



## **Substance Abuse Policy**

This policy was created by the staff of Ballydesmond National School in June 2008. It was reviewed in January 2015 and in February 2022

The central objective of this policy is the welfare, care and protection of every student, in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. We acknowledge that the school has an important role in terms of the education of children in relation to alcohol, tobacco, solvents and drugs. This policy reflects our school ethos and seeks to promote self-reliance, knowledge and skills to enable individuals within our school community to make healthy and safe choices. The school will endeavour to work closely with parents/guardians in the implementation of this policy to ensure the health and safety of each child.

We, in Ballydesmond National School, recognise the serious danger that drug misuse can have on the individual and on the school community. The main objectives of this policy are to inform the school community on substance misuse and the strategies in place to empower the staff, parents and children.

Ballydesmond National School aims to provide its pupils with the highest standards of care and protection in order to promote each child's well-being and safeguard him/her from harm. The Board of Management of Ballydesmond National School has adopted the following policy.

### **Introduction**

A drug can be defined as a chemical, which causes changes in the way the human body functions mentally, physically or emotionally, For the purpose of this policy we are concerned with drugs which have the power to change a previous mood and the way a person thinks about things and drugs which the taker may become physically or more often psychologically dependent.

The school sees itself as having a role in the process of enabling students to increase control over and improve their health. We endeavour to promote the well-being of student's by:

1. Providing a safe and healthy environment.
2. Promoting positive health behaviours.
3. Increasing knowledge about health.
4. Promoting the self-esteem and self-awareness of students.

5. Working in partnership with the parents and pupils.

To this end, in response to the encroaching drug culture in our society we feel the need to implement a comprehensive policy to address the problem of substance misuse.

### **Rationale**

- The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- The Social Personal and Health Education curriculum, of which substance misuse prevention education is an integral part, is a mandatory subject on the primary curriculum and must be taught to all primary pupils from junior infants to sixth class (DES Circular 022/2010).
- The National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 requires every school to have a substance use policy in place
- Action 21 of the National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 mandates the Department of Education and Skills to monitor the implementation of substance use policies in schools through the whole school evaluation process as operated by the Inspectorate. It is also mandated to ensure that best practice is disseminated to all schools.

### **The Policy will focus on:**

1. Strategies for prevention of substance misuse problems e.g., Walk Tall, Stay Safe, RSE, Grow in Love
2. Procedures for dealing with drug incidences in the school.
3. Guidelines and information for teachers to improve their response to the problem of substance misuse.

### **Implementation of the Policy**

The policy will be available from the principal to the Board of Management, teachers and other staff members.

A copy of this policy can be obtained on request.

The policy will be evaluated and updated where necessary.

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

#### **Prevention**

##### **Education:**

It is accepted amongst educationalists that education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs is best carried out by teachers through the inclusion of S.P.H.E in the curriculum. This S.P.H.E Programme would also draw on the expertise available from the community i.e. Parents, Gardaí, and Health Board.

#### **Smoking**

##### **School Policy:**

- The school is a no smoking area.
- Students are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on the school premises or in any other place.
- Staff may not smoke on the school premises.
- Visitors will comply with the no smoking policy.
- Pupils found smoking on school premises will be reported to the Principal and parents will be informed.

### **Alcohol**

#### **School Policy:**

- The school is an alcohol-free area.
- Pupils will not be allowed to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school activities.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of alcohol, s/he will immediately inform the principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Where a student comes to school under the influence of alcohol, their parents will be called in to take them home.
- Students breaking these rules will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary procedure.

### **Illicit Drugs and Solvents**

#### **School Policy:**

- Students are forbidden from being in possession of or using illicit drugs or solvents in the school premises.
- Illicit drugs found on 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 student is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, s/he 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 student involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer will be sought.
- The school B.O.M will expect parents to inform the principal or teacher if they suspect their child of drug taking.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_