

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

Introduction

Rationale for drug policy

Because of the increase in the number of incidents involving drugs, the prevalence of substance misuse and the damage caused to individuals, families and communities around the city, the National Drug Strategy have initiated a compulsory drugs policy for all schools.

Purpose/Objectives

- Formalise drug education policy
- Provide clear management procedures for dealing with drug related incidents
- Ensure students are informed of the risks associated with drugs, so they can make informed decisions around this issue.
- Provide counselling to students who require assistance.

Consultation Process

Students: Thomas Dalton, Thomas Quinn

Staff: Mr. Liam Martin, Ms. Stephanie O'Donoghue and Ms. Elaine O'Shea

Parents: Ms. Ethel Murphy

Facilitator from Slainte: Ms. Anna O'Neill

All Staff, Student's Council, Parent's Council, Principal and Board of Management

Definition of drugs

'Drugs can be defined as all mood-altering illegal substances, while recognising the degrees of danger associated with each and the differences in their social acceptability and non-acceptability'.

Illegal drugs include tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs (all illegal drugs together with the improper use of medication, solvents, magic mushrooms)

Drug Education Policy

Aim of Drug Education

'give young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes to appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and relate these to their own actions, both now and in their future lives'

Implementation

- First, Second and Third Year Students in 2003/2004 will receive a class once a week through S.P.H.E.
- Transition Year Students will receive a class twice a week

Further booster sessions to be provided based on life skills approach in the senior cycle.

Visiting Speakers

- Properly planned and part of overall programme
- Teachers should always be present and involved particularly in liaison beforehand with speaker with reference to the content.
- Speakers expected to work within the confidentiality policy of the school.

Parents and Drug Education

Parents/Guardians are primary educators and their involvement with school policy should be encouraged sought in any prevention strategy.

'Parents and people at home have the most influence on the lives of children, and are, therefore, crucial in any prevention strategy'.

The Parents association will be invited to liaise with Principal and Deputy-Principal to provide a channel for providing drug awareness for parents.

Management of Drug-Related Incidents:

Introductory Statement

This school will endeavour to handle any alcohol, tobacco or illicit drug incidents in a firm but fair manner, with due regard for the safety and welfare of the individual(s) involved and of other members of the school and to implement any legal obligations that apply. It is recommended that a subgroup representing staff and students investigate strategies for encouraging a no smoking environment.

Outline of Drug Related Incidents

The possession, use, supply, or finding of alcohol or illicit drugs would also constitute a drug related incident as would the attendance at school under the influence of these substances. The school is a no smoking premises where students are not permitted to have cigarettes on the premises or to supply them to another student.

When and to Whom policy applies

- Except where otherwise stated, this policy applies to all students and staff. It is in force at all times on school premises, during school time, and during all school-related activities.
- The exception is the correct and supervised use of cleaning agents and curriculum-related materials/ingredients as specified by the staff member involved.
- Staff may consume alcohol on special school events/occasions with permission granted from school management.

Internal lines of reporting and key individuals

- All alcohol and illicit drug incidents will be reported to the Principal who will inform the Year Head and other staff as appropriate.
- Students themselves are encouraged to inform a member of the teaching staff if an incident occurs.
- While on excursions, the teacher in charge will be responsible for the implementation of this policy where illicit drugs/alcohol incidents are to be referred directly to Principal who will inform other staff as appropriate.

Recording of Incidents

Smoking/alcohol incidences will be recorded as per code of discipline. A separate illicit drug related file will be written, recorded and stored by Principal. Reference will be at the Principal's discretion.

Confidentiality

'Students sometimes request confidentiality. The teacher must attempt to retain the respect and confidence of the student, while ensuring that the information is acted on, so confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.'

Information may need to be shared, for example, with certain staff members, with the parents of those involved, or with an appropriate external agency. However, discretion within these limits will be observed.

Informing/Involving parents

It will be standard practice to inform parents/guardians if their son has been involved in an alcohol or illicit drug incident in breach of the policy. Procedures will be as per code of discipline.

Parents may ask the school Principal or Counsellor to put them in contact with an appropriate external agency if they wish to seek further support for themselves.

Parents with concerns about the actual or possible misuse of alcohol or illicit drugs by their son are invited to discuss these with the school who will offer support, and information about external services.

Informing/Involving Gardai

This school has a positive working relationship with local Gardai, and together they have the welfare of the individual student, other students and the wider school community to consider.

In incidents involving illegal drugs garda advice may also be sought on a case-by-case basis. This decision will rest with the Principal and other key staff.

Sanctions/disciplinary issues

As per the code of discipline of this school a graded system of firm and consistent sanctions will apply to students involved in alcohol or illicit drug incidents. To ensure a smoke free environment the following sanctions will apply to students in possession of or smoking cigarettes – First offence €20 fine and notification to parents, second offence €20 fine and notification to parents, third offence suspension. Staff breaches will be dealt with in accordance with the agreed disciplinary procedures.

Counselling/support of those involved

Students directly involved in illicit drug incidents will be referred by school management to external agencies if necessary in association with guardians for further support.

Students or other members of the school who wish to speak to someone about their own misuse of alcohol or illicit drugs, or that of a person about whom they are concerned, are invited to approach the Principal, Deputy-Principal, Year Head or school Counsellor. They will be offered support and information about external services. Where voluntary, such disclosures will be seen as a desire to seek help and will therefore not be subject to Disciplinary consequences, but will be subject to the Confidentiality Policy outlined above.

Staff dealing with illicit drug incidents will be offered support through informal support systems and contact with external agencies if requested.

Disposing of illegal drugs

If an illegal drug (or suspected illegal drug) is found on school property or during school activity, it should be brought to the attention of the Principal or person in charge. The school is obliged to render illegal drugs beyond further use. The procedures set out in the policy will apply.

Search

This school retains the right to search any part of school property if there is reasonable cause to believe a substance in breach of this policy may be contained therein. This includes school lockers. Students will be given the option to hand over the substance voluntarily prior to search.

Where there is reasonable cause to believe a student (or other user of the school) has on his or her person a substance in breach of this policy, that person will be asked to volunteer the substance. In the case of a refusal the Gardai may be called in to conduct the search. Two staff members must be present during any form of search. If they refuse parents will be notified, the Gardai may be called if it is a suspected illegal drug incident. Two staff members should be present.

Health and Safety

For health and safety issues refer to health and safety statement, which is to be reviewed with regards to drug related incidents, and acute intoxication. Physical collapse or unconsciousness can result from even one experiment with drugs.

Students are encouraged not to use aerosols excessively for health, environmental and safety reasons.

Staff training and support

Staff will receive adequate training to implement the drugs policy.

Monitoring and Implementation

It is in everyone's interest that the policy is supported and implemented by students and staff. School policy owned by school community. Mr. Liam Martin (Deputy Principal) will act as Drug Policy Co-ordinator and will monitor the policy.

Information

Information will be provided through normal procedures. Parents will be made aware through the post. Parent's association will be made aware of policy and will receive a copy of the final draft. Staff existing and incoming will be made aware of the policy.

*** Approved by the Board of Management on 29 January 2003.**

