

POBALSCOIL NEASÁIN, BALDOYLE SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

Introduction:

In response to the National Drug Strategy – Building on Experience, and the encroaching drug and alcohol culture in our society and in particular in 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 abuse.

Pobalscoil Neasáin is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to substance abuse. This draft policy statement has been drawn up in conjunction with teachers, parents, Board of Management, Student Council and representatives from voluntary and statutory agencies in the school community. This policy applies to pupils, teachers, parents, ancillary staff and all users of the school grounds. It is applicable any time the school is in operation and to all school related activities. It applies to all groups who use the school building and grounds either during or outside school hours.

A drug is any substance, which changes the way the body functions mentally, physically or emotionally. The use, possession, sale or distribution of tobacco, alcohol or illegal substances will not be tolerated in the school. The school reserves the right to act on any information it may receive regarding the use, possession or distribution of illegal substances.

The use of drugs in School

The use possession or distribution of alcohol, tobacco, controlled substances or related substances (unprescribed medication or legal substitutes for illegal substances) or the misuse of prescription drugs/ solvents will not be tolerated within the school community or while representing the school outside e.g., tours.

The School Ethos

Pobalscoil Neasáin believes that the personal and social development of each member of the school community is important. Education flourishes in an environment where good relationships are encouraged, where people feel valued and respected and where there is genuine tolerance, fairness and support for those in difficulty. This philosophy underpins and informs all the work we do and is central to this policy document.

Our aim is to:

- To provide a safe and healthy environment
- To provide education programmes and to increase students – knowledge of the human body to help promote positive health behaviours, and a positive self esteem.
- To provide teachers and parents with a clear structure in terms of managing incidents.
- To ensure that students know the consequence of substance use and be equipped to make healthy decisions.

The Policy will focus on:

- 1) Strategies for prevention of substance use.
- 2) Procedures for managing drug incidences in the school.
- 3) Development and Training.

Prevention Education and Prevention Strategies

Prevention Education should be taught in the context of SPHE. All aspects of the SPHE Programme is to be covered at each class level by the class teacher. The school Chaplain will act as co-ordinator of SPHE programme within the school and will maintain links with the outside support services.

Walk Tall Programme – on my own two feet.

Stay Safe Programme

RSE Programme

Involvement with the outside agencies

JLO/Gardai

Drugs Task Force

Supplementary programmes, visitors and events must complement the SPHE Programme and must be subject to strict criteria. All information should be age and developmentally appropriate.

Strategies in relation to solvents.

All school owned cleaning fluids and solvents will be stored carefully where pupils cannot access them. Each staff member will ensure the safety of pupils by ensuring personal items i.e., tippex, aerosols, etc. are not accessed by the students in their care.

Smoking Ban.

In accordance with the Health Act 2001, smoking is prohibited on the school premises and in the school grounds. Every member of the school community has an obligation to uphold the law as it pertains in this situation.

Information with regard to the smoking ban will be disseminated as follows:

- Information on school's SPHE programme.
- Appropriate "no smoking" signs prominently displayed throughout the school.

Managing Incidents.

Every staff member, including ancillary staff, visiting facilitators and service providers has a role when an incident involving substance use, discovery or possession occurs. Discovery of legal/illegal substances must be dealt with in a rational and consistent manner, in accordance with legal requirements. In the event of a pupil being caught possessing or under the influence of legal/illegal substance the school will respond in the following way:

- The school will adopt a calm, rational and caring approach at all times.
- The pupil's safety and the safety of others must be taken into account.
- The child will be isolated and supervised in a caring and supportive manner, if found to be under the influence of a substance.
- If found in possession of a substance, the child should be escorted to the Principal's office with the substance and supervised closely. Teachers should not handle or hold the substance.
- The parents/guardians of the child should be called and informed of the incident.
- If illegal substances are involved the gardai must be immediately contacted.
- The incident will be assessed in consultation with class teacher and whoever made the discovery.
- The child will be advised, counselled or sanctioned in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Incidents involving Adults.

- All incidents involving adults on the school premises, suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs will be brought to the attention of the Principal who will request the adult to leave the school premises. Due discretion will be used with regard to seeking any involvement from Gardai in any situation that arises.
- Where adults are suspected of using illegal drugs anywhere on the school campus, Gardai will be contacted immediately. Members of staff will not approach anyone who is suspected of using illegal drugs.

Training and Development for School Community

Teachers:

- The school will support staff in the delivery of substance use education by providing resource materials in the staff room.
- The school will provide any training necessary for the continued development of the SPHE programme by involving outside agencies to provide appropriate training.
- The training needs of new teachers will get particular attention through informing them of, and releasing them to, in-service.
- The school will support parents by making them aware of the programmes organised throughout the year.

The Administration of Medicines

While the Board of Management has a duty to safeguard the health and safety of pupils when they are engaged in authorized school activities, this does not imply a duty upon teachers to personally undertake the administration of medicines.

The Board of Management requests parents to ensure that Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Heads be made aware in writing of any medical condition suffered by any children.

Parents of a pupil requiring regular medication during school hours should write to the school management towards arranging storage of emergency medication e.g. inhalers.

Written details are required from the parent/guardian giving the name of the child, name and dose of medication, whether the child is responsible for his/her own medication, the circumstances in which medication is to be given to the student by the teacher; and consent for it to be issued; when the parent is to be notified and when s/he can be contacted. It is the parent's responsibility to check each morning whether or not the authorized teacher is in school unless an alternative arrangement is made locally.

Where children are suffering from life-threatening conditions, parents should outline clearly in writing, what can and can't be done in a particular emergency situation, with particular reference to what may be a risk to the child.

In emergency situations qualified medical assistance will be secured at the earliest opportunity.

Parents/Guardians should ensure that these procedures are clearly understood before submitting any request to Management.