

***Substance Use Policy.
St. Malachy's, St. Eithne's, St. Monica's***

Our schools are situated in the heart of the parish of St. Monica's Edenmore. We are very conscious of the growing trend for young people in the community to experiment with drugs. The range of illegal drugs available is expanding and as their cost has decreased, the client profile has become younger. This has implications for all those involved with the young. The schools are and have been aware of the important contribution they can make in the areas of education and prevention. This is done in cooperation with local agencies such as E.D.I.T & Drugs Task Force.

In response to the ***National Drugs Strategy – Building on Experience***, and the encroaching drug culture in our society and in particular our community, the school sees the need for the formulation and implementation of a more structured and comprehensive policy, to address the area of substance use.

The following is a policy statement of our role in Drugs Education within our school communities and its place in the curriculum. By following this policy the schools mission statements of "***Learning & Working Together in a Friendly and Positive Atmosphere***" and "***Growing & Learning Together in Confidence***" will be furthered.

A group consisting of Parents/Teachers and experts in the field representing the parish schools met to draft this policy.

This policy is seen as necessary and beneficial in that it's aim is to make teachers, pupils, parents and staff aware of drugs and their potential use and misuse.

The policy applies to all people who enter the school grounds without exception and is operative 24 hours per

day. The policy covers the health and safety aspect of storage of drugs/solvents which are normally held in the school.

What is a Drug

A drug can be defined as any chemical which alters how the body works or how the person behaves or feel. Drugs may be legal such as may be purchased in a supermarket/chemist, prescription drugs or illegal such as cannabis, heroin etc.

Drug use in the school.

Only drugs which are prescribed by qualified medical personnel may be kept or consumed in the school under conditions agreed between B.O.M., Príomh Oide and Parents. This clause does not apply to adults who use the school and who carry legal drugs or medicines for private and personal use. Drugs brought in, in this manner must be administered out of sight of pupils.

Administration of drugs to pupils will be by agreement with the Príomh Oide/Parent and Class Teacher. The parent/guardian would ideally administer/supervise the taking of drugs before school and would be facilitated to do so during the school day
Where this is not possible the medicines may be stored in Príomh Oides office and administered/supervised by a member of the school staff who would do so by agreement and having been indemnified by the parent against adverse actions/reactions. Inhalers and other prescribed medical paraphernalia may be kept in class out of reach of children. Príomh Oide to be notified of any arrangements.

Pupils who wish to take tablets must have a note from their parents/guardians giving permission. Only the exact dosage may be brought to school.

Injections will only be administered in `predictable

emergencies' that have been notified to the school authorities and by prior agreement e.g. chronic allergies.

Appendix 1
(Indemnity Form)

Other Legal Drugs

- * The schools policy of allowing no smoking on the premises & surrounding grounds applies.
- * From time to time some alcoholic drink might be on the premises under strict control. This shall be kept in Strong Room or Príomh Oides office where pupils have no access.
- * If outside groups intend having alcohol at any function they must seek prior permission from B.O.M. and agree to comply with the terms of Intoxicating Liquor Act 03.
- * Any medicines/drugs taken by adults shall be the responsibility of the particular adult and may not be taken where children might observe.

Education Programme.

The central objective/aim of our Substance-Use Policy is the welfare, care and protection of our pupils in line with the Education Act 1998 and Education Welfare Act 2002.

The aims of our Drugs Education Programme are:

- o To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
 - o To foster in the child a sense of care and respect for him/herself
 - o To enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future.
- (SPHE Curr. Pg.9)

Rationale

- o Children who care for and respect themselves are more

likely to treat their own bodies with dignity and be more particular about their lifestyle choices both now and in the future.

o Children are encouraged to focus on the use and misuse of various substances both legal and illegal. (SPHE Teacher Guidelines P11/13)

o Our S.P.H.E. Programme is designed to give children the confidence, skills and knowledge to make healthy choices.

o All children will be taught the prescribed programme as contained in the schools SPHE curriculum statement which is written from N.C.C.A. Guidelines and will include elements of R.S.E., Stay Safe , Walk Tall & Alive-O programmes.

o This programme will be subject to ongoing review through Cuntas Miosúil & Staff Meetings.

o Supplementary Programmes may be offered if deemed suitable by Príomh Oide in consultation with SPHE co-ordinator and other staff members.

o Any outside intervention must be in total compliance with Educational Programme & Policy and must be delivered by suitably qualified personnel.

o **Timetabling** – one half hour period per week is timetabled in each class for SPHE – drugs education will form part of the programme taught during this time.

Best Practice Guidelines

All material taught to be in accordance with prescribed SPHE programme by the class teacher or other staff member.

Substance Use/Abuse Education will be taught throughout the school at age appropriate level.

Shock or scare tactics should not form part of any presentation

E.D.I.T. and other agencies may be consulted on a regular basis re. parent and school staff training courses.

Parental Involvement

- o Parents were involved in the formulation of this policy and in the ongoing assessment of same.
- o Parents will be made aware of this policy on enrolling children for school , in the school Information Booklet and on the Application Form.
- o Parents will be informed about the SPHE programme through regular newsletters, contact with H.S.C.L. Coordinator and Príomh Oide and at Parent Teacher Meetings.
- o A copy of this policy will be available on the school website and on request from Príomh Oide.
- o Where it is proposed to invite outside speakers to intervene/supplement the SPHE Curriculum, parents may be informed by note and be given an opportunity to have their child exempted from such sessions subject to their making suitable supervision arrangements in consultation with the Príomh Oide.

This policy applies at any time and in any place where pupils are under the care of school staff i.e. tours or after school activities.

Staff Training & Information.

- o All offers of staff training in fields relevant to Substance Use Policy will be posted on staff notice board and may be discussed at Staff meetings.
- o The Board of Management may agree to pay

subvention towards cost of suitable courses from its training budget.

Parent Training Support.

o All relevant training courses for parents such as may be facilitated by S.M.P.P., Stay Safe and E.D.I.T. which come to the notice of the school will be brought to notice of parents by placing them on parents notice board and co-operating in their delivery.

Managing Incidents.

The school community recognises that no policy can prevent rare incidents of drug abuse in or about the school. If and when these incidents occur the following procedures are to be adopted:

- * Drugs paraphernalia found on the grounds will be safely disposed of by the school caretaker. In extreme circumstances Gardaí will be notified.
- * Children should not touch any equipment which may have had contact with drugs.
- * Adults may if they judge it safe remove any such items to a safe place (e.g. cans should be emptied before storage)
- * If anyone other than a pupil presents with drugs or obviously under the influence of drugs they will be asked to leave the premises. The Chairperson will be informed.
- * No member of the school staff should withhold a pupil from release to their parent/guardian other than to make time to contact another staff member for help.
- * A teacher/SN.A. may accompany a pupil and parent/guardian to the extremities of the school grounds should they deem that prudent
- * Should they refuse to leave or cooperate or where there are concerns regarding the child's welfare the Gardaí and Social Services may be contacted where that is judged prudent.

*The Príomh Oide or in his/her absence the most senior teacher /designated liaison person must be informed of all such incidents.

* Pupils found in possession of drugs (other than cigarettes) will be removed from their peers and supervised while awaiting collection by their parents/guardian. Illegal drugs and alcohol should not be confiscated by school staff. Gardaí will be called.

* All actions taken by school staff should be taken with their own safety and that of the child of paramount importance.

* All incidents will be recorded in the school incident book which is available in the Príomh Oide's office. This should be done as soon as possible after it has been noticed.

This book is a confidential record and children should be identified by roll number or initials only. A separate note should be put in diary of staff member noting the incident.

No statement or comments should be made to any third party unless agreed with Príomh Oide or Deputy and in the presence of witness from the school.

Advice on issuing of formal statements to Gardaí or press should be sought from INTO or legal advisor to B.O.M. after consultation with Príomh Oide/or most senior member of staff.

In its management of incidents the school will adopt a balance between a pastoral and disciplinary response.

Monitoring, Review & Evaluation

o The above policy having been agreed and approved by the respective Boards of Management will be monitored

(i) Monthly by teacher comment.

(ii) Annually at May Staff Meeting. The SPHE

coordinator will arrange (with Príomh Oide) for this to happen.

Changes recommended will be put to entire staff, parents reps and B.O.M. before being formally included in the document.

Policy Implementation.

Adherence to the above policy is the responsibility of all school staff supported by the school community.

This policy was ratified by B.O.M. April. 2004.

Appendices

Indemnity Form
First Aid Policy
Health & Safety Statement
Skills to be taught.

INDEMNITY FORM

Drug /Medicine Administration.

I am aware of the schools policy on Drug/Medicine administration and agree to comply with it.

I understand that nobody employed by the school is responsible for administration of medicines/drugs.

I further understand that the Boards of Management & Staff of St. Malachy's, St. Monica's & St. Eithne's schools will not be responsible for any incidents which may occur concerning the administration or non administration of drugs or medicines and I hereby indemnify them from any such claims which may be made against them.

Parent/Guardian Príomh Oide.

Chairperson B.O.M.

Appendix 4.

SKILLS TO BE TAUGHT.

Purpose:

To promote the health of our pupils and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

- o To give our pupils the confidence, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions and choices about social, personal and health dimensions of life both now and in the future.
- o To foster in our pupils a sense of care and respect for him/herself.
- o To avert or at least delay experimentation with substances and reduce the demand for legal and illegal drugs.
- o To be responsive and supportive of individual needs
- o To encourage parents and staff to participate in drug awareness courses.

Rationale

Children who care for and respect themselves are more likely to treat their own bodies with dignity and be more particular about their lifestyle choices both now and in the future.

The education programme which will be delivered in all classes is the Walk Tall Programme. It will also include elements of Stay Safe and Alive O.

This programme allows for the development and reinforcement of personal social skills and the imparting of age appropriate knowledge in a structured,

developmental programme. It is delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment. The 3 elements of the Walk Tall Programme are skills, attitudes and knowledge.

Skills - In the S.P.H.E. Programme we will endeavour to equip children with the following skills:

- Communication
- Assertiveness
- Self-esteem
- Dealing with feelings
- Coping with conflict
- Coping with responses from others
- Decision making
- Problem solving
- Making positive relationships
- Keeping safe
- Dealing with loss
- Resisting peer pressure
- Dealing with others
- Dealing with stress
- Knowing where to seek help
- Accepting/refusing things from strangers/friends

Attitudes/Values are very important in determining the decisions we make. A great emphasis will be placed on the following values:

- o Valuing oneself and others
- o Respect for oneself and others
- o Healthy respect for drugs

Knowledge: children need accurate, age appropriate information about drugs if they are to be in a position to make informed choices about their use or misuse. They need to know:

- o What a drug is
- o The effect of drugs
- o Kinds of drugs

- o Use and misuse
- o Effects of risk taking
- o Substances at home/school capable of misuse
- o Uses of medicines
- o Life sustaining drugs
- o Alcohol, nicotine and solvents – legal and illegal drugs
- o Drugs and the law
- o Advertising/the power of the media
- o Where to get help

The following teaching methods will be employed:

- o Discussion
- o Art work
- o Co-operative games
- o Circle work
- o Stories, poems, songs and rhymes
- o Role play and mime
- o Visualisations
- o Group work
- o Project work
- o Brainstorming
- o Movement.