



Policy on Substance Use and Abuse

Rationale

The school is a place of teaching, learning and personal growth. The use of Substances, both legal and illegal, is contrary to the maintenance of this ethos. The use of Substances is harmful to the individual and by extension and example, to the school community. The school rules forbid the use of Substances for these reasons.

Policy

The policy focuses on 5 key areas:

1. Educational Aims
2. Managing Substance Related incidents.
3. Training (Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes) and Staff professional development.
4. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation.
5. Storage and Disposal

1. Educational Aims

- As an educational institute, the school shall put in place a programme of education for students regarding the many complex issues relating to the use of Substances.
- The educational element of the policy will, in the main, be implemented through the *Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) Programme*. Opportunities for cross-curricular approaches will also be sought and developed.
- The educational aims in relation to Substance use are:
 - To increase the self-esteem and confidence of our students
 - To equip students with social and personal skills
 - To enable our students to make informed choices in relation to Substance use
 - To provide age appropriate information in relation to Substance use
 - To minimise the harm caused by drug use by offering supportive interventions

. These aims will be met through the following actions

- v All teachers involved in SPHE are given the opportunity to avail of training in group

facilitation skills and personal development.

v The school will continue to draw on the expertise and support of the local agencies

v Staff teaching the Drug Education Programmes will be given the opportunity to avail of training in The Substance Abuse Prevention Pack (SAPP) –‘On My Own Two Feet’ Department of Education and Science and the Department of Health and Children.

v All teachers will be offered Drug Information and Drug Awareness training through regular in-service training.

v Outside speakers and agencies will be involved as appropriate to reinforce work done in the classroom.

2. Managing Substance Related Incidents

- The school is committed to addressing the needs of the whole community in relation to Substance use.
- Infringements of the school rules in relation to Substance use or the supply of Substances to others shall be dealt with within the *Code of Behaviour*.
- The enforcement element of the policy will be implemented through the Code of Behaviour. The code incorporates both a step-by-step response to negative behaviour and an instant response to gross misbehaviour. It is within the remit of the Principal to decide on the nature of a response to gross misbehaviour involving intoxicants.

School Journal - Code of Behaviour, p. 11, No. 9 states: “Students should not ... smoke within the school or around its boundaries or have in their possession cigarettes, matches, lighters, alcohol, drugs, weapons, solvents or items, which cause disruption. The Principal will remove from the premises any student who, in his opinion, is unfit for school.”

The School Approach

The school acknowledges that in all situations involving Substances, there is a need for a balance between the needs of the young person, the needs of the school community and the reputation of the school.

A. Listening, establishing the facts and providing support will be our initial approach to the situation. Disciplinary procedures will be necessary if school rules are broken and exclusion (subject to students rights under the Education and Welfare Act 2000) will be an option when all else has failed. Procedures are in place to handle specific drug incidents.

B. See Appendices: 1,2,3,4.

Where suspicion is based on disclosure, the rights and anonymity of persons will be upheld.

The Board of Management will be informed and may decide on further action.

Parental Involvement

Parents will be made aware and informed of what is happening in the school with regard to drug education on an ongoing basis. On the adoption of a School Policy on Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs the school asks all parents/guardians to ensure that the school has at least two contact phone numbers plus the name of a responsible adult/family member to whose care their child may be entrusted if they are not available. This is to cover all incidents related to this policy and other accidents or emergencies as may occur.

It is policy of Old Bawn Community School to inform parents/guardians in relation to all matters covered in this policy to include

Suspected Use or Possession
Actual Use of Possession
Dealing or Suspected Dealing

The School believes that the best interests of the students are served when home and school work together.

3. Training and Staff Development

Old Bawn Community School is committed to ongoing staff training and development in this area. With this in mind the school will facilitate regular in-service/training.

4. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Old Bawn Community School recognises that in light of changing needs this policy will be subject to regular reviews and evaluations.

5. Storage and Disposal of suspected alcohol, tobacco and drug finds.

Where a member of staff or a student finds or is alerted to the existence of a suspicious substance, such finds must be reported immediately to the Principal. Any suspicious substance will be stored by the school in a secure location. The Gardaí will be contacted in order to remove the substance; establish its nature and arrange for its disposal

APPENDIX 1

Procedure

- (a) Emergencies when the person may be unconscious or incoherent.
- (b) A situation where a person exhibits unusual behaviour possibly due to drugs or alcohol.
- (c) Response to use or suspected use.
 - 1. Secure the person's safety.
 - 2. If possible ascertain what he/she has taken/consumed.
 - 3. If the person is unconscious or incoherent call an ambulance.
 - 4. Inform the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head.
 - 5. Inform Parents and require that they take responsibility for the person by taking him/her home.
 - 6. If a parent/guardian is not immediately available the person may be left with a responsible adult providing that adult agrees to assume the responsibility.
 - 7. Refer to Procedures (Appendix 2 a, 2 b) which while invoking a spirit of support and advice will have due regard for the school code of discipline as outlined under The Management of Alcohol, Tobacco, Solvents and Drug Related Incidents – The School Approach.
 - 8. With regard to (c) above, such procedures as outlined in Appendix 2a, 2b will be applied as necessary.

APPENDIX 2(a)

Procedure re: Actual Possession of Drugs, Solvents, Alcohol.

- 1. Confiscate substance where possible in the presence of another teacher.
- 2. Students are accompanied to the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head.
- 3. Mindful of obligations regarding Storage, Preservation and Disposal the school will:
 - (i). Take possession of the substance, record details and ascertain whether the student has taken/used the substance.

N.B. If the situation is deemed serious enough as to constitute an emergency, then the procedure outlined in Appendix 1 is to be followed.

- (ii) Seek to verify the exact nature of the substance. This may involve the Gardaí or outside expertise available to the school.

(iii) Contact parents, inform them of the circumstances and all procedures regarding possession of drugs, solvents, alcohol as per school policy.

(iv) Contact Social Services/Gardaí as appropriate.

4. The student will be required to meet with the school Guidance Counsellors and may be required to undertake specific tasks e.g. linking with outside drug addiction counsellor, doctor, Gardaí, project as necessary to fit the circumstance. Parents and students to be advised as to specific services available locally.

5. Mindful of the school's duty of care and while invoking a spirit of support and advice, disciplinary procedures will be necessary if school rules are broken. The school reserves the right to exclude a student from the school. In such circumstances parents/guardians have the right to appeal such exclusion, under Section 29 of the Education and Welfare Act 2000.

6. The school will keep a record of all details regarding the incident.

APPENDIX 2(b)

Procedure re: Suspected Possession of Drugs, Solvents, Alcohol

Student is accompanied to the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head.

The Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head will outline the allegation to the student and seek his/her co-operation in establishing the truth.

Parents will be contacted.

Mindful of the schools duty of care, the school reserves the right to take appropriate action to investigate the allegation and establish the truth.

Should possession be confirmed, then reference will be made to Appendix 2(a) relating to actual possession of drugs, solvents or alcohol.

APPENDIX 3

Procedure re: Disclosure of information pertinent to any substances referred to in this policy.

Mindful of the duty of care which applies to school personnel and that teachers act in loco parentis (in place of parents) the school will fully investigate any matter brought to the attention of school authorities in relation to Drugs, Solvents, Alcohol and Tobacco.

Depending on the outcome, procedures as outlined in this policy will be followed.

Ratified by Board of Management: 15th February 2017

Signed by Principal: _____

Signed by Chairperson _____