

Patrician Presentation
Secondary School

Substance Misuse policy

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Introduction Statement:

Our drug/substance policy is supportive of the findings of a survey on substance misuse conducted among a random sample of all the partners involved in education in Patrician/Presentation Secondary School, Fethard.

It's main objective is the care and the protection of every young person in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and any subsequent Acts.

With the present environment in mind, this policy is also intended to protect and support the Ethos and Mission Statement of the Patrician Sisters, Bishop Delaney and Nano Nagle.

See appendix I for mission Statement.

See appendix II for Ethos.

The possession, use or supply of illegal substances.

While we view cigarettes as drugs, they are catered for in the school code of behaviour. Should an incident relating to any of these substances occur, which includes being under the influences of such a substances, it is the policy of the school to respond in a firm but manner, with due regard for the safety and welfare of the individual(s) involved, other students of the school, the school staff and the wider school community.

The consumption of alcohol on the school premises by all registered school pupils is contrary to this policy.

See appendix III for school code of behaviour

For the purpose of this policy.

- **A drug will mean**

A drug can be defined as a chemical substances, legal or illegal, which causes changes in the way the human body functions, either mental, physical or emotionally, including alcohol, tobacco, solvents, medication, any related paraphernalia and any other drug included under the misuse of drug included under the misuse of drugs act 1977, 1984, The Intoxicating liquor act and any subsequent acts.

- **School will mean**

All school buildings. The school yard and all open areas within school boundaries including the football pitch and access road from the convent lane. Also the semi-circular area directly in front of the main school entrance.

- **Parent will mean**

Parent or legal guardian.

- **Student will mean**

All pupils enrolled in patrician Presentation secondary School. (All other persons found in breach of this policy on school premises may be referred to the gardai and/or the relevant authorities.

When & to whom this policy applies:

Except where otherwise stated, this policy applies to all students, staff and other users of the school premises (including parents, visitors, those attending evening classes etc). It is in force at all times on the school premises, during school time and school related activities.

Principles underlying the policy

- Research in South Tipperary has shown a strong correlation between the number of young people attending the Adolescent Addiction Counselling Service and the development of substance misuse policy in schools in the south Tipperary area.
- Concern for the wellbeing of the young person and of the school community, in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act of 2000.
- An awareness of the need for substances misuse education in the current climate in Ireland today.
- A belief that a clearly defined and well communicated substances misuse policy is a cornerstone of substances misuse prevention in our school.

Educational containing substances misuse at present in our school.

Aim:

To give knowledge, to foster self-esteem and to empower young people with skills to make responsible, informed decisions.

Alcohol, tobacco and drug education is available to all students through planned use of the relevant sections of the following programmes.

Junior Cycle:

- NWHB junior cycle SPHE programmes.
- Substance abuse prevention programme (SAPP) (On My Own Feet).

Senior cycle:

- NWHB senior cycle SPHE programmes.
- Modules on drug education, from senior religion programme.
- Guest speakers.
- Attendance at drug information evenings (when available).

Substance misuse education is also carried out on a cross-curriculum basis in our school.

Parents:

- Depending on demand, a programme is available to parents, which highlights the role of good family communication and self-esteem, in the long-term prevention of drug and alcohol misuse.

Methodologies:

- Good discussion.
- Experiential learning.
- Dissemination of knowledge through use of newspaper Articles/videos/talks/literature and pamphlets.

Management of a Substance Misuse Incident

Internal lines of reporting and key individuals:

All substance misuse incidents should be reported to the principle or deputy principle as appropriate at the time who may, if deemed necessary, seek a statement or explanation from the person(s) concerned and will carefully record same and maintain a record of the investigation. The school will communicate with parent(s) and liaise with or report to other relevant agencies, if deemed appropriate and necessary.

Copies of such statements and actions deemed relevant to a particular student may be made available to that student and to his/her parent/guardian, in order that when and if required, they will have a reasonable and just opportunity to make a response on the matter at issue.

The school may inform the student(s) and their parents of it's findings and their reasons for same and indicate the sanctions that it intends to impose.

Recording of incidents

Written records may be kept of all misuse incidents in breach of the school policy and will be stored by the principle in a confidential file. Records should include any warning and/or advice given to the student and the consequences of repetition of the behaviour. If the name of the student is to be recorded on the file, they may be informed of this.

In written records, the recording of actual information only is preferable. Any opinion must be stated as such.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to students regarding information relating to incidents in breach of this policy. Information may, if deemed necessary or appropriate, be shared, for example, with or more other staff member, with the parents of those involved in the incident, or with an appropriate external agency. However, discretion within these limits will be observed.

The limits of confidentiality will be explained to the student prior to disclosure where this is possible. Students wishing to speak to someone in confidence may ask the school to put them in contact with an external agency that may meet their need.

Information involving parents.

Parents will be notified at the earliest opportunity if their minor son/daughter is involved in a substance misuse incident, as parental involvement and support is seen as essential in the resolution of these difficulties. Parents in such cases may be invited to the school to discuss what has happened and the course of action to be taken. The student may normally be informed that their parents are being notified. Parents may then be given the name and number of an appropriate external agency should they wish to seek further support for themselves.

Information involving gardai

In incidents involving the supply or possession of illegal substances, the school may inform the gardai. Gardai advice may also be sought about other incidents on a case-by-case basis.

This decision will rest with the Principle and other key staff. If practicable, parents will be contacted before gardai become involved.

Sanctions/Disciplinary Issues

In accordance with the disciplinary policy of this policy of this school a graded system of firm and consistent sanctions will apply to students involved in substance misuse incidents. Sanctions up to and including suspension or even expulsion may be imposed depending on the seriousness of the incident. In cases of repeated breaches of the policy and in the case supply of illegal drugs, expulsion may be recommended to the board of management.

Parents/Guardians have a right to appeal on behalf of their minor child in line with the school's procedures. A student who has attained his/her majority (over 18yrs) can appeal on his/her own behalf.

Counselling/support of those involved

Because of the potentially insidious nature of drug use for the person involved, and for the wider school community, students and staff directly involved in illicit drug incidents may be offered support through internal support systems and contact with external agencies.

Disposing of illegal drugs

If an illegal drug or any substance which is suspected to be an illegal drug or drug paraphernalia is found on school property or during school activity, the representative of the school may take immediate possession of the item(s) and retain same during the investigation, or until it can be safely passed on to a representative of an appropriate outside agency. In the meantime it should be handled as little as possible in the interim, and no attempt should be made to taste or analyse the substance. Where possible, two adults should be present during and procedures involving handling of suspected illegal drugs or such suspected substances.

Where the school parts with such items to an outside agency, a record of all items so disposed of may be retained, as it may be relevant at a later stage.

Suspicion of possession

Where there is reasonable cause to believe a student has on his/her person a substance in breach of this policy, he/she may be asked to volunteer the drug. If they refuse, the gardai may be called. An attempt will be made to notify a minor student's parents/guardian prior to the arrival of the gardai.

In emergencies, medical/emergency services will be sought.

Availability, storage & use of solvents

Cleaning and other volatile substances will be stored securely when not in use, under supervision of authorised personnel. We endeavour to use non-toxic products where possible.

Pupils medication.

On entry into the school, parents/guardians are obliged to state on the entrance form, details of any health problems, as well as any long term medication being used. Parents/guardians are also obliged to inform the school of any changes that may arise, after completion of the entrance form.

See appendix IV for entrance form

Where a student is using a medication, parental approval must be recorded by the parent/guardian in the student's school diary.

Any medication is the property of the parent/guardian.

In the event of a pupil appearing unwell, for any reason, parents will be contacted in accordance with normal school procedures.

Media

The school will not comment on any individual matter when an investigation into a substance misuse incident is in progress. If the school is confronted by a media enquiry, it may decide to outline its policy and procedures for managing and investigating such an incident. After the conclusion on any such investigation, the board of management may, to protect the school's reputation, clarify its own position in relation to these matters. Only the principle or a nominated spokesperson on behalf of the school will handle all media enquiries and the response to it.

Date for Evaluation

The working group representatives will review this policy by May 2005.

Provision for training and staff development.

The board of management and the school trustees are committed to training and staff development in the area of substance misuse are brought to the attention of staff. The development of a S.M.P. was included in the school plan for the year 2003/2004.

Ms. Sinead O'Mahoney from the south east health board launched the policy with a comprehensive presentation to all staff members on the first day of term 2003.

The purpose of this presentation was:

- To create an awareness among the staff on the extent of the problem in south Tipperary.
- To support the drawing up of a substance misuse policy for our school.

Staff members were thus made aware of the signs and symptoms of substance misuse. Information was also received on the laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they relate to everyday life in school.

To support the implementation of this policy, Ms. O'Mahoney will address all staff again in the New Year. Furthermore, all religion and SPHE teachers will receive in-service training on the teaching of a substance misuse programme. The school aims to present this programme to the pupils shortly afterwards.

The school has requested an information pack on substance misuse from south eastern health board, for distribution to 1st year parents. This pack will be distributed in conjunction with a drug awareness campaign being carried out in south Tipperary during the winter of 2003/2004.

Success criteria

This policy will be deemed successful:

- By the increased understanding and awareness of Substance Misuse in School.
- By the openness and level of support available in the school, if a substance misuse incident occurs.
- Inclusion of this policy in the student record book (homework diary).
- By availability of a parenting course in the school.
- By the operation of a comprehensive substance misuse education programme in the school.

Monitoring, review and Evaluation:

Monitoring, review and evaluation of this policy and all related work and procedures will take place on an ongoing basis. This will allow the school to keep up to date with current and best practise regarding the area of substance misuse.

Implementation

The drug/substance policy will come into effect in the second term of the 2003/2004 school year.

All staff members and parents/guardians will receive a copy of this policy.

