

# Gaelscoil Eoghain Uí Thuairisc

## Substance Use Policy

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Gaelscoil Eoghain Uí Thuairisc is committed to addressing the needs of the whole community in relation to substance use. This policy applies to teachers and all other school staff, to parents, pupils, the board of management and all users of the school premises. The policy applies at all times on the school premises and also on school related tours and outings.

### **DEFINITION OF DRUG:**

For the purpose of this document, the term `drugs` includes tobacco, alcohol, glue, over-the counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs.

### **DEFINITION OF SCHOOL PREMISES:**

For the purpose of this document the term `school premises` includes both the building and the grounds.

### **RATIONALE:**

#### **Why do we need a Substance Use Policy?**

- The National Drugs Strategy `Building on Experience` is now Government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place. (Guidelines, October 2002)
- This policy will enable the school to provide suitable age-appropriate education for our pupils on the subject of drugs.
- This policy will enable the school to respond appropriately to an issue involving a drug as defined above.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL ETHOS:**

In line with the ethos of our school, each child's personal, emotional and social development is a priority. The building of each child's self-esteem is of prime importance. We aim to provide a safe and secure environment for our pupils and for all in the school community. We also seek to support those who are experiencing difficulties.

### **AIMS:**

The aims of our Substance Use Policy are as follow:

- The development of a framework for education concerning substance use.
- The development of a framework for the management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents.
- The provision for training and staff development.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

The objectives of our Substance Use Policy are as follow:

- To develop positive self-esteem in our pupils and to give them the confidence, skills and knowledge necessary to make healthy life choices.
- To help the children to appreciate their worth and the worth of others.
- To inculcate in the children a sense of responsibility for themselves and others

- To help the children to develop strategies to assist in the prevention of substance misuse.
- To ensure teacher training in the various education programmes which relate to substance use.
- To provide Guidelines and information for teachers to guide their response to an issue relating to substance misuse.
- To support parents in their primary role as educators of their children in relation to substance use.
- To ensure that the school has correct procedures in place for dealing with any substance misuse incident which may arise in the school or on school related tours / incident.

### **EDUCATION REGARDING SUBSTANCE USE:**

The school wishes to emphasise that the primary role of substance misuse prevention rests with parents and guardians.

We believe that education in school about alcohol, tobacco and drugs is most effective if provided in the broader context of social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

- Education in the area of substance use is an integral part of SPHE. The Walk Tall Programme, the specific Substance Misuse Prevention Programme, is in use in this school, this programme addresses the issues relating to the use of tobacco, alcohol, legal and illegal drugs.
- The main themes in the Walk Tall Programme are
  - Self-esteem
  - Feelings
  - Influences
  - Decision making
  - Drugs awareness
- Raising the children`s self esteem is a primary focus of the Walk Tall Programme and a primary aim of the school. High self-esteem gives children the confidence to make healthy choices.
- The themes of the Walk Tall Programme are also developed in other areas of SPHE ( RSE and the Stay Safe programme) and also in Religion and SESE.
- The scope of the SPHE Programme also allows us to draw on the expertise available from the following, to enhance the work done in class
  - The local community e.g.Parents, Gardai and Health Board personnel.
  - The Support Staff of the Walk Tall Programme.
- Confirmation classes each year will do a module on `Taking the Pledge` and a speaker will be invited from the PTAA.

The class teacher will always be present during visits from outside speakers.

### **PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF SUBSTANCE MISUSE:**

#### **SMOKING**

- Gaelscoil Eoghain Uí Thuairisc is a non-smoking area.
- All persons are required by law to comply with this non-smoking regulation.
- Pupils are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on the school premises or on school related outings / tours.
- Pupils found smoking on the school premises or on school related outings / tours will be reported to the Principal and parents will be informed.
- Tobacco will not be permitted as a prize in a school raffle.
- Any person who smokes on the school premises will be reported to the school Principal.

## **ALCOHOL**

- The consumption of alcohol by a pupil on the school premises or during any school related activity is strictly forbidden and would be treated as a very serious disciplinary matter.
- Were a teacher or other member of staff to come to school under the influence of alcohol, a family member or friend would be called to take them home.

## **ILLCIT DRUGS AND SOLVENTS**

- **Pupils are strictly forbidden to be in possession of, or to use, illicit drugs or solvents on the school premises.**
- Aerosols, sprays eg deodorants, body spray, paints etc are prohibited on the school premises and during school related activities.
- **(?cad faoi ábhair glanacháin – Pledge , bleach &rl ????)seomraí stórais glanacháin faoi ghlas ?**
- All adults on the school premises are forbidden to be in possession of, to use, or to sell illicit drugs.
- If illicit drugs or any drug paraphernalia e.g syringes, are found on the school premises, they will be brought to the Principal's office and the Gardaí will be contacted immediately.
- **Discovery of illegal substances must be reported to the Gardai.**
- If a member of Staff is of the opinion that a student or other adult is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, she/he will immediately inform the Principal, who will take the necessary action.
- Where the school suspects the trafficking of illicit drugs, an investigation would be carried out and the advice and assistance of the Gardaí would be sought.
- Returning confiscated articles: Confiscated items not required by the Gardai must be returned to the parents. They will be informed in writing within 24 hours of articles confiscated and an explanation given as to why it is inappropriate to return the articles to the pupil.
- The school's Board of Management will expect parents/ guardians to inform the Principal if they suspect their child of drug taking.

## **MANAGING DRUG INCIDENTS:**

The following are examples of a drug incident:

- Experimenting with solvents, tobacco and alcohol.
- Intoxication/ unusual behaviour.
- Suspicion of drug use, possession of, or dealing drugs.
- Disclosure by another person.

- Possession of a legal/illegal drug on the school premises or on school related activity.
- Selling / supplying legal/ illegal drugs.
- Person seeking help from a member of staff.
- School grounds being used for drug activity
- Drug paraphernalia found on school property.

**PROCEDURE:**

Where there is no immediate danger to the pupil, it is important to take time to assess the situation before responding.

- Any staff member who encounters a drug incident must inform the Principal, who is also the Designated Liaison Person (DPL) all written documentation will be held confidentially by the Principal.
- It is important that in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents, a limited number of people are involved in managing the incident. Staff will be informed on a `need to know` basis.
- Parents will be informed and the Code of Behaviour will be invoked. Suspension and / or expulsion may follow.
- Confidentially: Where a pupil confides in a member of staff regarding drug use with a view to seeking help, the staff member should follow Child protection Guidelines. The DPL, in consultation with the staff member, will then decide on the involvement of parents/ guardians at an appropriate time.
- The Principal will liaise with the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) in the event of any drugs found on the premises. Gardai will be informed regarding all incidences regarding illegal drugs.
- In response to all incidents, parents will be advised to seek support from the relevant Community Care Area.
- If a pupil has a drug problem, parents will be advised to make a referral to a G.P. and /or Drug Treatment Centre.
- The Principal will handle all media queries. The school will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.
- The matter should be recorded in the serious incident book.

In situations of confirmed use/ supply or possession all details will be recorded and acted upon. The record will be retained by the school.

**DRUG-RELATED ISSUE RELATING TO ADULTS:**

Adults found to be smoking or drinking on the school premises will be asked to stop. If they refuse to do so, they will be asked to leave. If they do not comply with this request the Gardai will be called and the matter will be reported to the Board of Management.

In cases of suspected drug misuse by parents/ guardians, the Child Protection Guidelines will be invoked.

**DRUG-RELATED ISSUE RELATING TO STAFF:**

Normally, a verbal warning will be given by the Principal to staff who do not comply with the policy. If the matter persists it will be reported to the Board of Management and the staff member will be advised to seek appropriate help. In cases of an

extremely serious nature, disciplinary procedures may be invoked immediately, which may result in dismissal.

**PARENT INFORMATION AND SUPPORT:**

If parents require further information, advice or training, the school can be the conduit between the Parents` Association or individual parent and an appropriate agency which will provide the service.

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT:**

Social, Personal and Health Education is a curricular subject in which the teaching staff have received training. The prevention of substance misuse is an element of this subject covered in this school by the Walk Tall Programme.

**REVIEW AND EVALUATION:**

This policy has been evaluated by

- The school staff
- Coiste na gCairde (Parents` Association)