



## Substance Abuse Policy

### ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND DRUG USE

#### Introduction

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs. The policy has been drawn up and accepted by the Principal, Teachers, Parents/Guardians, Board of Management and Students. It is necessary that all involved work together to implement this policy. It is vital that parents/guardians actively work with the school to implement this policy to ensure their children's health and safety. In this policy "Drug" means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The School recognises that drugs both legal and illegal are available in the local community and that the School, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents.

#### THE SCHOOL ETHOS

The school asserts its right to protect and promote its Christian ethos requiring certain standards of behaviour and prohibiting certain practices.

#### Aims

- 1 To foster the care, protection and wellbeing of students by keeping the school free from Substance Abuse
- 2 To promote social and personal education of students and provide health education for them in order to help them make informed and responsible choices leading to a healthier lifestyle.
- 3 To help students develop knowledge and understanding of the use, misuse, risks and effects of drugs
- 4 To make the school community aware of the problems of tobacco, alcohol and drug misuse.

As stated in the School's mission statement, Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal is committed to enabling students to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, cultural and physical potential. It also is committed to fostering the development of personal responsibility.

- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the school, or on outside activities or in non school time by any member of the school community.
- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco in the school or on school activities by any student.
- The School does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances. Students may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only.
- Students who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school long term must inform the school.
- The School must be informed if a student has a medical condition and relevant teachers, e.g. P.E. teacher must be informed also.
- A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter "medicine.
- Chemicals in school laboratories will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher's supervision.

The policy is focused in four key areas:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.
2. Managing Drug Related Incidents.
3. Training and Staff Development.
4. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation.

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

The School is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programme for all students. Our educational aims are:

- To increase the self esteem and confidence of our students.
- To equip our students with personal and social skills.
- To enable our students to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions.
- To provide clear and age appropriate information on drugs.
- To minimise the harm caused by drug abuse by offering supportive interventions.

These aims will be achieved by:

1. A Health/Drug Policy Co-ordinator.
2. Teachers are offered Drug Awareness training, SPHE training or any relevant training through regular in-service training.
3. Outside speakers are used where appropriate to reinforce the work done in class.
4. Parents/Guardians will be consulted on the need for drug education and will be informed of what is happening in the School. Drug

information and drug awareness sessions are organised for parents annually.

5. Student Drug Education will be achieved through:

- SPHE Programme
- Science
- First Aid Course in Transition Year
- Outside speakers where appropriate.

## **2. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Related Incidents**

We acknowledge that in all situations involving drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the student, the needs of the school community, the reputation of the school and legal considerations. Assessing a drug incident: If there is no damage to the student/s, it is important to:

- Take time to listen and assess before responding.
- Separate fact from rumour.
- In situations of confirmed use or possession or supply all details must be recorded and acted upon.
- Then complete the drug incident report.

### **Managing a drug incident**

A limited number of people are involved in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents. People will be informed on a "need to know" basis. All written records will be held confidentially by the Principal or Deputy Principals. Parents/Guardians will be involved. They will be informed sensitively and support offered to them. In the case of illegal drugs the Principal or Deputy Principal will contact Gardaí - Juvenile Liaison Officer, and any drugs will be dealt with by Gardaí. In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered.

If a student has a problem then referral will be recommended. Parents/Guardians, staff and other students involved in the incident will be offered support. Confidentiality is a complex issue. It is important that the limits of confidentiality are discussed with students before any disclosure is made. The well being and welfare of the student and teacher must be a primary focus.

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

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. These will be consistent with school rules (see SMGS behaviour policy).

## **3. Training & Development**

We will provide:

## **Staff**

The School will facilitate training for staff involved in the SPHE programmes.

All staff will be offered drug information and awareness training regularly.

Specific training will be made available to the Drug Co-Ordinator and key staff in relation to managing drug related incidents.

First Aid training will be made available to all staff regularly.

### **Parents/Guardians**

The School will provide opportunities to attend drug workshops, information evenings and sessions on the School Drugs Policy in this current year. From next year onwards this will be offered as part of the induction for parents/guardians of new pupils to the School.

### **Students**

The School will offer all its students drug education programmes within the context of their SPHE classes. TY students will study First Aid.

### **4. Monitoring the Policy, Review and Evaluation**

The Deputy Principal will monitor the policy once a term to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the School. The result will be recorded and made available to the Principal.

The areas of:

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

Will be reviewed.

### **Evaluation**

Teachers, Parents/Guardians, Students and the Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for one year. Again the three specified areas above will be evaluated.

### **Dissemination of Policy**

Copies of this policy will be distributed to all the school community. It will be available also from the Principal's Office, School Library and Drug Co-Ordinator. Copies will be given to all new staff and parents of new pupils as part of their induction to the School. Students will be made aware of the policy within the context of the SPHE programme.

This policy was ratified by the Board on 16/05/2015

Policy Reviewed by the Board of Management

Signed: - \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson

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

