



Substance Use Policy

This policy is formulated in accordance with guidelines issued by the Primary Schools' Managerial Bodies and the Irish National Teachers' Organisation

Scope of the Policy:

This policy was developed by the staff, Board of Management and Parents Representatives of Navan Educate Together N.S. and applies to all students, staff, parents and users of the school building during school time (including break times) and during school related activities.

Aims of Policy:

The primary aim of the Substance Abuse Policy is prevention. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, e- cigarettes, alcohol, solvents, legal and illegal drugs. We aim to develop in our pupils' a healthy self-esteem, through providing a positive school climate atmosphere and through giving our pupils age appropriate information from educational programmes.

Relationship to School's Mission, Vision and Aims:

At Navan Educate Together we strive to create a happy, safe, inclusive and nurturing environment in which all children are provided the opportunity to reach their full potential. We are committed to providing an environment that promotes the holistic development of every member of the school community. This policy reflects our ethos and seeks to empower individuals to make healthy and safe choices.

Rationale:

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges that affect their health and wellbeing. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs is part of this reality. Navan Educate Together recognises the need to respond appropriately to this reality and the sensitive and emotive issues that arise from it. The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.

It is necessary to devise a policy on substance use at this time because:

- The National Drugs Strategy, 'Building on Experience', is now Government Policy and it requires schools to have a drugs policy in place (Action 43)

- Recent reports from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs underline the importance of schools developing drugs policies:
 - To develop a shared understanding of the term 'drugs' and to define the school's agreed position in relation to drug related issues
 - To equip schools to deal with issues relating to substance misuse in a planned and considered way and in accordance with their statutory responsibilities
 - To assist teachers in their classroom experience

Content of Policy:

The substance use policy will address issues in relation to

1. Current provision regarding alcohol, tobacco, and drug education
2. The management of substance-related incidents
3. Legislation
4. Staff Development
5. Parental Involvement
6. Links to other policies / procedures

1. Current provision regarding alcohol, tobacco, and substance use education

- Information on alcohol, tobacco and substance use is provided through the Walk Tall and Stay Safe Programmes. These programmes will be school-based, developmental and delivered as recommended in the SPHE Curriculum for primary schools.
- The school's definition of 'drugs' is as follows.
'A drug is any chemical which alters how the body works or how the person behaves or feels'.
- The school will promote awareness with the assistance of the Gardaí and the Health Service Executive (HSE) e.g. nurse/doctor. Outside visitors/speakers are considered in the context of the SPHE programme
- Education concerning substance use is provided through the SPHE strand unit 'Taking Care of my Body'. This will be taught in line with Navan Educate Together's SPHE Policy.
- When inviting speakers' teachers take into consideration the suitability of guest speakers and brief them on suitable language to use with children. Class teachers will monitor their contribution.
- Any presentations by visiting speakers are made in the presence of the class teacher
- The school community is supportive of the substance use policy
- Pupils, teachers, staff, parents/guardians and users of the school building are aware of the substance use policy

2. The management of substance-related incidents

A substance misuse incident is defined as:

- Use or suspected use on the school premises
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour
- Disclosure about use
- Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia
- Possession and/or supply on the school premises or during a school-related activity
- Use and/or supply off the school premises

When a child is involved:

- Any responsible adult can inform the Principal /Deputy of incident.
- Ensure child involved is in a safe place and in no immediate danger to themselves or others.
- Seek medical intervention if necessary.
- Contact family immediately.
- Consult with the family regarding appropriate support from the school, e.g. medical advice or counselling.
- The support agencies which are available to assist pupils/ staff involved in substance misuse incidents are HSE, Gardaí and NEPS (this is not an exhaustive list).
- Ensure that a quiet place (e.g. small meeting room, Principal's office) can be made available for students/staff, if applicable.
- Official records should be kept at this point and all involved are reminded of the need for confidentiality.
- The incident will be reported to the BOM and appropriate sanctions for the misbehaviour will be determined by our Code of Behaviour.
- If incident involves a number of children, we will refer to the Critical Incident Policy for the correct procedures to follow.
- It should also be noted that a single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension (National Education and Welfare Board Code of Behaviour Guidelines p.71)

When a member of staff is involved:

- Any responsible adult may inform the Principal / Deputy Principal of an incident.
- The Principal and/or Deputy Principal will ask the person involved to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and others. Provision will be made to ensure staff member gets home safely.
- Medical intervention will be sought if necessary.
- A formal meeting will take place between the Principal / Deputy and the staff member involved.
- Official records will be kept at this point and all parties involved reminded of the need for confidentiality.
- Other interventions may be required over time to resolve the issue e.g. counselling/ medical advice (Employee Assistance Service Phone: 1800 400 057 or e-mail eas@vhics.ie)
- The case may be brought before the Board of Management. The B.O.M. will discuss the case and decide if disciplinary procedures are required.
- A serious incident of misconduct may be grounds for informing the Gardaí.
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for informing the DES.

When a member of the school community with a duty of care is involved:

- The Principal/Deputy Principal will be informed of incident.
- All necessary steps will be taken to protect the pupils and safeguard their best interests.
- A parent or other adult presenting under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be afforded an interview with any member of staff. He/she will be asked to leave the premises by the Principal/Deputy Principal. Failure to do so will result in the Gardaí being called. A formal letter of complaint will be issued by the Board of Management in such instances and

where necessary a legal injunction will be sought to prevent a re-occurrence of such an incident.

- Medical intervention for the individual will be sought if necessary.
- The Principal/ Deputy will inform the Gardaí of the incident if deemed necessary.
- Official records will be kept at this point and all involved reminded of the need for confidentiality.
- Other interventions may be required over time to resolve the issue e.g. counselling/ medical advice.
- The case may be brought before the Board of Management. The B.O.M. will discuss the case and decide if sanctions are required.

3. Legislation

- Legislation is complex and schools are advised to be proactive in developing a good working relationship with local Gardaí. The laws that are most relevant to the school are: Misuse of Drugs Acts, 1977 and 1984. Offences under these acts include "Possession with intent to supply" and "Possession for personal use"
- Staff should be sufficiently aware of laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they relate to themselves, to the school and its pupils

4. Staff Development

- There is a shared understanding of the contribution SPHE can make to the prevention of substance misuse
- All staff are aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of substance misuse within their own classrooms e.g. by developing a supportive class/school environment
- All staff members are sufficiently aware and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse
- This policy is available to all staff on the school website, school shared drive and on request from the school office.

5. Parental Involvement

- Parents/Guardians are informed of the school's SPHE programme on substance use and the Substance Use Policy

6. Links to other policies / procedures

- The following plans/policies also have a bearing on the substance use policy:
 - SPHE
 - Health and Safety
 - Special Educational Needs
 - Critical Incident Management
 - Anti-Bullying
 - Parental Involvement
 - Administrations of Medicines

School Position on Substance Use

Smoking: the entire school is a smoking free zone in accordance with the Tobacco Act 2002.

Alcohol: The school is an alcohol free zone. Students are not permitted to possess or consume alcohol on school premises, on school activities or on school trips. Staff are not allowed to consume alcohol on school premises, on school activities or on school trips. Any alcohol on school premises must remain sealed and stored away securely. The Board of Management may grant exceptions for special events.

Illicit Drugs: Staff and students are prohibited from possession, use or supply of illicit drugs on school premises, on school activities or on school tours.

Solvents: The school does not accept the misuse of solvent-based substances.

Medication: All use of medication on school premises, on school activities or on school trips should comply with Navan Educate Together National School policy on Administration of Medication. No student may give another student any prescribed or over the counter medication.

Breaches of these rules: All breaches of the rules shall be considered to be serious misconduct. Pupils found in breach of these rules will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy and in accordance with the Navan Educate Together National School Code of Behaviour.

Implementation Procedures

Copies of this policy will be circulated to all staff members and a sample group of parents for their input and observations. Following this, the policy will be amended as necessary. As a next step the policy will be presented to the BOM for their consideration and ratification.

Monitoring and Review Procedures:

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. The policy will be reviewed annually, in the light of changing information / legislation and subsequent to a substance related incident. A copy of this policy will be issued to all staff members and a reminder of its contents will be given at the first staff meeting of each year.

Success Criteria

The school evaluates the success of the policy through;

1. Participation of all staff in the policy
2. Safe and effective care of all students in our school
3. Feedback from all staff
4. Feedback from relevant parents/guardians

Communication, Monitoring and Review:


This policy will be communicated to staff and the school community as appropriate and will be subject to regular review in accordance to the guidelines. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Chairperson of the Board of Management of Navan Educate Together National School.

Signed: 
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: 8/2/24

Signed: 
(Principal)

Date: 8/2/24