

# St. Oliver Plunkett National School

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## Substance Use Policy

### Introductory Statement

This Substance Use Policy was formulated in May 2011 and was reviewed and updated in December 2018. This policy applies to students, teachers, parents, school staff and users of the school building. It applies at all times (unless prior exemption is obtained from the Board of Management). This also applies on any school outing or trip and to all school related activities.

The school sees itself as having a role in the process of enabling students to increase control over and improve their health. We endeavour to promote the well-being of students by: -

1. Providing a safe and healthy environment.
2. Promoting positive health behaviours.
3. Increasing knowledge about health.
4. Promoting the self-esteem and self-awareness of students.
5. Working in partnership with the parents and pupils.

### Rationale

This policy was formulated in response to

- The National Drugs Strategy, 'Building on Experience', is now Government Policy and it requires schools to have a drugs policy in place (Action 43).
- Recent reports from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs underline 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 schools 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 the Characteristic of Our School

- St. Oliver Plunkett National School recognises that the school has a pivotal role within the community and that there is interdependence between the school and the community. We aim to help the students to take their place in society as educated, responsible and committed Christians. Our school cherishes the individuality of every child and strives to meet the particular needs of each child.
- We endeavour to educate our pupils about the dangers posed to health and community life by abuse of tobacco, drink and drugs. We aim to prepare them for the future by educating them to lead healthy and responsible lifestyles.

## Aims

The school is committed to providing a comprehensive drug education programme through our existing SPHE programme. We aim:

- To ensure the welfare, care and protection of every young person as provided for in the Education Act, 1998 and the Education Welfare Act, 2000.
- To ensure that the school complies with legislative requirements and principles of good practice
- To provide pupils with age appropriate information and skills through engagement with the SPHE curriculum
- To increase the pupil self-esteem and confidence.
- To enable pupils to make informed, healthy and responsible choices.
- To minimise the dangers caused to children by drug misuse and drug misusers within schools/communities.
- To manage drug related incidents in a planned manner.
- To support parents and pupils in addressing drug misuse.

## School Policy on Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

A drug can be described as any substance which changes the way the body functions – mentally, physically or emotionally. The school does not tolerate the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs, drink or tobacco in the school, on school trips or during school related activities, by any of the pupils. *The school wishes to make clear that the primary role of substance misuse prevention rests with the parents.*

Education concerning substance use will occur as an integral part of the SPHE programme which is developmental and delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment.

The following specific modules or programmes will be used:

- “Walk Tall Programme”
- “Be Safe Programme”
- “Drug Awareness Programme”
- “Accord”
- “Stay Safe Programme”
- “Understanding Substances and substance use: a handbook for teachers”

### Substance Abuse:

Our school will be proactive in our approach to education concerning substance use in inviting members of the local community e.g. nurses/ Gardaí to speak to the children. Due regard will be given to family circumstances and community issues.

### Smoking

The school and its grounds are a no smoking area for pupils, parents, staff and visitors. Students are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on the school premises or in any other place.



## **Alcohol**

Pupils will not be allowed to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school activities.

## **Illicit Drugs and Solvents**

Students are forbidden from being in possession of or using illicit drugs or solvents in the school premises. Illicit drugs found on school premises should be locked away and the Gardaí contacted to dispose of them. Teachers are advised not to transport illicit substances at any time.

## **The management of substance-related incidents**

The school's shared understanding of a 'substance-related incident' is:

- Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, 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.

### **Indications:**

- Intoxication / unusual behaviour
- Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia
- Possession and/or supply on the school premises or during a school-related activity
- Other

The **reporting procedure** for such incidents is:

**Step 1:** Witness to drug related incident informs teacher/staff member/Principal

**Step 2:** Principal inform parents/guardians

**Step 3:** Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management

**Step 4:** H.S.E. referral made (please see Child Protection Policy)

**Step 5:** Gardaí informed depending on seriousness of incident

**Step 6:** H.S.E informed for disposal of items.

Our school will exercise due care in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. **An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use would include:**

### **Intoxication / unusual behaviour / disclosure about use:**

- Observation and informal questioning of the child by the teacher to ascertain whether the child is under the influence of drink, drugs or tobacco. Parental explanation of unusual behaviour may be sought if deemed necessary.
- Consultation with the designated liaison person in the school / or a colleague.
- Recording of observations and informal conversations with the child and parents.
- If the incident is deemed serious the designated liaison person will follow guidelines as outlined in 'Children First' Guidelines. This will involve support from outside agencies.
- Where a member of staff requires support schools may consider facilitating links with an appropriate outside agency.

## **Parental Involvement**

- Parents have been consulted during the formulation of this policy.
- Parents are informed about the content of the SPHE programme and its relevance to substance use.
- The Parent Association is encouraged to invite expert speakers to provide information to the parent body about drug related issues.

## **Prevention**

### **Smoking - School Policy**

- The school is a non- smoking area. This applies to cigarettes and vaping devices.
- Students are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on the school premises or on school related activities.
- Visitors will comply with the no smoking policy.
- Pupils found smoking or in possession of cigarettes on school premises will be reported to the Principal and parents will be informed.
- Tobacco will not be permitted as a prize for school raffles.

### **Alcohol - School Policy**

- The school is an alcohol free area.
- Pupils will not be allowed to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school activities.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of alcohol, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Where a student comes to school under the influence of alcohol, their parents will be called in to take them home.
- Students breaking these rules will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary procedure.
- If alcohol is required for an adult only school function, permission shall be sought from the B.O.M.

### **Illicit Drugs and Solvents- School Policy**

- Students are forbidden to possess or use illicit drugs or solvents on the school premises.
- Illicit drugs found on school premises shall be locked away and the Gardaí contacted to dispose of them. Teachers are advised not to transport illicit substances at any time.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Where the school suspects trafficking of illicit drugs, an investigation will be carried out. Parents of any student involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer will be sought and an investigation will be carried out.
- The school B.O.M. will expect parents to inform the Principal or teacher if they suspect their child of drug taking.



## **Management of Persons in the Workplace (Under the Influence of Drugs and/or Alcohol)**

The Board of Management shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that pupils and other persons in the workplace are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare from persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The term “in the workplace”, in the preceding sentence includes all school related activities taking place under the supervision of a teacher, with the Board’s approval, and both within and away from the school premises.

- Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.
- Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and others. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented.
- Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of any contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.
- If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace.
- 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 to the pupil. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the pupil and safeguard their best interests.
- The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers. An Employee Assistance Service (telephone: 1800 817 433 or [www.inspirewellbeing.org](http://www.inspirewellbeing.org)) is available to teaching staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service.
- The Board of Management also acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all other staff members. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the non-teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to seek counselling or other professional intervention.
- All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded and reported as soon as possible to the Board of Management.
- The Board of Management shall consider all such reports and decide on the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

## Success Criteria

Practical indicators of the success of this policy will be:

- Feedback from teachers, pupils, parents, community, Gardaí, HSE, others
- Parents are supporting teachers in the implementation of this policy.

## Roles and Responsibility

- Each class teacher will implement this policy.
- The principal is responsible of overall implementation.
- Parents will work in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse.

**Implementation Date:** December 13<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Timetable for Review:** Review at end of 2020-21 or sooner, if deemed necessary.

## **Ratification and Communication:**

- Ratified by the Board of Management on **12<sup>th</sup> December 2018.**
- Circulated to all teaching, support and ancillary staff
- Circulated to the Parent Association
- Circulated to all parents/guardians via school website.

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

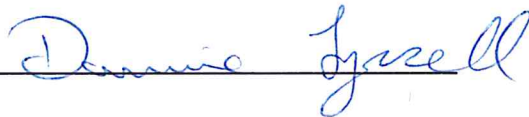


(Chairperson)

12 / 12 / 2018

(Date)

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



(Principal)

12/12/18

(Date)