



St. Mary's Road
Buncrana,
Co. Donegal

St. Mura's National School

Tel. No. 074 9362309

Roll No.16854V

e-mail stmurasbuncrana@gmail.com

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY OF ST. MURA'S N.S.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all users of the school building. In this policy, our understanding of "drugs" is:

"A drug is any chemical which alters how the body works or how the person behaves or feels"

The Substance Use Policy is applicable to all school related activities and any exceptions will be discussed with the Principal and/or Chairperson of the Board of Management.

RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL'S MISSION/VISION/AIMS

The characteristic spirit of the school (school ethos) has been developed and agreed with the partners in education. The substance use policy reflects the school ethos in that it is dedicated to the care of the whole school community and it aims to provide a safe and secure environment for learning.

RATIONALE

Why is this policy necessary?

- 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. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their student cohort and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.
- The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.



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- The National Drugs Strategy “Building on Experience” is now Government policy and it requires school to have a substance use policy in place.
- The recent report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled “Drug use prevention” (November 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.
- The 1999 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) Report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among sixteen year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 29 ESPAD countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland whilst the use of tobacco and other drugs was above the ESPAD average. For the population as a whole, alcohol consumption per capita in Ireland has increased by 41% in the period 1989 – 1999, while the other EU Member States showed either a decrease or a modest increase. Ireland now has the second highest per capita consumption of alcohol in the EU.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

The substance use policy of St. Mura's National School is intended to highlight the clear procedures the staff of the school will follow in the event of a drug related incident and to better inform the School Community with regard to Substance Use in all its guises.

POLICY CONTENT

The policy content is divided into three sections.

1. Education concerning substance use:

Education concerning substance use in St. Mura's National School will be provided within the broad context of the subject of Social, Personal and Health Education. SPHE was introduced formally into the school in September 2003.

Active learning strategies are advocated in the SPHE curriculum and will inform our selection of methodology. We will continue to treat many of the topics associated with Substance Use in the context of the religion programme. This will be reinforced by project work and by talks from local Gardaí and Public Health Nurses. The content of their talk will be in keeping with the school curriculum.



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The use of an outside visitor/speaker to enhance the work done in the class should always be considered in the context of the full SPHE programme and must be undertaken in the presence of a teacher.

2. Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents

Young people are most at risk in relation to substance use in St. Mura's N.S. in:

- The array of food and drink consumed in certain instances.
- The use of glue and solvents
- Interaction with second level students at community sports and entertainment events.

Incidents relating to:

(a) alcohol, (b) tobacco and (c) drug use are addressed in the school as follows:

(a) Alcohol:

The school is an alcohol free zone and pupils are not allowed to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school related activities as per the scope of this Substance Use policy.

If any member of staff thinks that a student is under the influence of alcohol, the Principal will be informed and parents will be asked to attend at the school immediately. The parents will be required to give an undertaking that such an incident will not recur.

In general, if a student comes to school in an intoxicated manner or becomes intoxicated in school, he/she will be withdrawn from the class and parents requested to take him/her home. Parents of the other children in the class will be written to and requested to monitor their children for any signs of alcohol consumption.



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Students found breaking this rule must be cared for and may also need to be referred to the school Code of Behaviour if the offence is repeated. Gardaí may be informed, especially if the child/ren were supplied with the alcohol – i.e. the alcohol was not stolen from the house as a one-off act of bravado. If the child continuously violates the rule, the school will have no choice to report the matter to the duty social worker of the Local Health Authority as this

falls under the realm of neglect in the Children First Guidelines – guidelines all teachers must adhere to in relation to child protection.

Permission to serve alcohol for a school related activity in which only adults will be present can be sought from the Board of Management.

Members of staff who present themselves for work in an intoxicated manner will be asked to excuse themselves from work for the day and the Chairperson of the Board of Management informed. The Chairperson of the Board of Management will then adhere to the Rules for Primary Schools with regard to this issue.

Parents who collect their children and are clearly under the influence of alcohol and intend driving them home will be advised that the school will seek the other parent/guardian listed on the school enrolment form to perform same.

Alcohol will not be used as prizes in school raffles.

(b) **Tobacco**

The school is a no smoking zone.

Students are not permitted to smoke or possess tobacco products on the school premises or on any school related activity.

Staff may smoke off the school ground, out of view of the pupils.



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All visitors to the school will be expected to comply with the school policy on tobacco as outlined, and signs informing visitors to the school of this will be retained.

Pupils found smoking on the school grounds or on a school activity will be asked to hand over all tobacco products and matches/lighters they have and parents informed of the incident.

Pupils found in possession of tobacco products and matches/lighters will be asked to hand over the products and parents informed. These products may then be returned to the parents. Gardaí may be informed especially if the child/ren were supplied the tobacco products – i.e. the tobacco product was not stolen from the house as a once-off act of bravado.

Tobacco products will not be used as prizes in school raffles.

(c) **Illegal drugs/Solvents/Food and Beverages**

The school is an area where illicit drugs, non-water based solvents and certain food and beverages which affect the behaviour of children will not be allowed.

Certain children have a noticeable change in behaviour if certain fizzy drinks, sweets and chocolate are consumed. The parents of the school will be encouraged not to include fizzy drinks, sweets or chocolate in their child's lunch as per the healthy eating policy.

Any illegal drugs found on the school premises will not be disturbed unless leaving them in the location where they were found presents a risk to pupils. Gardaí will be informed immediately and asked to remove the substances. No member of staff will transport illegal substances at any time.

If any member of staff thinks that a pupil is under the influence of an illegal substance, the Principal will be informed immediately and further action will then be decided.

In general, if a student comes to school under the influence of an illegal drug or comes under the influence in school, they will be withdrawn from the class and parents requested to take them home. Parents of the other children in the class will be written to and requested to monitor their children for any signs of substance use.



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Students found breaking this rule must be cared for and may also need to be referred to the school Code of Behaviour if the offence is repeated. Gardaí will be informed. If the child continuously violates the rule, the school will have no choice to report the matter to the duty social worker of the local Health Authority as this falls under the realm of neglect in the Children First Guidelines – guidelines all teachers must adhere to in relation to child protection.

If the dealing of illegal drugs is suspected in the school, an investigation will be carried out. Parents of any students involved will be informed and the advice and assistance of the local Juvenile Liaison Officer of the Gardaí will be sought.

Members of staff who present themselves for work under the influence of illegal substances will be asked to excuse themselves from work for the day and the Chairperson of the Board of Management informed. The Chairperson will then decide on action to be taken based on the circumstances.

Parents who suspect their child is taking illegal substances should inform the school. The school may be able to advise where support is available for that child in consultation with the relevant health authorities.

For all school activities, the use of spray deodorants is prohibited and will be taken from the student if they are being used. These products will be returned to the parents of the child.

Students who must take prescribed medication must keep this medication in a secure place and under no circumstance will this medication be given to any other child.

School staff will not administer any medication. If a child has an illness whereby they must receive medication during the course of the day, parents of the child in question must apply in writing to the Board of Management of St. Mura's N.S. for the issue to be taken further.

Emergency incidents requiring medical intervention will be dealt with by the pupil's doctor as detailed on the school enrolment form and the child's parents will be informed as soon as possible. If the pupil's doctor is unavailable, the pupil will be treated by the doctor on duty.



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The School Principal/Chairperson of the Board of Management is designated to respond to the media in relation to “drug related incidents” they may be enquiring about.

3. PROVISION FOR TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The shared understanding among the staff regarding the contribution that an SPHE programme can make to the prevention of substance misuse is evident through our adherence to the two year plan for SPHE Curriculum and the use of the Walk Tall Programme.

Staff members are aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of substance misuse within their own class by developing a supportive class environment and informing the pupils in an age-appropriate and socially relevant manner.

Staff members will be made sufficiently aware of laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they relate to themselves, to the school and the students.

Further training needs we have in relation to the implementation of the substance use policy include revision of the signs and symptoms of substance use – training similar to training received by staff on the Walk Tall Programme.

Training can be accessed from the Substance Misuse Prevention Project based in Dublin West Education Centre – at present this training is only available to schools in the Local Drugs Task Force Area.

New staff, in particular, will be briefed on the substance use policy of the school on commencement of employment in the school.

It is envisaged that the parents will be informed of the schools role in relation to child protection by informing them that the school must adhere to the “Children First Guidelines” and more specifically the Department of Education and Science Guidelines produced in conjunction with the aforementioned “Children First Guidelines”.

Roles and Responsibilities



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All members of the school community have a role in the development, implementation and evaluation of the policy to ensure the safety and welfare of all students is maintained and we have a safe and secure environment for learning. Teachers, parents and Board of Management will be responsible for:

Policy development
Policy implementation
Policy evaluation

Success Criteria

The following indicators will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the substance use policy in St. Mura's N.S.

- The school community to be well-informed in relation to substance use.
- Clarity regarding procedures to be followed in any drug related incident in the school.

Timeframe

This completed policy was implemented on the first of October 2004.

It will be subject to regular review whenever an incident arises which is not covered by the policy at present.

THIS POLICY WAS DEvised BY THE TEACHING STAFF OF ST. MURA'S NATIONAL SCHOOL. IT WAS REVIEWED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT ON

Signed: _____ (Chairperson, B.O.M.)