



St. Joseph's Primary School

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Substance Use Policy.

The aim of the Substance Use Policy of St. Joseph's Primary School 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, solvent 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.

St. Joseph's Primary School is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs. The policy has been drawn up and accepted by the Principal, Teachers, Parents/Guardians, Board of Management and Students. It is necessary that all involved work together to implement this policy. It is vital that parents/guardians actively work with the school to implement this policy to ensure their children's health and safety. In this policy "Drug" means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The School recognises that drugs both legal and illegal are available in the local community and that the School, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents.

Relationship to school's Mission, Vision & Ethos.

As stated in the School's mission statement, St. Joseph's Primary School is committed to enabling students to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, cultural and physical potential. It also is committed to fostering the development of personal responsibility.

- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the school, or on outside activities or in non- school time by any member of the school community.
- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco in the school or on school activities by any student.
- The School does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances.
- Students who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school long term must inform the school and follow the procedures of The Administration of Medicines Policy.
- The School must be informed if a student has a medical condition.
- A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine.

The policy is focused in four key areas:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.
2. Managing Drug Related Incidents.
3. Training and Staff Development.
4. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation.

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.

The School is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programme for all students. Our educational aims are:

- To increase the self- esteem and confidence of our students.
- To equip our students with personal and social skills.
- To enable our students to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions.
- To provide clear and age appropriate information on drugs.
- To minimise the harm caused by drug abuse by offering supportive interventions.

These aims will be achieved by:

- Outside speakers are used where appropriate to reinforce the work done in class.
- Parents/Guardians will be consulted on the need for drug education and will be informed of what is happening in the School. Drug information and drug awareness sessions are organised for parents when available.
- Student Drug Education will be achieved through.
 - SPHE Programme
 - Science
 - Outside speakers where appropriate i.e.guards.

2. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Related Incidents

We acknowledge that in all situations involving drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the student, the needs of the school community, the reputation of the school and legal considerations.

Assessing a drug incident: If there is no damage to the student/s, it is important to:

- Take time to listen and assess before responding.
- Separate fact from rumour.
- In situations of confirmed use or possession or supply all details must be recorded and acted upon.
- Then complete an incident report if required.

Managing a drug incident

A limited number of people are involved in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents. People will be informed on a "need to know" basis. All written records will be held confidentially by the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Parents/Guardians will be involved. They will be informed sensitively and support offered to them. In the case of illegal drugs the Principal or Deputy Principal will contact Gardai - Juvenile Liaison Officer, and any drugs will be dealt with by Gardai. In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered.

If a student has a problem then referral will be recommended. Parents/Guardians, staff and other students involved in the incident will be offered support. Confidentiality is a complex issue. It is important that the limits of confidentiality are discussed with students before any disclosure is made. The well-being and welfare of the student and teacher must be a primary focus.

The Principal or Deputy Principal will handle all media enquiries. They will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.

Disciplinary Procedures

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. These will be consistent with the school's code of behaviour.

3. Training & Development

Staff

The School will facilitate information sessions for staff whenever possible or available.

Parents/Guardians

The School will provide opportunities to attend information evenings and sessions whenever possible or available.

Students

The School will offer all its students drug education programmes within the context of their SPHE curriculum.

4. Monitoring the Policy, Review and Evaluation

The principal will monitor the policy to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the School. The result will be recorded and made available to the staff.

The areas of for constant review:

Drug Education Programmes

Managing Drug Related incidents.

Parent, Staff and Management Training

Evaluation

Teachers, Parents/Guardians and the Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for one year.

Copies of this policy will be distributed to all the school community through the website. Students will be made aware of the policy within the context of the SPHE programme especially the Sixth class pupils before moving onto Secondary school.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Signature : _____