

policy on drugs and substance abuse

Substance Use Policy

The central objective of our schools substance use policy is the welfare, care and protection of every young person within our school in line with the Education Act, 1998.

Name of school: St. Malachy's boys' National School

Date: This policy was formulated in 2004 and most recently amended in 2015

Core Committee:

Mr Kevin Stanley (principal) Mrs Orla Hughes (class teacher)

Why is this policy necessary?

- 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' 1 is now Government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.
- The recent report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drug use prevention' 2 (November 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.
- The 1999 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) Report 3 highlighted the seriousness of the problem among sixteen year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 29 ESPAD countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland whilst the use of tobacco and other drugs was above the ESPAD average.
- For the population as a whole, alcohol consumption per capita in Ireland has increased by 41% in the period 1989 to 1999, while the other EU Member States showed either a decrease or a modest increase. Ireland now has the second highest per capita consumption of alcohol in the EU

What is a drug?

A drug is a chemical substance, which alters how the body functions, physically how we behave, mentally how we think, emotionally how we feel.

Drugs include:

Nicotine Alcohol Solvents Illegal Drugs

Over the counter medicines Prescription Medicines

Tea Coffee Chocolate

1. Relevant resources, documents and legislation:

- S.P.H.E. primary school curriculum and teacher guidelines
- Walk Tall Programme
- "Drugs Awareness"- Irish Safety Books LTD.
- "Facts about Drug Abuse in Ireland"- Health Promotion Unit
- "Underage Drinking"- National Parents Council
- "Parents, Children and Drug Use"- Department of Education
- "Alcohol, a Guide for Parents"- Mark Morgan
- "Substance Misuse Prevention"- Department of Education
- "Solvent Abuse, a Guide for Parents and Professionals"- Department of Health
- "Understanding Drugs"- Health Protection Unit
- "Drugs Use Prevention"- Report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs
- "Smoking, Know the score"

2. Our current situation regarding Substance Use Policy Issues:

Related plans and policies currently in place:

- Whole school Plan
- Social, personal and health education curriculum.

- Discipline for learning
- Anti Bullying
- Health and safety
- Administration of Medication
- Code of behaviour
- Special Projects
- D.E.S. Child Abuse Prevention Guidelines

3. Draft Policy Statement:

(A) Scope

Our policy applies to Students, Teachers, All School Staff, Parents, and Users of the school building, Clergy (Dominican Brothers) and invited guests and visitors to the school. It will be applied to the school building and yard twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. It will also be relevant to all school related activities including transportation to and from school, School Tours and Sports days. The Policy will only be applied to the sports and games field during school hours.

(B) School Mission Statement:

In St. Malachy's B.N.S. we are committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment in which all pupils can develop the confidence required to further their intellectual, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical potential in preparation for lifelong learning.

We will strive to nurture in our pupils a sense of personal identity, self-esteem and awareness of their particular abilities, aptitudes, and limitations, combined with a respect for the rights of others. While we have a traditional Catholic ethos, we respect and endeavour to accommodate the needs of those of other religious beliefs.

St. Malachy's National School will strive to promote, both individually and collectively, the professional and personal development of teachers through staff development programmes. St. Malachy's National School will encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contacts and through their involvement in other activities and community events.

St. Malachy's National School will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils, respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.

St. Malachy's National School will promote gender equity amongst the teachers and pupils.

We see it as an aim to ensure that the young boys of our town acquire a keen appreciation of their local, national and global heritage and identity, so that, they will foster in themselves a sense of responsibility for the long term care of the environment.

Déanfaimid iarracht Gaeilge a labhairt agus a usáid mar cumarsáid atá oiriúnach do muintir na scoile.

(c) Objective:

We work to ensure that our pupils will grow up in a healthy environment, helping them to develop skills, values/attitudes to cope with our drug oriented society.

(d) Policy content:

Education and prevention:

A substance misuse prevention programme will be implemented at all class levels in accordance with our social, personal and health education primary curriculum statement. Through SPHE, which is generic in approach and spiral in nature, our pupils will practice specific skills and experience a value system which supports primary prevention in a holistic, caring, supportive environment. We will address the content objectives relating directly to substances in an age appropriate manner using discrete SPHE time.

Management of school drug related issues:

POSSIBLE SCHOOL RELATED ISSUES: MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE:

1. Smoking on the yard and school building Inform the person in question of the school policy/Government ban. Request them to refrain from such actions. Failure to comply with this: contact the Gardai.
2. Pupil in possession of cigarettes and/or alcohol Request the child to surrender the banned substance. Inform their parents. In extreme or repeated circumstances social workers may need to be contacted.
3. Alcohol as presents or prizes Alcohol as presented as gifts to school or school personnel to be placed in a strong room and accessed only by the principal or designated staff members.
4. Parent/guardian clearly under the influence of alcohol or illegal substance during pupil contact time In the event of such an occurrence being brought to attention of staff or principal, the parent would be reasoned with. Non compliance on the parent/guardians behalf would result in notification of Gardai and/or possibly social worker.
5. Staff member under the influence of alcohol or illegal substance during pupil contact time. Notification of a staff member, who then notifies the principal. Principal will notify the board. Where a member of staff requires support, schools may consider facilitating links with an employee assistance scheme.
6. Alcohol use in the staff room during school hours/after school hours Consumption of alcohol is prohibited during school hours. Certain concessions by agreement with the board may be made to facilitate special occasions, outside school hours.
7. Unusual behaviour(s&s) Notification of a staff member who then informs the principal. Principal will notify the board. Where a member of staff requires support, we may consider facilitating links with an employee assistance scheme.
8. Finding an illegal drug Gardai will be contacted immediately
9. Magic markers and cleaning agents in the school building and premises These will all be kept in a secure place out of contact with the children
10. Medicating a pupil during the school day This may be done in certain cases with written consent from the parents.
In case of certain types of medication such as inhalers, they can be kept in the principal's office and administered with written consent from parents.
For more serious cases, evaluation will be necessary as they arise.

Links to other policies and to curriculum delivery:

The following policies form a link with the substance use policy

- Health and safety
- Administration of education
- Code of behaviour

The following subjects form a link with the substance use policy

- The Social, Personal and Health Education will deal with issues related to substance use issues.
- Training and Staff development

- There is a shared understanding among the staff that an SPHE programme makes a significant contribution to the prevention of substance misuse.
- Staff members are aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of substance misuse within their own class environment and therefore and this comes across particularly in the teaching of SPHE, more so in the senior classes.
- All staff members are aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance of substance misuse.

Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated annually by the core committee taking into account feedback from the school community and changes in context.