

Substance Use Policy

Introductory Statement & Rationale:

This policy is necessary given that exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs are part of the reality of life for students today. This presents young people with many challenges, which affect their health and well being. A drug can be defined as a chemical, which causes changes to the way the human body functions mentally, physically or emotionally. For the purposes of this policy we are concerned with substances which have the power to change a previous mood or on which the taker may become physically or psychologically dependent.

In Scoil an Athar Tadhg we endeavour to promote the social and personal development of our students. This includes education to enable pupils to make informed, healthy, responsible choices.

Scope:

This policy seeks to ensure the health, safety and well being of the children, staff, parents and other users of Scoil an Athar Tadhg while they are in attendance at the school. It applies during school times (including break times) 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/visit.

Aims:

- To ensure the safety of children, staff, visitors and school users.
- To enable children to make informed healthy and responsible choices.
- To equip children with personal and social skills.
- To provide honest and age-appropriate information on drugs.
- In line with the ethos of the school, to provide a safe and secure environment for learning where people feel valued and respected and where there is tolerance and support for those in difficulty.
- To ensure the smooth running of the school.

Policy Content:

The content of this policy is addressed under three sub-headings:

1. Education concerning substance use
2. Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents.
3. Provision for training and staff development

1. Education concerning substance use

Education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs will be provided in the Social and Personal Health Education (S.P.H.E.) programme. The programme is developmental and delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment.

Programmes used include Stay Safe Programme, Walk Tall, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

Specialists in the area of substance abuse may visit senior classes. The use of an outside visitor/ speaker will always be considered in the context of the full SPHE programme and will be undertaken in the presence of the teacher.

2. Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents

In accordance with Health and Safety regulations, smoking is prohibited on the school premises.

Alcohol shall not be consumed on the school premises.

The school does not accept the possession, use or supply of drugs in the school or on school related activities. Prescribed medication is administered according to the structures set out in our Administration of Medication Policy.

To ensure children's safety, they are not allowed to bring cigarettes, matches, lighters, aerosols, or any products containing dangerous solvents to school. Such products will be confiscated and appropriate action taken.

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use might include:

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- 1) Use or suspected use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco on the school premises or during a school related activity
- 2) Intoxication/ Unusual or unbecoming behaviour arising from use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs.
- 3) Disclosure about use
- 4) Possession and/or supply of alcohol, tobacco or drugs (with the exception of prescribed medication for which permission has been given) on the school premises or during a school related activity.
- 5) Finding these substances and /or associated paraphernalia e.g. syringes.
- 6) Disposal of substances and/or associated paraphernalia.

Our school will respond to incidents in a planned, considered and caring way. Due care will be exercised in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. Confidentiality will be maintained in all instances. An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use may include referral to a support agency. Disciplinary responses, as set down in the Code of Behaviour, include suspension or expulsion.

The reporting procedure for such incidents is as follows:

Witness to incident informs teacher/staff member/Principal. Teacher/ staff members will inform Principal of incidents they have witnessed or been informed of.

The Principal informs the parents/guardians.

The Principal informs the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

The Principal (Designated Liaison Person, DLP) will take responsibility for seeking advice, including from external agencies where appropriate, and making decisions with regards to the best course of action to take. The focus of the decisions will be the best interest of the child. This may in some cases involve the local Gardai or other agencies. A written record will be kept of all incidents.

3. Provision for Training and Staff Development

Staff will be made aware of courses concerning the delivery of the SPHE programme as they become available.

Talks will be arranged through P.A./ B.O.M. to highlight parental/ staff awareness in the area of substance abuse.

Circulation and revision of draft policy

This draft policy was drawn up by the Principal and teachers of Scoil an Athar Tadhg in between April-June 2011. It was informed by the DES *Guidelines for Developing a School Substance Use Policy*. It was submitted to the Parents Association for the views of parents/guardians in March 2012. The Policy Review Group, (consisting of two representatives of the PA and Mary Gilley representing the school staff) met on Fri. March 16th to agree proposed changes to the draft policy prior to submission to the BOM for ratification.

Roles and Responsibility for Development, Implementation and Reporting:

The Board of Management, through the Principal and teaching staff has the overall responsibility for the development and implementation of this policy.

Review of Substance Use Policy:

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis and will be reviewed every two years.

Copies of the policy will be made available to all staff and to the Parents Association.

More copies of this policy are available from the school upon request.

Success:

The success of this policy will be judged by the successful implementation of its stated aims.

RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil an Athar Tadhg at its meeting on June 19th, 2012. Parents/guardians will be informed of the Substance Use Policy on enrolment of their child/ren and will be asked to sign a statement to the effect that they accept the policy and agree that they are bound by it.

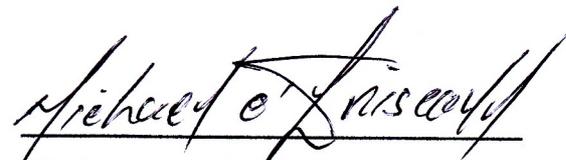
Parents may obtain a copy of this Policy through the Parent Association or from the school office.

Review Date: 2014-2015

Ratified by Board of Management on:

June 19th, 2012

Signed


Chairperson, BOM