

# Pelletstown Educate Together National School

## Substance Use Policy 2015

### Introduction and Rationale

This policy was formulated as an interim policy for one school year to provide guidelines on substance use in the school and to allow for parental consultation and feedback.

As part of the SPHE curriculum and Action 43 of the National Drugs strategy a substance use policy must be established within the school. The substance use policy aims to create awareness and provide pupils, staff and parents/carers with appropriate knowledge in relation to alcohol, tobacco and drugs (which are defined as any chemical that alters how the body works or how the person behaves or feels). This will create a healthy school environment that will have both a positive and long-term effect for all concerned.

This policy applies to students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and all users of the schools facilities. It applies within the school building, school grounds and anywhere the children are taken under the care of the school.

### Aims

#### **General Aims**

- To develop self confidence and a positive sense of self esteem in the pupils.
- To develop a sense of personal responsibility in dealing with alcohol, tobacco and drugs.
- To develop an understanding of healthy living.
- To develop a sense of safety and the ability to protect himself/herself from danger and abuse.
- To develop the ability to make healthy decisions.
- To develop a safe school and community environment.

#### **Educational Aims**

- Help students develop the self respect and confidence needed to enhance the prevention of substance misuse.
- Seek to develop the listening, decision making and communication skills of our students to enable them to deal with situations that may arise.
- Highlight the harmful effects of the misuse of drugs.

### School Programmes

- The main programme to be used in the teaching of this policy is the Walk Tall Programme.
- This programme is also supported by the Learn Together Programme.
- SPHE and the substance use programme will also be taught in an integrated way throughout the curriculum.
  
- We will address the content objectives which relates directly to substances in an age appropriate manner using discrete SPHE time.
- Areas may also be discussed as a whole school during assemblies.
- The programme will be taught by the class teacher.
- Any supplementary programmes or speakers used will be discussed with and agreed to by the principal in advance.

## **Recording/short term evaluations of the programme**

The programme will be evaluated by teachers at the end of every month in their cúntus míosuil.

## **Parental information/involvement**

- Parents will be informed prior to the teaching of any sensitive issues.
- The SPHE programme will be outlined to parents/carers at class meetings in September/October every year.
- The parent teacher meetings which take place during the year will also provide information to parents on programmes which are being taught to their child.
- Any whole school activities relating to SPHE may also be highlighted in the school newsletter and on the school website.

## **Management of Medicines and Substances**

### **Storage of medicines/substances**

- Unprescribed medicines will neither be stored nor administered to pupils in the school.
- Prescribed medicines will not be administered in the school without the written consent of parents/carers and the specific authorisation and agreement of the boards of management, principal and class teacher.
- Medicines should not be kept by the pupils at any stage. They will be kept in a locked cabinet in the relevant classroom/office.
- Chemical solvents used for cleaning and operating machinery are stored in accordance with the health and safety policy.
- All other medicines e.g. inhalers will be stored in a designated area for safe keeping

### **Administration of medication**

- Administration of medication will take place where necessary for pupils with diagnosed illnesses.
- Clearly understood and agreed upon arrangements will be made with the board of management, principal and class teacher before any medicines will be administered to a child.
- Parents will be encouraged to provide maximum support in helping the school accommodate the child.
- Parents will be asked to outline in writing, what can and cannot be done in particular emergency situations involving their child.

### **Disposal of medicines/substances**

- Where deemed necessary the principal will contact the Gardaí if any illegal substance/ item is found on the school premises.
- If necessary an instrument will be used to pick up the item and it will be placed in an appropriate container e.g. glass jar/plastic bag.
- This will then be stored in the designated area until the Gardaí arrive to collect and dispose of it.

## **Managing Incidents**

The school will take a pastoral and supportive approach to the management of all substance misuse incidents in the school.

### **In the case of an emergency**

- The teacher will stay calm.
- The teacher will stay with the child.
- The principal will be informed.
- A qualified First Aid person will assess the situation.
- If necessary an ambulance will be called.
- A parent/carer will be contacted as soon as possible.
- A teacher will accompany the child to the hospital if a parent is unavailable to do so.

### **In the case of an incident**

- Any person who sees or suspects the misuse of a substance by a child or any member of the school community, including teachers, parents/carers should report this to the principal. The person should stay calm at all times.
- The principal will then deal with the incident.
- The incident will be recorded and reported to the board.
- The principal will hold all written documentation about the incident.
- Parents/Carers will be informed by the principal, where relevant
- An agreed course of action and disciplinary sanctions will be agreed upon were needed.
- Parents will be referred to appropriate services where necessary.
- In the case of an illegal substance, the Gardaí will be contacted.
- In cases where children/parents/carers/teachers fail to comply with school policy, the Board of management will be informed.
- Further action will be taken at the discretion of the Board of Management.
- The Board of management will at all times comply with the Children First guidelines.

### **Confidentiality**

All matters discussed or recorded will be confidential in accordance with the Children First guidelines and the Board of Management Procedures.

### **Disclosure**

If a disclosure is made, it should be reported to the Designated Liaison Person in the school in accordance with the Children First guidelines.

### **Media Queries**

All media queries will be directed towards the principal and/or the chairperson of the board. No teacher, parent/carer or child will answer questions in relation to school matters

### **Management of Substances**

#### ***Legal Drugs***

The use of legal drugs in the school has been examined under the section of this policy entitled "Administration of Medication".

It is acknowledged that all situations are different and must be dealt with as such.

#### ***Solvents***

- Tip-X and solvent markers are not permitted by any pupil in the school. The pupil may ask their teacher to correct an error on their behalf using Tip-X. Each teacher is obliged to keep his or her Tip-X and solvent markers in a safe place at all times.
- The use of aerosol sprays is generally not permitted by pupils in the school. However aerosol sprays will on occasion

be used for arts and crafts. An adult must supervise such activities.

- Cleaning solvents held in the school should be stored in a locked cupboard at all times.

### ***Tobacco Smoking***

- In correspondence with the Tobacco Act 2002, smoking is not permitted anywhere within the school grounds- building, school grounds etc. Our policy extends to any activity the school engages in with the children on behalf of the school

### ***Alcohol***

- The consumption and possession of alcohol is not allowed at any time on the school premises except if prior permission has been sought and granted by the Board of Management.

### ***Illegal Drugs***

- Illegal drugs as itemised under the current legislation are not permitted within the school premises.

## **Training and Staff Development**

- Ongoing training and staff development will be offered to members of staff to support the implementation of this policy. This will be in the form of continuing professional development.
- The attention of all newly appointed staff will be drawn to this policy upon their appointment to the school.
- All members of the staff will adhere to this policy.
- The school will liaise with relevant agencies on an ongoing basis.

## **Parents**

- When appropriate, relevant information will be given to parents.
- Parents are encouraged to discuss any issues being covered within the policy.
- The policy will be available for parents to view.
- Parents are encouraged to provide feedback on this policy, for review purposes.

## **Implementing/Reviewing Policy**

The Substance use policy will be reviewed in line with the SPHE policy. This review will take place following consultation with parents/carers and relevant agencies and will involve the changing of information based on current practice and legislation when appropriate. Any developments in the school-based programme (Walk Tall) will be monitored and feedback will be obtained from teachers, parents/carers and the pupils in order to enhance the policy. From this an evaluation will be drawn up. The principal and the Board of management will have ultimate responsibility for the policy, its implementation and its review.

## **Dissemination of Policy**

This policy will be published on the school website and provided to the Parent-Teacher Association, when established. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the Patron, if requested. Hard copies of this, and all school policies, are available at the school on request.

Signed: Gerry Mc Kevitt (School Manager)

Date: August 30<sup>th</sup> 2015