



Substance Use Policy

Aims of Policy

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.

The aim of the substance use policy of Canal Way Educate Together 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 self-esteem and well being, by providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and by giving our pupils age appropriate information from educational programmes.

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.

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 government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.

The school authority in Canal Way ETNS has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.

School Ethos

The school believes that the personal and social development of each member of the school community is important. Good relationships are fostered, people feel valued and respected and there is genuine respect, fairness and support for those in difficulty.

As a health promoting school we have an important role in enabling students to value their well being and improve their health.

The well being of students is enhanced by:

- providing a safe and healthy environment
- promoting positive attitude towards health
- increasing knowledge about health
- actively promoting self esteem and self-awareness
- working in partnership with the parents/guardians and pupils

In response to the emerging drug culture in our society we feel the need to implement a policy to address the problem of substance use should it arise.

Policy Content

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 Abuse:

Substance misuse prevention education will be taught throughout the school in the overall context of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum. The

core programme for substance misuse prevention education will be the Walk Tall programme. It will be supported by the Stay Safe, RSE and Learn Together Programme.

The Walk Tall Programme aims to give children the confidence, skills and knowledge to make healthy choices. Social, Personal and Health Education is time-tabled into the curriculum and taught for 30 minutes per week by the class teacher. The methodologies used include discussion, art work, cooperative games, circle work, stories, poems, songs and rhymes, role play and mime, visualisations, group work, project work, brainstorming and movement.

Parents are informed that substance misuse prevention education is taught throughout the school as part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme and are notified when outside agencies deliver programmes or presentations to support substance misuse prevention education.

Parents of Junior Infants receive a Welcome Pack which includes information on all aspects of SPHE.

In addition to Walk Tall, CWETNS deliver a safety lesson annually that enables children to identify drug paraphernalia and informs them what to do should they find such items.

Best Practice Guidelines:

1. Class teacher has the primary role in the delivery of substance misuse prevention education in the school setting
2. Substance misuse prevention education must be delivered in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)
3. Scare tactics are ineffective
4. People's drug use must not be normalised
5. Information must be age, developmentally, culturally and environmentally appropriate
6. An active learning approach is recommended
7. Consistent implementation is crucial to effectiveness.
8. Supplementary education must compliment and not replace or duplicate the school curriculum.
9. The teacher must be present and actively involved at all times.
10. Expectations of school based programmes need to be realistic.

2. Management of Alcohol, Tobacco & Drug Related Incidents

The school's shared understanding of a 'drug related incident' is:

- Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs
- The sale or passing on of any illegal substance,
- Possession of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs on grounds or at related activities
- Disposal of drugs or related items found on school property.

Legally held substances include:

- alcohol and tobacco
- over the-counter medicines e.g. Paracetamol, cough sweets, etc.
- prescribed drugs e.g. Antibiotics, inhalers, etc.
- volatile substances eg glues, correction fluids, lighter fuel, aerosols and petrols.

If a pupil needs to take medication in school (e.g. Inhaler, allergy injection etc.) the school must be informed and the family and child will be supported by our staff in line with our Chronic Illness Policy.

Procedures to be followed on the misuse of substances may include some or all of the following:

1. Assess the situation.
2. Seek medical help if necessary.
3. Adults displaying signs of substance abuse will be asked to leave the premises.
4. Contact principal.
5. Contact Parents.
6. All incidents will be recorded by the principal.
7. Referral to outside agency.
8. It is mandatory to contact Gardai if an illegal substance is found on the premises.
9. Sanctions (See Code of Behaviour).
10. Report (Refer to Child Protection Guidelines)

11. Illicit drugs must be confiscated and locked away

A record will be kept of any incident which occurs. The DLP or the DDLP will keep the record in the Special Incident File.

Confidentiality & Follow Up Procedures

People will be informed on a 'need to know' basis. Parents/guardians will be involved unless reporting would pose a threat to the child. In the case of illegal drugs the Board of Management will decide whether to inform the Gardaí based on the severity of the incident.

In the case of suspected drug taking by a pupil outside school hours, the D.L.P. will be informed immediately. Those who report incidents to the school will be encouraged to contact the Gardaí to pass on this information. Parents will be informed. Guidance and support will be given to pupils and parents on the availability of specialist advice from relevant support agencies.

A combined caring and disciplinary approach will be taken. Each incident will be dealt with on its own merits. Repeated incidents will be dealt with in a different manner.

Smoking – School Policy

- Visitors, staff and parents will comply with the national non smoking policy
- All staff - teaching, peripatetic, support and non-teaching as well as visitors and pupils may not smoke while on school premises. The prohibition of tobacco or ecigarettes/vapes also applies during related school activities undertaken outside school premises, eg. Educational Visits.
- When school premises are used for purposes other than school related activities the school smoking policy remains in operation.
- Pupils found in possession of tobacco products on school premises will be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal and his/her parents will be informed
- Adults who have in their possession tobacco products for their own use, must keep them in their possession at all times and out of sight and reach of children.
- A record should be kept of any incident which occurs. The DLP or the DDLP will keep the record in a Special Incident Book.

Alcohol – School Policy

- Pupils are not allowed to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol on the school premises or during any school activities.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of alcohol, They will immediately inform the Principal or Deputy Principal, and consult on what action should be taken. Parents will be notified. In such an instance, our Child Safe Guarding Statement will be consulted.
- If a staff member appears to be under the influence of alcohol, it will be reported to the Principal who will act in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy. [Section 24 of the Education Act](#) will be consulted accordingly.
- If an adult appears to be under the influence of alcohol when coming to collect a child, it must be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal. The child's safety is paramount. The Child Protection policy will be consulted accordingly.
- If alcohol is required for an adult only school function, permission shall be sought from the B.O.M.

Illegal Drug Use – School Policy

- Students, staff, parents and visitors are forbidden from being in possession of or using illegal drugs or solvents in the school premises.
- Illegal drugs found on school premises will be locked away and the Gardai contacted to dispose of them. Teachers are advised not to transport illegal substances at any time.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of illegal drugs or solvents, s/he will immediately inform the Principal or Deputy Principal and consult on what action should be taken. Parents will be notified. The school's Child Protection Policy will be consulted.
- If a staff member appears to be under the influence of a substance, it will be reported to the Principal who will act in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy. Section 24 of the Education Act will be consulted accordingly.
- If an adult appears to be under the influence of a substance when coming to collect a child, it must be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal. The child's safety is paramount. The Child Protection policy will be consulted accordingly.
- A record should be kept of any incident which occurs. The DLP or the DDLP will keep the record in a Special Incident Folder.

3. Provision of Training for staff

An effective policy needs to be supported by an ongoing commitment from the Board of Management and School Trustees to training and staff development. All staff will discuss substance abuse and dangers around paraphernalia that our community may be exposed to. Relevant courses, offered by the Department of Education and Science, will be offered to staff. Where and when available, First Aid Training will be made available to staff.

Parental Involvement

All parents have access to this policy document on our website and other related policies including Health and Safety, Child Protection, Chronic Illness Policy, Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying. A hard copy of this policy is available from your teacher.

Parents are encouraged to support the school's efforts to educate pupils in substance misuse prevention and to manage substance use incidents.

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Ratify this policy
- Implement this policy
- Monitor and evaluate it
- To sponsor/provide training for staff members
- Make decisions involving critical incidents
- To deal with the media in the event of a critical incident.

The Board of Management will refer to the Critical Incident Policy where necessary. Whether or not to inform the Gardai 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. Serious substance incidents that are non compliant to the Substance Use Policy, will be reported in the principal's report to the BoM.

Ratification and Communication:

This policy will be in operation in the school year _____, having been ratified by Staff and BoM. Every teacher will be provided with a copy of this policy for their files.

Date of next policy review:

Signed on Behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairperson: _____ Date _____

Principal: _____ Date: _____