Substance Use Policy

Introduction

Scoil Mhuire Naofa is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school regarding substance use. The school has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and handling drug related incidents but its role is to support the parents/ guardians who have a primary responsibility with respect to substance use education.

Our working definition of a drug is…

* Any substance which changes the way the body functions mentally, physically or emotionally
* Any chemical which alters how the body works or how the person behaves or feels

Relationship to School’s Mission

The substance use policy reflects the school mission because it also aims:

* To provide a safe, secure and healthy environment for learning
* To promote self-esteem and self-awareness of pupils
* To promote positive health behaviour
* To increase knowledge about health

Rationale

This Policy is necessary because

* The school wishes to provide for the needs of the pupils and respond accordingly
* The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of this reality. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their student cohort and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues
* The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
* The National Drugs Strategy ‘ Building on Experience’ is now Government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.

Aims/Objectives

The aim of the substance use policy of Scoil Mhuire Naofa is primary prevention. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs. We aim to develop in our pupils’ better self-esteem, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils age appropriate information from educational programmes.

Our objectives are to enable the child:

* To develop skills such as valuing themselves and others, communication, co-operation, decision-making and critical awareness
* To be aware of attitudes that affect people’s decisions and exploration of what seems to be the acceptability of certain drugs such as alcohol
* To acquire accurate, age-appropriate information about drugs and to distinguish between myths and facts about drugs

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to the entire school community, including pupils, all school staff, parents/guardians and users of the school building. It applies at all times to school buildings and yard, all school related activities, and school bus. The policy applies to the possession, use or supply of drugs in the above mentioned places- the only exception is for legitimate medicinal use and the school principal has to be informed.

Policy Content

Our policy is focused on these three areas

1. Education concerning substance use
2. Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents
3. Provision for staff awareness raising, training and development

1. Education concerning substance use

This school is committed to providing education on substance use. This will be achieved within the broad context of Social, Personal and Health Education.

The following considerations will inform the selection of content and methodologies

* Age-appropriate information
* A value system which supports primary prevention in a holistic, caring and supportive environment
* Active learning methodologies to practice specific skills
* Specific content objectives of the SPHE curriculum

# The school

* Will provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills, be aware of values and attitudes and acquire knowledge regarding substance misuse prevention through the SPHE curriculum
* Will teach the content objectives as set out over a two year period in the school plan
* Will provide a positive school climate and atmosphere
* Will use an active learning approach as far as possible
* Will draw on the expertise available within our community, and the support of the gardai
* Will consider inviting outside visitors/speakers to work with the pupils, in the presence of a teacher, to enhance the work done in the context of the full SPHE programme

Parents/Guardians and Local Community

* Will support the substance use policy and the teaching of SPHE

Board of Management

* Will support teaching initiatives by providing funding where necessary

(ii) **Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents**

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.
* In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove him/herself from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.
* The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers. An Employee Assistance Service (telephone: 1800 411 057 or e-mail: eas@vhics.ie) 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.

The school’s position on alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents include the following:

Smoking and Tobacco

* This school is a no smoking area.
* Students and are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on school premises, on school activities or on school trips
* All persons on the school premises are required to comply with the No smoking policy

Alcohol

* The school is an alcohol free zone. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may approve the responsible use of alcohol among adults e.g. retirement function social evening etc.
* Pupils are not permitted to possess or consume alcohol on the school premises, on school activities or on school trips.

# Illicit Drugs

* Students and adults are prohibited from possession, use or supply of illicit drugs on school premises, on school activities or on school trips
* Suspicion/rumour of drug use, possession or dealing on the school premises or during a school related activity
* Selling/supplying legal/illegal drugs

Solvents

* The school does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances
* All chemicals on school premises are locked away and prohibited for student use unless under a teacher’s supervision

# Medication/Prescription drugs

* Procedures are in place for dealing with incidents requiring medical intervention as laid out in our school’s policy on Administration of Medication or our health and safety statement
* All use of medication on school premises, on school activities or on

School trips comply with this policy

* A student may not give another student ‘over the counter’ medication
* Incidents requiring medical attention will be dealt with by a member of staff who is suitably qualified in first aid

In the case of a substance misuse incident- suspected, witnessed or reported the following procedures will be adopted**:**

Assess the situation

* If the person is in immediate danger, we will determine the nature of substance if possible and contact 999/112 or one of the relevant services
* If no immediate danger to a person, we will take time to listen and separate fact from rumour
* We will assess whether the incident is confirmed or suspicious misuse of drugs/ possession or supply

Recording of drug-related incidents

* We will keep a factual written account
* All written documentation will be kept by the principal

Who will be informed?

* People will be informed on a ‘need to know’ basis so that confidentiality can be respected, however, total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to a young person who discloses drug involvement
* The principal will be informed
* The pupil will be informed about what is happening and why
* The chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed
* Parents/Guardians will be informed in an incident which involves their own child
* Parents/Guardians will also be informed of an incident or accusation relating to another child but involving their own child
* Other agencies may be involved such as the gardai, in the event of a confirmed drug-related incident, the Health Board(if seeking advice on Child Protection issues, the law, if necessary, for advice

Disciplinary Procedures

* Incidents will be handled sensitively- we will endeavour at all times to have a balance between a pastoral and disciplinary response
* We will address the needs of the pupil(s) involved, the other pupils and the school
* Sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature and severity of the offence
* Pupils will be dealt with in accordance with school procedures regarding serious misbehaviour as in this school’s Code of Behaviour/Discipline

In our area support agencies are available to which a student involved in substance use could be referred.

# If responding to the media

* The school will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug-related incident
* The Principal is designated to respond to the media in relation to ‘drug-related incidents’

1. Provision for training and staff development

This policy will be effective only if there is a strong commitment made to ongoing training of the whole school community. Scoil Mhuire Naofa undertakes to provide the following in relation to each relevant group:

Staff

Opportunities will be provided to avail of training such as

* In-service training in SPHE
* First Aid training
* Drug awareness training and skills development(Substance Misuse Prevention / Health Promotion Unit / Gardai
* Information on the legislation relating to schools and drugs

New staff will be briefed on the substance use policy by the principal.

Parents/ Guardians

The school, in conjunction with the Parents’ Association, will provide opportunities to avail of training such as

* Drug awareness and information sessions
* Courses or sessions on aspects of SPHE organised by the Parents’ Association

Success Criteria

The following indicators will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the substance use policy in this school

* Attitudes of the children
* Skills of the children(decision making, self awareness etc)
* No smoking policy being adhered to by parents

Review Procedures

This policy will be regularly evaluated and updated where necessary.

This policy was adopted on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

Principal

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

Chairperson

Appendix 1

Important Contact Numbers

HSE National Drugs Helpline 1800 459459

[www.drugs.ie](http://www.drugs.ie)

Drugs.ie is an independent website managed by The Ana Liffey Drug Project and funded by the Health Service Executive. It offers information on all aspects of drugs and alcohol

Narcotics Annoymous Southern Area. 087 1386120

Community based organisation for recovering addicts. NA members learn from one another how to live drug-free and recover from the effects of addiction in their lives .

CARECALL IRELAND 1800 409676

CareCAll Ireland helpline is available to employees to help them with stresses of working life.

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

<http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie/>

<http://www.na-ireland.org/>