

Ballinamore Community School

Substance Use Policy

Scope

The policy applies to students, teachers, parents, school employees and visitors. It applies to all school activities: from arrival in the school until departure, class time, during breaks and during all school outings.

Mission and Aims

Our Mission is the provision of a broad, relevant curriculum for our students, through which they can develop their full potential. We aim to prepare our students to participate as good Christians and as good citizens in society.

An essential element of this preparation is to educate students in relation to healthy and responsible lifestyles. This includes educating students about the dangers posed to health and to community life by the abuse of tobacco, alcohol and drugs.

Rationale

This policy is necessary because the world in which we live presents many challenges to young people that affect their life and well-being. The use of tobacco can damage health; we wish to alert students to the dangers. Alcohol abuse is prevalent in society; education can contribute to a more responsible use of alcohol. The availability and use of drugs pose great threat to young people. Education on the dangers and on avoidance strategies is essential.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy is to:

- (a) Educate students about substance use so that they may have a clearer understanding about the consequences of various forms of substance use in order to act more responsibly.
- (b) To outline procedures that the school will follow in the event of substance use taking place during the school day or during school activities.

Policy Content

(a) Education concerning substance use

- Education about tobacco, alcohol and drugs will take place during SPHE classes.
- These topics will also be addressed in RE classes. Specific modules and programmes will be used from time to time.
- The content and methodologies will be geared towards the age of the pupils.
- The teachers of SPHE will coordinate the programmes.

(b)Management of tobacco related incidents.

- The schools are smoke free areas.
- Students are expected to remain smoke free in the school buildings and grounds; when moving from one school to another; on the way to and from school and at all school events.
- Staff will actively encourage students to be smoke free as part of the school curriculum.
- Visitors will be encouraged to comply with the smoke free policy by the use of prominent signs.
- Pupils found smoking on the grounds (observed in possession of a lighted cigarette or an electronic cigarette) will be reported to the Year Head. On the first offence a caution will be given; on the second a letter will be sent home; on the third offence the student will be suspended for two days. Any student caught smoking in a school building will be suspended for two days.

(c)Management of Alcohol and Drug Related incidents

- This school is an alcohol and drug free area
- Students, staff and visitors are expected to present and remain alcohol and drug free in the school premises; on the way to and from school and at school events, tours and visits outside the school.
- Students who present themselves at school or on school outings under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or who have them in their possession, will have their parents informed. These students will be liable to suspension or expulsion
- The appropriate state authorities will be alerted.
- Students may need to be referred to a support agency.

(d)Provision for training and staff development.

Assistance from the SPHE Support Service will be sought from time to time.

Implementation and Review

The school authorities have drafted this policy.

The Board of Management following consultation with teachers, Students Council and Parents Council, has ratified this policy. It will be reviewed periodically.