

School Substance Use Policy of Tubber N.S.

◆ Introductory Statement

This policy applies to the Teachers, pupils, parents, and school visitors during all school related activities.

◆ Rationale

- The Education Act 1998
- Challenges affecting young peoples well being/exposure to media, drugs etc.
- Schools need to reflect on how they provide for the needs of their students
- The National Drugs Strategy “Building on Experience” is now Government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.

◆ Relationship to Characteristics Spirit of the School

This policy ties in very much with the holistic development of the child and with the foundation of the SPHE programme.

◆ Aims

The substance use Policy of Tubber National School is intended to:-

- Provide a safe and secure environment for learning.
- Seeks to engage the partners in the educational process i.e. setting up committees
- Educate children concerning substance use.
- Provides strategies for management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents.
- To provide support to those experiencing difficulty e.g. member of staff – Employment Assistance Scheme.

◆ Guidelines

Education concerning substance use

Education regarding substance use in Tubber National School will be provided within the broad contexts of S.P.H.E., Walk Tall, Bí Folláin and S.P.H.E. strands:

- Myself
- Taking care of my body
- Health and well-being
- Safety and protection
- Safety issues.

Considerations which inform the selection of content are

a)Our rural setting, b)special needs, c)agricultural background.

Approaches to co-ordinate, involve teachers and allocate time include:

- a whole school approach
- A thematic approach (Junior/Senior rooms) –related to S.P.H.E. units, which are covered in a two-year cycle.
- Discrete time – 30 minutes per week
- Incidental time allocation

Other considerations include

- **Multi-class setting.**
- **Sensitivity to substance use in locality.**

(ii) Management of Misuse Incidents

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drugs use will be responded to in a planned and considered way. It may be necessary to seek legal advice in certain circumstances. A balance will be sought between a pastoral and a disciplinary response depending on the circumstances.

Incidents relating to (a)alcohol, (b)tobacco and (c) drug use are addressed in the school's "*Code of Behaviour*" and sanctions are outlined for dealing with unacceptable behaviour/bullying.

Our school's shared understanding of a drug related incident is the use of any chemical which alters how the body works or how the person behaves.

Reporting procedures may include the following;

- 1. Class teacher to the principal to the Board of Management.**
- 2. Communication between the principal and the parents.**
- 3. Reporting to the Gardai (in the case of illegal drugs)**
- 4. Involving the Health Board-"*Children First Guidelines*"**

In situations involving their own child parents will be notified of the incident.

Incidents requiring medical intervention will be dealt with by the local G.P. initially and advice may be sought on further action.

(iii)Training and Staff Development

To be effective we are aware that this policy needs to be supported by an ongoing commitment from the Board of Management to training and staff development. At the moment we are assisted by the Primary Curriculum Support Unit (www.pcsp.ie), Walk Tall Support Office and the Mid-Western Health Board.

We as a staff have received training in "Walk Tall".

Early in the new year 2004 we will receive staff training in "Stay Safe" from CAPP.

There is a shared understanding in our staff of the contribution that an SPHE programme can make to the prevention of substance misuse. We can further support this by developing a supportive class environment in our own classrooms.

We feel that as a staff we may not be sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse especially in relation to drugs and further training in this field would be desirable.

Furthermore we may not be sufficiently aware of the laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they relate to ourselves, to our school and our students.

Further training in these areas would be desirable and this is part of our action plan to source this training and evaluate its accessibility.

Any new staff to the school will be presented with a copy of this policy.

Parent education on SPHE and issues relating to substance misuse will be promoted in the school community by circulating the policy to the parent representatives on

the B.O.M.

Roles and Responsibilities

The teachers are primarily responsible for the development of the policy with support from the parent representatives on the Board. The implementation of the policy will be undertaken by the teachers with the support of the outside agencies already named.

The role of the parents is one of support for the policy and a recognition of their role as prime educators of the children.

The role of the B.O.M. is to ratify the policy and support those involved in drafting, implementing and evaluating the policy.

Success Criteria

The following indicators will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the substance use policy in Tubber National School.

- Teacher observation of attitudes in the school to the substances
- Testing of procedures for reporting

Timeframe for Implementation

This policy will be drafted and amended during the schoolyear 2003/2004 and will not be presented to the Board for ratification until June 2004. Proposed implementation date is September 2004.

Timeframe for Review

The policy will be reviewed by both teachers at certain junctures to evaluate the effectiveness of the substance use policy and to ascertain what changes, if any, are necessary. Initially it will be reviewed in June 2005, one year after implementation.

Responsibility for Review

This will be the joint responsibility of the two teachers.

Ratification and Communication.

Ratified June 2004. A copy of the policy was circulated to all members of the B.O.M. and the policy is available on the school website.