



# SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

**Scoil Phobail Bhaile an Chollaigh**

**Ballincollig Community School**

## INTRODUCTION

This policy came into being in response to staff reflection on the issue of School Development Planning. It emerged as a key area requiring attention by the staff. The school also acknowledges that it has an important role to play in drugs education, both in terms of prevention and offering support to those who use drugs. Copies of this policy will be available at all times from the school office.

## SECTION ONE

### Scope

This policy applies to the students, parents, all school staff, school management of Ballincollig Community School and users of the school building. Once people are on school grounds or partaking in any school related activity e.g. school tours, matches, day trips, retreats, etc. it comes into force.

### Relationship to the School's Mission/ Vision/ Aims

In devising a Substance Use Policy we are encouraging students to have a sense of respect for themselves and others and for the community and society in general. The vision of the school is to create a healthy, caring and supportive environment for everybody. The Substance Use Policy will enable the school to achieve this. The school has the right to expect and promote certain standards of behaviour and to prohibit certain practices.

### 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. Substance use is recognised as a growing problem in our community with a significant amount of young people taking drugs excluding alcohol. At a young age either drug or

alcohol experimentation has begun. As a health promoting school we need to provide for the needs of the whole school community and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues. This policy will enable us to deal with various crises as they occur.

- The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- The report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drug Use Prevention' underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.(November 2001)
- The school is obliged to adopt a substance use policy under the National Drugs Strategy 'Building on Experience' (2001-2008)
- Children First Act 2015 sets out best practice procedures that should be in place for all organisations providing services to children. Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 are adhered to in BCS when dealing with child disclosure and issues of confidentiality

### **Goals and Objectives**

- To raise awareness of the issue of substance use among the community.
- To provide a whole school education programme for pupils through the integration of various subject areas which deal with substance use e.g. SPHE, CSPE, P.E., R.E, Wellbeing, Social Education in L.C.A and guest speakers.
- To provide educational and preventative programmes on substance use.
- To prevent substance use by our students through education.
- To provide information for parents with regard to substance use. Eg. Liam Doocey- Parents information talk on substance use
- To provide ongoing staff training. Staff will be offered substance use information and awareness training. The school will support the delivery of substance use education by providing relevant and up to date resource materials for the SPHE programme.

- To develop a school intervention programme through pastoral care, staff meetings etc
- To outline clear and defined procedures in relation to managing incidents.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **School Policy**

It has been agreed that a drug is: ‘any substance which changes the way body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally’. The school does not accept or tolerate the possession, use or supply of banned or prohibited substances i.e. alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, solvents, tranquillisers, depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, opiates and others or drug paraphernalia by any person in the school, on school trips and outings, or during any school related activity.

### **Prescribed medication**

The only exception is for legitimate medical use and the school has to be informed. If a student is required to take legitimate medicines during school hours a note from his/her parents to that effect must be placed in the student’s file in the main office (if this information is not already recorded on the student’s registration form) and the Year Head must be informed. The Year Head will inform the teachers of the student involved. In the case of a school trip/event, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian of the child involved to inform the organiser of the event of any medication which the child may be taking.

## **SECTION THREE**

### **Education Concerning Substance Use**

- There will be a coordinated approach among all areas which address this: SPHE, LCA-Social Education, elements of CSPE, RE,, Science, Wellbeing and PE.
- The various needs of the students themselves and the whole school community will determine the methodology and the syllabus content.
- Syllabi and the different subject areas will determine the methodology and content of courses.

- The coordination of the education programme within the policy will take place following a meeting of the SPHE teachers. Speakers and resources from outside agencies will support the work done in the substance use education programme eg. 5th year drug awareness week with Harry Kennedy, 1st & 2nd year drug awareness presentations with Liam Doocey etc.
- Training will be provided for staff regarding substance use awareness i.e. in-service training, guest speakers, Health Promotion Unit Training.
- The Guidance Counsellors and Chaplain will work closely with management.
- Parents will be made aware of what is happening regarding substance use education programmes and provided with information through leaflets, parent information evenings, guest speakers etc., to assist them in their role as parents.
- Information will be provided on local services available to support students.
- The Board of Management through the principal's report should be made aware of the education programme.

## **SECTION FOUR**

### **Procedures for Managing Substance Use Incidents, i.e. allegations against a student, young visitor, member of staff, parent or adult visitor**

- In the event of a substance use incident, the school will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the people involved and the welfare of the school community as a whole and the reputation of the school.
- The school at its own discretion, will liaise with any appropriate outside authority e.g. H.S.E, Garda J.L.O, the local community guard, Tulsa and seek advice or assistance, as it deems appropriate in relation to its investigation of an incident.
- The following detailed steps will be followed:
  1. The Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Head (if appropriate) will be informed.
  2. A Drug Incident Report Form will be completed. Appendix 1
  3. The school will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this. The school will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances and drug paraphernalia associated with an incident and the local Gardaí will be notified. The school will carefully record all such items and

- retain them pending completion of the investigation having contacted the local community guard. Should the accused refuse to hand over these items the Gardaí will be called immediately. In the event of an incident, the school will seek statements from all persons involved in, concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident and will record these statements
4. Where it is apparent that there is immediate danger to students or the school community, the school reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school any person involved in a suspected abuse incident pending further and complete investigation of the incident. This will comply with the school's Code of Behaviour and Suspension Policy.
  5. If there is a reasonable suspicion that a person has been involved in an incident an initial assessment will be carried out in order to decide further action.
  6. The school will question the person; this may include principal, the deputy principal and the year head.
  7. Parents/Guardians will be informed
  8. The school will compile a written report about the incident.
  9. The school will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this.
  10. The school will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of an incident, including records referred to in the above steps, communications with other people or agencies involved or concerned with the matters under investigation, the investigation outcome, decisions taken and the rationale for these decisions, penalties or disciplinary measures imposed following an investigation and the management and outcome of any appeal that may arise following an investigation.
  11. If the circumstances merit while the investigation is continuing, the school will put the full particulars of the incident to the people concerned and their parents, if necessary in the following manner:
    - I. Copies of all records deemed relevant i.e. incident report form/school policy will be made available to the person and in the case of students or minors his/her parents, by the principal, in time to permit the person a reasonable opportunity to make his/her own reply to the matters at issue and any representations that he/she would wish to make or have made on his/her behalf.

- II. The principal will allow the person concerned and his/ her parents, if appropriate, reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. The school will take into account any response so made and any other relevant extraneous consideration or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.
- III. The principal shall shortly thereafter inform the person and his/ her parents, if appropriate, of the schools findings and their reasons for these. If the school finds that the person has been guilty of or involved in or implicated in an incident, a formal letter will be sent to the people involved. The letter will indicate the penalty or sanctions the school intends to impose in the circumstances.
- IV. The person involved has the right to appeal a decision made in regard to his/her case within a time frame specified by the principal

**\*The school will comply with GDPR regulations and The Freedom of Information Act.**

12. In relation to a verified and investigated incident, the Board of Management will deal with each case on its own merits.
13. The school can, at its sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstance or representations that it considers should be taken into account. The school asserts the right to exercise an appropriate show of mercy.
14. The school will also ensure that pastoral supports are offered to the people affected by an incident. As these incidents can sometimes be traumatic for those involved the services of the chaplain, guidance counsellor, class tutor, year head will be made available. The school will seek outside support/advice if appropriate.
15. The school will record all decisions and monitor the outcome for the pupil and school community.

Monitoring the policy

The Policy Review group will monitor and review the policy annually. Copies of the policy will be available in the main office. Students will be made aware of the policy through SPHE classes.

Date of next review: March 2020.



**Where did the incident occur? :**

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**Who have you informed? :**

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**What action have you taken?:**

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**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_