



Substance Use Policy

Scope

This policy applies to students, teachers, auxiliary staff members, users of the school premises, visitors i.e. every person who enters the building. It is applicable during school time – including breaks and to all school related activities. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place.

Relationship to School's Mission/Vision/Aim

Ardfinnan NS;

- Wishes to create a warm and friendly atmosphere in the school where there is a sense of good order and an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- Promotes a Christian Ethos where respect, tolerance and fairness are promoted.
- Wishes to create a secure environment to ensure everyone's well being and safety.
- Seeks to maintain a happy, harmonious, working school so that our pupils may develop socially, personally, spiritually, emotionally, creatively and academically to their fullest potential.
- Seeks to promote healthy lifestyles for all in a safe, supportive and non-threatening environment.
- Wishes to offer support for those who are experiencing difficulties.

Rationale

- *The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.*
- *The Social Personal and Health Education curriculum, of which substance misuse prevention education is an integral part, is a mandatory subject on the primary curriculum and must be taught to all primary pupils from junior infants to sixth class (DES Circular 022/2010).*
- *The National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 requires every school to have a substance use policy in place*
- *Action 21 of the National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 mandates the Department of Education and Skills to monitor the implementation of substance use policies in schools through the whole school evaluation process as operated by the*

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Inspectorate. It is also mandated to ensure that best practice is disseminated to all schools

- *The 2003 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (E.S.P.A.D.) report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among 16 year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 34 E.S.P.A.D. countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland, with girls ranking higher than boys in terms of regular alcohol use. In terms of drug use in Ireland, there was a notable increase in lifetime use of any illicit drug between 1999 (32%) and 2003 (40%), up eight per cent.*

Definition of a Drug

A drug is any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally.

Drugs include:

- Over the counter medication and drinks with a high concentration of caffeine
- Prescription drugs
- Nicotine/Tobacco/Vaping products
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Solvents

Goals and Objectives

The substance use policy of Ardfinnan NS is intended to;

- Provide a comprehensive programme of education for all students in substance use issues.
- Equip the school to deal with issues relating to substance use in a planned and considered way and in accordance with its statutory responsibilities.
- Reinforce the role of the school in contributing to local and national strategies in relation to substance use education & prevention.
- Minimise the dangers caused to young people by substance misuse within schools/communities.
- Manage incidents of substance misuse in a clear and consistent manner
- Promote positive health behaviours.
- Provide a safe and healthy environment.
- Support parents and pupils in understanding and addressing substance misuse.

Content of the Policy

Education concerning substance use

- Education concerning substance use in Ardfinnan NS will be taught throughout the school in the overall context of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum.
- The primary resource used for the delivery of Substance Misuse Prevention Education at all class levels is the 'Walk Tall' Programme.
- The Walk Tall Programme hopes to give children the confidence, skills and knowledge to make healthy choices. SPHE is time-tabled into the curriculum and taught for 30 minutes per week by the class teacher.
- The methodologies used include circle time, discussion, stories, poems, role play, group work, project work, art work, co-operative games, songs and rhymes.
- Parents are informed that substance misuse prevention education is taught throughout the school as part of the SPHE programme and are notified when outside agencies deliver programmes or presentations to support substance misuse prevention education.
- The school ensures compliance with the Best Practice guidelines in the delivery of Substance Misuse Prevention Education in line with DES Circular 0022/2010.

Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents

Types of Incidents

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use might include:

- Use/ suspected use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco or vapes on the school premises or during a school related activity.
- Intoxication/ unusual behaviour.
- Disclosures about abuse.
- Finding alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and/or associated paraphernalia.
- Possession and/ or supply on the school premises or during a school related activity.
- Other.

Drinks with a high concentration of caffeine

- Children are not allowed to have in their possession drinks with a high concentration of caffeine.

Prescription Drugs / Administration of Medicines

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- Children must not bring over the counter medication to school or on school related activities.
- Any medication i.e. inhalers etc. must be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Children must not share medicines.
- In situations where children are deemed capable by their parents of taking prescribed medication during school hours or on a school related activity, parents must notify the school in writing, stating the name of the medication, the exact dosage and giving permission for the child to take the medication themselves.
- School staff will take responsibility for administering medication only when a written request has been made to the Board of Management and an Indemnity Form completed, indemnifying the board. (See Administration of Medicines policy)

Smoking (Nicotine/Tobacco/Vaping products)

- The school is a smoke free zone in line with legislation.
- Staff, parents and students are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes/tobacco/vape products on the school premises or on school related activities.
- All persons on the school premises must comply with the no smoking/vaping policy.

Alcohol

- The school is a no alcohol area.
- Staff, parents and students are not permitted to possess or consume alcohol in school or during any school related activities.
- In the event of a teacher suspecting or being of an opinion that a student is under the influence of alcohol he/she must immediately inform the Principal and the incident will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures outlined below.
- In the event of aggressive or intimidating behaviour by any member of the public on the school premises, the incident will be recorded and the Gardaí will be informed if the person refuses to leave the premises. (See procedure below)
- In the event of a staff member or member of the Board of Management appear to be under the influence of a substance, appropriate action will be taken. (See procedure below)

Illegal drugs

- Staff, parents and students are prohibited from possession, use or supply of illegal drugs on the school premises or on school activities.

Solvents

- We will aim to keep the school as free from solvents as possible. Children in the interest of health and safety will not be allowed to use aerosols e.g. spray deodorants.

Procedures to be followed in managing the misuse of substances may include some or all of the following.

Incidents involving pupils

- Manage any medical emergencies in the first instance.
- Inform and consult with the principal.
- Investigate/clarify incident.
- Confiscate and store.
- Involve parents, Gardaí and HSE. (as appropriate)
- Referral to other appropriate intervention if necessary.
- Balance a pastoral care approach with disciplinary procedures.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Record a factual account of the incident.
- Report the incident. (if indicated)
- The principal is designated to respond to the media in relation to “drug related incidents” they may be enquiring about.

Incidents involving staff members

- The staff member may be asked to leave the premises if he/she presents to school under the influence.
- Principal will speak with the staff member about the incident and record details of the conversation.
- Depending on the severity of the incident, the Gardaí may have to be notified and the Board of Management informed.

Incidents involving parents/guardians or the wider school community.

- The person in question may be asked to leave the premises if he/she presents to school under the influence.
- Pupils will not be released to parents/guardian who are under the influence.
- Principal will speak with the person in question and record details of the conversation.
- Depending on the severity of the incident, the Gardaí may have to be notified.

Provision Training and Staff Development

- 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 implementation of active learning methodologies as recommended in the SPHE curriculum.
- Procedures are adopted in the school in relation to the administration of medicines in the school and staff are adequately informed of same.
- As far as possible staff will avail of training and information evenings provided.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Staff Members

- To implement this policy.
- For teachers to deliver the Walk Tall Programme specifically on Substance Misuse.
- To inform themselves regarding the signs and symptoms of drug use and about drugs and their effects.
- To be alert to any disclosure by pupils regarding their own or others involvement in drug taking activity.
- To bring any such information or suspicion to the attention of the Principal.

Role of Principal

- To implement this policy and to support other teaching staff in its implementation.
- To investigate all referrals in accordance with this policy.
- To liaise with parents and other outside agencies including the Gardaí.

Role of the Board of Management

- To support the implementation of the policy through staff training and resource provision.

Role of Parents

- Parents are responsible for supporting the school's goals to educate pupils in substance misuse prevention.
- To educate their children about substance abuse. (where age appropriate)
- To support this policy and to co-operate fully with the school in its implementation.
- To bring to the attention of the school authorities any conditions their child/children may suffer from which may require specific medication.
- Parents should advise the school if they suspect that their own child may be involved in substance misuse.

Success Criteria

The following indicator will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the substance use policy in Ardfinnan NS;

- That incidents will be dealt with effectively and that concerns or reasonable suspicions are reported and acted upon.

Monitoring Procedures

- We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of these procedures. Staff and parental feedback are welcomed.

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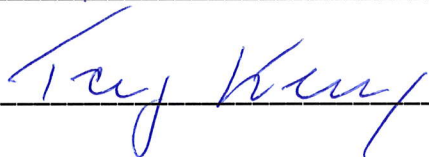
- Implementation of the Substance Use Policy is monitored on an ongoing basis by everyone to ensure that is of practical benefit to the school.
- Monitoring also requires that any concerns or reasonable suspicions be reported to the Principal.

Review

- The policy should be reviewed and evaluated at certain pre-determined times and as necessary.
- The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise.
- Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

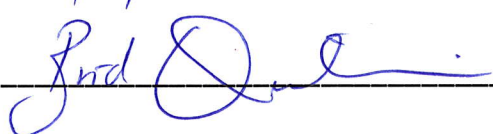
This plan was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on:

Date: 24/8/21

Signed: 

(Chairperson)

Date: 24/8/21

Signed: 

(Principal)

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