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Substance Use Policy

Introduction:

The management and staff of St Paul's N.S. aim to protect the wellbeing of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The Board of Management has drawn up this Substance Use Policy as one element of the school's policies and plans.

Aim:

The aim of the Substance Use Policy is to raise awareness of what a drug is and to lay out procedures in managing drug related incidents.

Objectives:

1. To develop a shared understanding of the term 'drugs'.
2. To provide a safe and healthy environment for the whole school community.
3. To develop strategies for the prevention of substance misuse.
4. To list procedures for dealing with drug incidents in the school.

Our School Ethos:

Our school is a community where all pupils are equally valued and respected – irrespective of gender, social background, race, family circumstances, educational achievement, physical characteristics or intellectual functioning. Pupils will experience a sense of caring and belonging. Their spiritual, moral and religious development is encouraged, as is their intellectual, social and academic development.

Definition:

A drug is a substance which changes the way the body works and which may change the way you feel, think and behave.

Prevention:

Education with regard to substance use will proceed within the context of the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

J.I.: Things I put in my body

S.I.: Things that go in my body

I & II: I have feelings, changes and choices

III & IV: Valuing self and others, choices, smoking and alcohol

V & VI: Decision making, feelings, smoking, drugs, alcohol, influences

It is school policy that throughout a pupil's school life, all aspects of drug use in an age appropriate manner will be addressed.

It is envisaged that through the use of the S.P.H.E. programme the following knowledge and skills will be instilled in the pupils:

Knowledge:

- What are positive and negative drugs
- Effects of drugs
- Kinds of drugs
- Use and misuse of drugs
- Medicines and their uses
- Alcohol, nicotine, legal and illegal drugs
- Advertising techniques
- People who can help with problems

Skills:

- Communication
- Assertiveness
- Coping with feelings/disappointment
- Coping with conflicts
- Coping with responses from others
- Decision making
- Problem solving
- Keeping safe
- Resisting peer pressure
- Dealing with stress
- Respect
- Responsibility

The school wishes to make clear that the primary role of substance misuse prevention rests with the parents.

Management of a drug related incident:

Signs and symptoms of substance misuse:

- Bouts of drowsiness
- Loss of interest in school
- Furtive behaviour and lying
- Sudden changes of mood
- Uncharacteristic irritability/aggression
- Change of friends
- Spots or sores around mouth or nose

Any of the above signs on its own does not necessarily mean that a pupil is misusing drugs, but if ongoing and occurring in combination do warrant investigation.

General Procedures

1. A situation should be assessed, investigated and clarified to the best of the class teacher's ability.
2. The Principal should be informed and a response developed.
3. Parents/guardians should be informed immediately. However, if not contactable, the school should take whatever action they consider necessary for the well-being of the pupil.
4. The Chairperson of the Board of Management should be informed.
5. The school's response and decisions should be recorded.
6. The H.S.E./Gardaí/relevant agencies may be informed.

School Policy with Regard to administration of prescribed medication:

1. No teacher can be required to administer medicine or drugs to a pupil.
2. Pupils are not permitted to have any form of medication in their possession in school. This includes antibiotics and unprescribed medication. Parents may, in prior consultation with the class teacher, visit the school to administer medication which they may consider necessary.
3. Any teacher who is willing to administer medicines in exceptional/emergency situations should only do so under strictly controlled guidelines.
 - (i) The parent(s) of the pupil should write to the Board of Management requesting the Board to authorise a member of the teaching staff to administer the medication.
 - (ii) The request should include written instructions of the procedure to be followed in administering this medication. The pupil's name, medication, dosage and time of administration should also be included in this request and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be expected to sign the letter. Should any change be made to the administering of the medication parents should inform the Board of Management in writing.

- (iii) The Board of Management, having considered the matter, may authorise a teacher to administer medication to a pupil. If the teacher is so authorised s/he should be properly instructed by the Board of Management.
- (iv) A teacher should not administer medication without the specific authorisation of the Board of Management.
- (v) In administering medication to pupils, teachers should exercise the standard of care of a prudent parent.
- (vi) The Board of Management should inform the school's insurers accordingly.
- (vii) The Board of Management should seek an indemnity from the parent(s) in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of the medication.

Arrangements should also be made by the Board of Management for the safe storage of medication and procedures for the administration of medication in the event of an authorised teacher's absence.

In emergencies, teachers should do no more than is obviously necessary and appropriate to relieve extreme distress or prevent further and otherwise irreparable harm. Qualified medical treatment should be secured in emergencies at the earliest opportunity.

Where possible, the school requests that medical practitioners would arrange times for medication so that they don't coincide with school time.

- 4. It is important that parents ensure that teachers are made aware in writing of any medical condition suffered by any pupils in their class. Pupils who suffer from diabetes, epilepsy or who are prone to anaphylactic shock may have an attack at any time and it is vital, therefore to identify the symptoms in order that treatment may be given by an appropriate person if necessary.

Use of Inhalers:

The school accepts that pupils may occasionally need to use inhalers. In such circumstances, parents are requested to provide an inhaler, which will be accompanied by specific written instructions. It is parents' responsibility to ensure that the product remains in date and that the pupil knows how to use the inhaler. The inhaler must be given to the class teacher for safe keeping.

School Policy with regard to smoking:

- The school and its grounds are no smoking areas.
- The pupils are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on the school premises or during school related activities.
- Visitors will comply with the no smoking policy.
- Pupils found smoking on the school premises will be reported to the Principal and parents will be informed.
- Tobacco will not be permitted as a prize for school raffles.

School Policy with regard to alcohol:

- The school is an alcohol free area.
- Pupils and members of staff will not be allowed to consume alcohol in school or during any school activities.
- Where a pupil comes to school under the influence of alcohol, his/her parents will be called to take the pupil home. The Board of Management will be informed and decide upon relevant action.
- If alcohol is required for an adult only school function, permission should be sought from the Board of Management.
- Only adults may accept alcohol used as gifts or prizes in school raffles.

School Policy with regard to illicit drugs and solvents:

- Pupils are forbidden from being in possession of any illicit drugs, solvents (including bottles of tippex) or aerosol deodorants in the school premises or during any school related activities.
- Illicit drugs found on the school premises should be locked away and the Gardaí contacted to dispose of them. Teachers are advised not to transport illicit substances at any time.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a pupil is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, he/she will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Where the school suspects trafficking of illicit drugs, an investigation will be carried out. Parents of any pupil involved will be informed. The advice of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer will be sought.
- The Board of Management expects parents to inform the Principal or teacher if they suspect their child of drug taking.

Staff members and visitors are expected to accept School Policy regarding substance use.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Responsibilities:

- All teachers, ancillary staff and parents will be issued with a copy of this policy and will be expected to implement this policy.
- If a major incident arises that attracts media attention, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will speak generally on behalf of the school.

Monitoring and Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the Substance Use policy in the school. This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the three-year school development plan.

Modification Clause

The Board of Management reserves the right to modify details of the Substance Use Policy at short notice. Such modification may be needed in an ever-changing environment and social context.

Policy Ratified On: _____

Signed By: _____
Chairperson

Dated: _____