

Substance Use Policy

This policy was formulated by the school staff in partnership with the Board of Management and parents.

Rationale

The National Drugs Strategy 2001 – 2008 ‘Building on Experience’ is now Government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place. We feel the need to implement a comprehensive policy in response to the increasing drug culture in our society.

Definition of a Drug

A drug is any chemical which alters how the body works or how the person behaves or feels.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

St. Michael’s N. S. strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed.

The main objective of the school is to prepare the pupils to take their place in society as good and responsible citizens.

We 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.

This policy is intrinsic to the ethos of the school and to our wish that every pupil who attends this school shall grow into a fulfilled adult; ready to play his/her full part in society.

Aims

By introducing this policy we endeavour

- To promote a safe environment for all users of the school premises
- To raise awareness in the whole school community re the dangers involved in substance misuse
- To help the pupils develop healthy attitudes and skills around substances

This policy also hopes to equip the school and teachers to deal with issues relating to substance use in a planned and considered way and in accordance with their statutory responsibilities.

Who does the policy apply to?

This policy applies to:

- The school premises at all times
- Pupils during school time and school related activities
- Staff (including ancillary staff) during school time and school related activities (while in charge of or in the view of children)
- Parents while visiting the premises and when asked to help with pupils during school related activities
- All other visitors to the premises

Guidelines (content of policy)

This policy focuses on:

1. Education concerning substance use
2. Guidelines and Information for staff and visitors to the school
3. Procedures for dealing with drug incidences in the school

1. Education concerning substance misuse

The school wishes to make clear that the primary responsibility for substance misuse prevention rests with the parents.

The school will endeavour to support the parents in this by providing talks/courses by qualified personnel arranged and funded by the Breaking The Cycle Co-ordinator.

The school will focus its efforts on preventing substance misuse through its S.P.H.E. programme. Substance misuse is incorporated into the strands:

Safety and Protection
Taking care of my body

Junior / Senior Infants

- Safe use of medicines

1st class / Second class

- safe use of medicines
- strategies for dealing with dangerous substances

Third and Fourth class

- Safe use of medicines
- Dangerous substances
- Nicotine
- Alcohol
- What is a drug?

Fifth and Sixth class

- Safe use of medicines
- Dangerous substances
- Nicotine
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs

Resources:

S.P.H.E. Curriculum

Walk Tall Programme

Child Protection Guidelines

Alive O

Prim-Ed Publications

Visiting Professionals

2. Guidelines and Information

Medicines

1. Staff in general do not administer medicine (see Health and Safety Statement)
2. Pupils do not use or have medicines at school that a teacher is not made aware of in writing

3. Any medication on the premises will be stored safely to safeguard the well being of the pupils

Solvents

1. Pupils are prohibited from having or using Tippex or any other correction fluid or thinners
2. Pupils are encouraged to use water based markers
3. Staff using solvents will take the necessary precautions to ensure safety of pupils at all times
4. Parents are asked to provide their children with stick/roll on deodorants if necessary for school based activities e.g. swimming
5. All solvent based products will be stored safely

Smoking

1. St. Michael's N. S. is a non-smoking area
2. Smoking is not permitted in the school building or the school premises
3. Visitors will comply with this no smoking policy
4. Pupils are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes, lighters or matches while on school premises or during school related activities

Alcohol

1. St. Michael's N. S. is an alcohol free area*
 2. Pupils are not permitted to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during school related activities
- *Exception: for an occasional event, e.g. raffle with the permission of B.O.M.
Prizes of alcohol will only be handed to adults

Illicit Drugs and Solvents

1. Illicit drugs and solvents are not permitted on the school premises at any time

3. Procedures for dealing with drug related incidences in school

Smoking:

Pupils found smoking on school premises will be reported to the principal and parents will be informed. Disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the schools Code of Behaviour.

Pupils found in possession of cigarettes shall be reported to the principal.

These cigarettes shall be confiscated and parents will be informed.

Visitors to the school shall be made aware of this policy and will be expected to extinguish cigarettes on arrival.

Alcohol:

If a staff member is of the opinion that a pupil is under the influence of alcohol he/she will inform the principal and consult on what action should be taken. Medical help may be sought.

Parents will be informed and asked to take the pupil home.

Disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Illicit Drugs and Solvents:

Any illicit drugs, or unrecognised drugs, found on school premises shall be confiscated, locked away and the Gardaí contacted to dispose of them.

If a staff member is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents he/she will inform the principal and consult on what action will be taken.

Parents will be informed and the pupil will be sent home.

Disciplinary action will be in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Where there is a suspicion of illicit drug trafficking the matter will be referred to An Garda Siochána to investigate. It will then no longer be a school issue.

The Board of Management expects parents to inform the principal or class teacher if they suspect their child of drug taking.

If a member of staff is of the opinion that a parent or any visitor is under the influence of alcohol and/or illicit drugs, he/she will inform the principal immediately. Such visitors will be asked to leave the premises. If such visitors should become unco-operative and/or aggressive, the appropriate authorities shall be contacted.

The principal may, in good faith and conscience refuse to release a child into the care of an adult, if said adult is clearly incapable of taking reasonable care of same child due to the effects of alcohol and/or illicit drugs. Gardaí may be called.

All of the above incidences will be recorded. Due care will be taken in the balance between disciplinary and pastoral response.

Any staff members in breach of policy will

- be reminded of policy
- receive a verbal warning
- receive a written warning
- be subject to further disciplinary action if required by B.O.M.

Success Criteria

It is hoped that this policy will add to the effective organisation of the school.

The success of this policy will be determined by the feedback received from the staff, Board of Management, parents, pupils, inspectors and any other relevant authority.

Roles and Responsibility

It is the role of the principal to co-ordinate the progress of this policy, to accept feedback and report back to staff and Board of Management.

The Board of Management of St. Michael's N. S. will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating this policy in consultation with the staff and partners.

This policy will be available from the principal, staff and Board of Management and will also be made available to parents.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Behaviour.