

Holy Spirit Junior Primary School

Substance Use Policy

Introduction

Holy Spirit Junior Primary School is a co-educational school catering for children from Junior Infants to Second Class. The objective of the school's Substance Use Policy is the welfare, care and protection of every student in line with the Education Act 1998, DES Circular 022/2010 and the recommendations of the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016. The policy will address both education concerning alcohol, tobacco and drugs and the procedures for managing incidents relating to these substances.

Scope of the policy

This policy refers to the whole school community – pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school building at any time. It includes all school related activities. We believe that staff, parents / guardians, students and the Board of Management need to work together and that co-operation is essential to the acceptance, implementation, and success of the Substance Use Policy.

The policy mirrors the aim of the Mission Statement to nurture the dignity of the child and the child's family in a supportive, caring environment and is in line with the Catholic spirit and ethos of the school. The policy applies to all school staff, parents /guardians, pupils, visitors to the school and the Board of Management, and will focus on:

- Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Incidents in the School
- Training and Staff Development

Definition

A drug can be defined as any substance that can be used or misused and can change the way the human body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally or on which the person can become physically or psychologically dependent. Included are illicit drugs, solvents, alcohol, prescribed medication and tobacco. The use of prescribed drugs for medical reasons for children is outlined in our Policy on Administration of Medication.

Education concerning substance use

Holy Spirit Junior Primary School is committed to providing a comprehensive age-appropriate education to the children in relation to drug use. Education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs is most effective if provided in the broader context of a Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme which is developmental and delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment. The Walk Tall Programme will be the main SPHE resource for substance use education. However, aspects of the Grow in Love Programme (based on the Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland), the Stay Safe Programme and other health promoting programmes will also be helpful. The programme aims:

- To increase the confidence and self-esteem of the children

- To help children develop personal strengths and social skills that will help them make responsible decisions
- To enable the children to make informed, healthy and responsible choices
- To provide honest and age-appropriate information on ‘drugs’

Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents

The improper use of drugs is strictly forbidden on the school premises at any time by adults or children. Since schools are public buildings, smoking tobacco is also forbidden. The consumption of alcohol is forbidden in the school during the school day.

Examples of drug-related incidents

- Experimenting with solvents, tobacco or alcohol
- Intoxication /unusual behaviour
- Suspicion/rumour of drug use, possession or dealing
- Disclosure about use
- Sharing medication
- Possession of an illegal drug on the school premises or at a school related activity
- Selling/supplying illegal drugs
- School grounds being used for a drug activity
- Drug paraphernalia found on school property

Procedures re pupils found misusing ‘drugs’

- Any incident or suspected incident should be brought to the attention of the Principal
- A written record of the alleged incident will be made and held by the Principal who will assess the situation
- Principal will inform the pupil’s parents / guardians
- A meeting will be held with parent/guardian and strategies to deal with the matter will be discussed and decided bearing in mind the Code of Behaviour
- Where medical assistance is needed, the parent will be contacted to bring the pupil to the GP or local hospital
- The Principal will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management
- An appropriate response will be decided on a case by case basis in consultation with the relevant parties.
- Where the parents/guardian are reluctant to co-operate, the matter will be brought to the Board of Management to decide what action should be taken
- The advice and assistance of the Gardai and/or clinic personnel may be sought. Where an illegal substance is involved the Community Garda will be informed.

Response on verification of an incident may include

- Remove pupil from class
- Principal will contact parent / guardian
- Arrange debriefing session with relevant staff
- Where it is deemed necessary, the Principal and Board of Management will contact relevant agencies such as:
 - Doctor
 - Social Worker
 - Health Promotion Unit
 - Community Worker
 - Public Health Nurse
 - Drug Treatment Services
 - Community Garda

Procedures where a pupil discloses about misuse of drugs

- The staff member to whom the disclosure was made will listen carefully to the pupil and note the disclosure
- In relation to personal drug abuse, confidentiality will not be offered
- The care of the pupil will be the primary focus
- The staff member will bring the disclosure to the attention of the Principal
- The parents/guardians of the pupil will be informed and the procedure outlined above will be followed
- Where another pupil is named, care will be taken to respect the name of the pupil who disclosed the matter

Procedure re adults / staff found misusing 'drugs'

- Any incident or suspected incident should be brought to the attention of the Principal
- A written record of the alleged incident will be made and held by the Principal who will assess the situation before responding
- The personnel involved will maintain confidentiality and information will be passed on, on a 'need to know' basis
- The Principal will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management and advice will be taken as to how to proceed
- Where possible, advice and support will be offered to the adult
- Where medical assistance is needed, the adult will be advised to contact their GP or if appropriate brought to the GP or local hospital
- Legal advice may be sought
- The Gardaí may be informed and advice taken
- No staff member may shelter an individual who is misusing drugs. The matter must be brought to the attention of the Principal. Failure to do so is in breach of staff obligations.

Procedures re visiting adults under the influence of drugs / alcohol

- Any incident or suspected incident should be brought to the attention of the Principal
- School personnel involved will maintain confidentiality and information will be passed on, on a 'need to know' basis
- Every effort will be made to avoid a situation whereby a child is released to an adult should a member of staff suspect that this adult is under the influence of alcohol / drugs. Contact will be made with another named person on the pupil's list of contacts as supplied to the school
- Where necessary, the Gardaí / Social Services may be informed / called to the school.

In the event of illicit drugs being found on the premises, they will be locked in a safe place and the Gardaí will be contacted.

Confidentiality

It is important in all suspected or confirmed substance use incidents that a limited number of people are involved in managing the incident. Teachers cannot offer total confidentiality to a young person who discloses drug involvement. The personnel involved will maintain confidentiality and information will be passed on, on a 'need to know' basis, and handled with discretion and sensitivity. Written documentation will be held confidentially by the Principal. The well-being and welfare of the person must be the prime focus.

Education for staff, management, parents/guardians

In Holy Spirit Junior Primary School we recognise the importance of training and staff development in this area. Staff are encouraged to avail of relevant professional development courses. Use will be made of services provided by the Walk Tall Support Service, P.D.S.T., the HSE and the Gardai. Information will be given to staff on available courses/ drug education programmes. On occasion, parents are invited to information evenings with guest speakers.

Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that all partners in education have a role to play in this area. Parents are encouraged to make use of opportunities to discuss substance use issues with their children when it is being taught in school.

Review and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Ratified by the Board of Management on

Date.....

Chairperson