



## **Drugs and Alcohol Misuse Prevention Policy**

### **Introduction to the policy**

#### **The School Position**

Our Lady of the Wayside National School is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to alcohol and other drugs. We believe that the Board of Management, teachers, parents, need to work together and that co-operation is essential to the acceptance and implementation of the policy.

It has been agreed that a drug is any substance that changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally.

This school recognises that drugs – both legal and illegal are available in the local community and that the school being part of this community may have drug incidents which need to be handled consistently and in a sensitive way. This school also acknowledges that it has an important role to play in drugs education both in terms of prevention and offering support to those who use drugs.

This policy applies to teachers, parents, students and the Board of Management and all other school staff/ancillary workers.

#### **The School Ethos**

Our Lady of the Wayside National School aims to create a safe positive, child-centred educational environment. Our primary focus is to enable our children to grow in all aspects of their development, academic, social, emotional, physical and spiritual.

This will be best achieved by good communication and teamwork, involving key people i.e. teachers, parents, pupils, Board of Management and the wider community.

#### **Vision Statement**

Our Lady of the Wayside National School recognises that there are risks for our pupils, both immediate and in the long term, associated with the use and misuse of drugs (including alcohol and tobacco).

Our policy seeks to address those risks both in the immediate and long term, and to provide pupils with the skills, knowledge and self-confidence to deal with drugs (including alcohol and tobacco) in a healthy, safe and assertive manner.

#### **The Policy is focused on three key areas:**

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programs
2. Managing Drug related Incidents
3. Monitoring Review and Evaluation



## **1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes**

### **The School position:**

Our Lady of the Wayside National School is committed to providing a comprehensive timetabled drug education program for all students, which will be incorporated into the SPHE Program currently running in the school.

### **Our educational aims in relation to Drug Education are:**

- To increase the self-esteem and confidence of the young people
- To equip young people with personal and social skills
- To enable young people to make informed, healthy and responsible choices
- To provide honest and age appropriate information on drugs
- To minimize the harm caused by drug use by offering supportive interventions

### **These aims will be met through the following action:**

- All teachers involved will implement a range of programs to ensure that they deliver comprehensive methodologies around substance misuse.

### **Outside Speakers**

We believe that trained teachers are in the best position to carry out the drugs program, however, outside agencies may also take part where deemed appropriate to support the teachers or to reinforce a part of the program.

### **Parents**

Parents are to be made aware and informed of what is happening in the school with regard to drug education. This will happen on an annual basis. Parents will also be consulted annually on the need for drug education and courses will be made available to meet these demands.

## **2. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug related incidents**

### **The School Approach**

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, the sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature and severity of the offence. These will be consistent with school rules regarding other breaches of conduct.

Procedures are in place to deal with specific drug related incidents for the protection of children and for the overall health and safety of the school.



## **Drug Incidents**

**All incidents must be recorded and witnessed on Aladdin. The DLP (Mr John Murtagh - Principal) must also be notified and have access to the report. Incidents may include:**

- Emergencies –when a person may be unconscious
- Suspicion/rumour of drug use, possession or dealing
- Disclosure by another person
- Suspicion involving large amounts of money being carried by children in school premises
- Possession of legal/illegal drug on school premises or on a school related activity
- Possession of legal drugs
- Possession of cigarettes or alcohol
- Possession of illegal drugs
- Selling/supplying legal/illegal drugs
- Persons seeking help in relation to drug use from member of staff
- School grounds being used for drug related activity
- Drug paraphernalia found on school property

**The above list is not exhaustive**

**In the case of any of the above incidents:**

1. Inform the Designated Liaison (DLP) –Principal
2. DLP to contact parents/carers, except where the child may be endangered by doing so
3. Where appropriate, DLP to notify Garda, Social Services, BOM, LDTF and any other appropriate body
4. An incident report to be typed up and stored on Aladdin
5. Follow up according to School Code of Behaviour

**In the case of Intoxication/Unusual Behaviour of a Parent/Carer:**

1. Staff member to inform DLP (Principal) immediately
2. If parent/guardian seems incapable of being responsible, DLP to enquire whether another family member is available to collect the child
3. The Principal will advise that the child cannot be removed from the school grounds unless by another family member, and that Túsla may be contacted (Child Protection Referral Form-refer to Child Protection Policy) or the Gardaí



4. An incident report to be typed up and stored on Aladdin

**In the case of Intoxication/ Unusual Behaviour of a Teacher/Worker:**

1. Staff member to inform DLP (Principal) immediately
2. It may be necessary to relieve the person of their duties
3. Offer the person medical attention or assistance home
4. Report to the Board of Management
5. Disciplinary procedure will be instigated according to contract of employment
6. In the case of a trainee, college to be contacted by DLP
7. An incident report to be written up

*Please note: It is unacceptable for staff members to be on school premises if they are affected by any intoxicating substance*

**In the case of Intoxication/ Unusual Behaviour of Principal:**

1. Staff member to inform Deputy DLP immediately
2. Procedures to be followed as for staff members
3. An incident report to be written up

**In the case of Intoxication/ Unusual Behaviour in Children:**

1. Report to DLP and record the incident
2. DLP to contact parents, seek medical attention and proceed according to Health and Safety Policy and Child Protection Policy
3. An incident report to be typed up and stored on Aladdin. Parent will also be notified of same

**Recording Procedure**

All staff need to be aware of signs of drug use and alert to changes in behaviour. Adolescence is a period of great change and rumour must not be taken as evidence of drug use.

In situations of confirmed use/possession or supply then all details will be recorded and acted upon. A written record will be maintained on Aladdin & stored. This procedure will ensure that a fair process of challenging the student about behaviour of concern is in place.



### **Managing a drug incident**

All incidents of this nature to be reported directly to the DLP (John Murtagh - Principal).

It is important in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents that a limited number of people are involved in managing the incident. People will be informed strictly on a need to know basis.

Members of staff are strongly discouraged from discussing these incidents with other staff members, however, if the staff member in question works directly with the child, a professional judgement will be made to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child is fully supported by the professional adults the child in question works with. Professionalism towards confidentiality will be expected to be adhered to in cases such as these.

### **Parents**

In most cases the school will want to involve the parents/carers. This needs to be handled sensitively and where possible support offered to them by HSCL. In the first instance, the Principal will offer this support and referral will be offered to local/community support services with support from HSCL.

### **Counselling/School Care Team**

School Pastoral Care is a complete approach to education that seeks to value and develop the student at every level. Programmes such as; Life Skills, The Walk Tall, Stay Safe, and Relationship & Sex Education Programmes are a significant part of this approach within Our Lady of the Wayside National School and will be used in accordance with the SPHE curriculum and SPHE school overview. The school also has a Care Team in place who meet weekly to look at children they have concerns around.

### **Confidentiality**

Teachers cannot offer total confidentiality to a student who discloses drug involvement. We recognise the need for professional support and guidance in this area as the student may be coming to a teacher because they trust him/her and need help. How this situation is handled will have an important bearing on the outcome. Information must remain private and only disclosed on a strict "need to know" basis. The student must be informed about what is happening and why. The well-being and welfare of the students and the teacher must be the prime focus.

The school recognises that the issue of confidentiality is complex. It is important that confidentiality and its limits are discussed with students before an incident arises.



### **Media**

The Principal or nominated spokesperson will handle all media queries. The school will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.

### **Training and Staff Development**

#### **Staff**

The school has and will continue to make available training to staff involved in delivering areas such as substance misuse in the SPHE curriculum  
Nominated First Aid Person to be kept current with all First Aid Skills and it is proposed that a second person be nominated to access First Aid Skills as back up.

#### **Parents and Board of Management**

The school will provide opportunities to attend information meetings on issues relating to drugs and the school policy in this current year.

#### **Young People**

This school will offer all its students drug education programmes through a range of programmes within the SPHE curriculum

## **3. Monitoring the policy**

A member of staff will monitor aspects of the Policy annually to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the school.

The three areas are:

- Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents
- Parent, Staff and Management Training

Policy reviews will be recorded and made available to the Principal.

#### **Reviewing of the Policy**

The drug policy-working group in consultation with the wider school community will review the policy bi-annually, or in the light of changing information.

#### **Dissemination of Policy**

Copies of the policy will be freely available on the school website for all to access.

#### **Signed:**

Chairperson BOM: \_\_\_\_\_



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