

### **(iii) Training and staff development**

The shared understanding among staff regarding the contribution that an SPHE programme can make to the prevention of substance misuse is that it has a valuable contribution to make but it is vitally important that parents are actively involved and supportive.

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 laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they relate to themselves, to the school and the students by being provided with written information from the Western Health Board.

Our further training needs in relation to the implementation of the substance use policy include a First Aid Course, input from WHB and Gardaí. Training can be accessed from the Order of Malta, Western Health Board, the Gardaí and the Galway Education Centre.

New staff, in particular, will be briefed on the substance use policy of the school by being given a copy of the policy.

### **Role and Responsibilities:**

Principal: overall responsibility for inducting new teachers, liaising with parents and implementing the procedures as laid out in this policy.

Class Teachers/Ancillary Staff/: policy development, implementation and evaluation.

Pupils: Participation in SPHE lessons and following school rules regarding substance use.

Parents: supporting the school with this policy area.

BOM: Ensuring teacher education is provided where necessary supporting the policy and helping the principal teacher where incidents arise.

### **Success Criteria**

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

- Lack of incidents or no incidents
- Procedures in place have worked
- General evidence of heightened awareness throughout the school and community

The following actions will be taken by having a three yearly review and more often if the need arises, to evaluate the effectiveness of the substance use policy and to ascertain what changes, if any, are necessary.

### **Communication**

This needs to be circulated as widely as possible for the view of parents/guardians, teachers, students and BOM. Particular attention needs to be given to involve those parents and pupils who might not normally be reached. Revision of the draft policy should be informed by the feedback from this process

It is recommended that parents be asked to sign a statement to the effect that they have read the policy and agree that they are bound by it.

### **Date for Ratification and Implementation**

Dated: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Signed: Bríd Bn Uí Dhomhnaill Principal

Signed: Fr. Patrick Callanan Chairperson BOM

### **Date for Review**

School year 2021