

Substance Use Policy

The Substance Use Policy of St Colman's BNS

The Substance Use Policy of St Colman's BNS has been prepared and produced by the Board of Management in consultation with parents and staff.

This policy applies to students, teachers, auxiliary staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the building. It is applicable during school-time – including breaks and to ALL school related activities. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place, e.g. School Tour.

Relationship to School Ethos

The school is committed to the care of the whole school community and the provision of a safe and secure environment for learning. This policy is in keeping with those ideals.

Rationale

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of this reality. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their student cohort and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.

The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them. The National Drugs Strategy '*Building on Experience*' is now government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place

Aims

The aim of the substance use policy of St Colman's BNS is primary prevention. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs. We aim to develop in our pupils' better self-esteem, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils age appropriate information from educational programmes.

Policy Content

Education concerning substance use

Education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs is most effective if provided in the broader context of a Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme, which is developmental and delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment. The use of an outside visitor/ speaker to enhance the work done in class is always considered in the context of the full SPHE programme and is undertaken in the presence of a teacher.

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use include

- Use or suspected use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco on the school premises or during a school-related activity
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour
- Disclosure about use
- Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia
- Possession and/or supply on the school premises or during a school-related activity

The school will respond to incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use in a planned and considered way. In certain cases it may be necessary to seek legal advice. Due care will be important in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use may include referral to a support agency. It should be stressed that the ultimate sanction of expulsion can have the effect of alienating a student from mainstream sources of help and may result in this student becoming more involved in the culture of drug misuse.

Reporting procedure:

- Witness to drug related incident informs teacher/staff member/Principal
- Principal inform parents/guardians
- Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management
- Gardaí informed depending on seriousness of incident
- Area Health Board informed for disposal of items

Parents will be informed of an incident involving their own child and will be asked to accept responsibility, co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardaí if necessary.

Parents will be involved in incidents involving another child only if deemed necessary by the school authorities; if parents are aware that another child is involved in drug-related incidents under the scope of this policy they should inform the teacher, Principal or a Board member.

Whether or not to inform the Gardaí of minor incidents will be at the discretion of the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management, but they will be involved in any serious substance abuse incidents.

At local level the following support agencies are available to which students involved in substance misuse might be referred:

- N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous)
- Child Care & Family Support Services
- Drug Education Officer
- Drug Helpline **1800 341 900**
- Juvenile Liaison Officer
- Community Garda

In the event of media interest in relation to a 'drug related incident', the matter will be referred to the Board of Management and the Chairperson will issue a prepared statement to the media.

Success Criteria

- Monitoring of behavior in classrooms, corridor, yard, and on out of school activities
- Appropriate intervention when an incident occurs
- Openness in discussing issues relating to substance use
- Positive feedback from all stakeholders
- Feedback from parents/guardians will be carefully considered by the Board of Management

Monitoring

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. A copy of this policy will be issued to all staff members and a reminder of its contents will be given at the first staff meeting of each year. A Board of Management member has agreed to take responsibility to monitor procedures annually and ensure they are being adhered to.

Implementation Procedures

Policy distributed to Board of Management members for ratification in June 2011. When ratified and amended, copies were given to:

- All staff members
- Parents' Association
- School Community on request

Review

The first annual review will be held in June 2012 and procedures will be reviewed annually.

Management of Persons in the Workplace Under The Influence of Drugs and/or Alcohol

The Board of Management shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that pupils and other persons in the workplace are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare from persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The term "in the workplace", in the preceding sentence includes all school related activities taking place under the supervision of a teacher, with the Board's approval, and both within and away from the school premises.

Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and others. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of any contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a parent or adult collecting a pupil from school or presenting themselves on the premises for another reason is unfit to be on the premises or to take care of the said pupil, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal will be informed and the duty of care will apply to the pupil. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the pupil and safeguard their best interests.

In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove him/herself from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers. An Employee Assistance Service (telephone: 1800 411 057 or e-mail: eas@vhics.ie) is available to teaching staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service.

The Board of Management also acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all other staff members. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the non teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to seek counseling or other professional intervention.

All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded and reported as soon as possible to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management shall consider all such reports and decide on the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

Appendix 1

Important Contact Numbers

Drugs Advisory and Treatment Centre
Trinity Court, 30/31 Pearse Street, Dublin 2 01 677 1122

Drugs/AIDS Services:

South Western Area Health Board,
Bridge House, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10 01 620 6400

East Coast Area Health Board,
Centenary House, Dun Laoghaire 01 280 3335

Northern Area Health Board,
Phisboro Tower, Dublin 7 01 882 0300

Alcohol Services 01 660 7838
East Coast Area Health Board:
Baggot Street Community Alcohol Treatment Unit

Reference Section

- Walk Tall Programme-a Social, Personal and Health education programme for the prevention of Substance Misuse - Department of Education and Science.
www.dwec.ie/smpp
- Social, Personal and Health Education-Primary School Curriculum and Teacher Guidelines - Department of Education and Science/NCCA (1999).
- Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Primary Schools – Department of Education and Science (2001).
- Substance Misuse Prevention information booklet outlining a multi- strand approach for Boards of Management, Teachers, Parents and other Educators – Department of Education 1997.
- “On My Own Two Feet” – Educational Resource Materials for Social, Personal and Health Education - Department of Education and Science.
- Directory of Alcohol, Drugs and related services in the Republic of Ireland – Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health and Children.
- Facts about Drug Abuse in Ireland, compiled by Dr Des Corrigan - Health Promotion Unit, Dept of Health and Children (revised edition available in September).
- The National Drugs Strategy, “Building on Experience” is available at www.pobail.ie
- The Report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled “Drug Use Prevention” is available at www.nacd.ie
- www.sdps.ie
- www.pcsp.ie