

Donabate-Portrane



Educate Together

Substance Use Policy

This policy was originally drawn up in consultation with the staff, parent representatives and the Board of Management. It has now been reviewed and updated to reflect current good practice.

Scope:

The policy applies to:

- All staff, paid and voluntary
- Parents/guardians/carers
- All guests and visitors
- All students of the school

It is understood that the policy is in effect:

- In all buildings
- Yard areas
- On all school related activities
- Extra-curricular activities

Relationship to School's Vision:

D.P.E.T.N.S is dedicated to the care of the whole school community and to provide a safe and secure environment for learning. Our Ethos is underpinned by four principals:

- Multi-denominational
- Co-educational
- Democratic
- Child-centred

D.P.E.T.N.S. is committed to placing the child at the centre of all education. In accordance with our Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) policy, the school consistently endeavours to enhance the self-esteem of every child. In doing so, it is hoped that the child will be enabled to make healthy and safe choices in his/her life.

Rationale:

- The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education.
- The National Drugs Strategy Building on Experience is now government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.
- It will enable the school to respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues involving alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- The 2001 report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drugs use Prevention' underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.

Aims/Objectives:

The aims of this policy are:

- To support parents in their important role of educating their children against drug use.
- To protect and prevent our pupils from using tobacco, alcohol and all illegal drugs.
- To develop a healthy respect for medicines.

The school aims to achieve this:

- Through building our pupils self esteem.
- Through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere.
- Through giving pupils age appropriate information.

Policy Content

1. Education and Prevention:

A substance misuse/use prevention programme (Walk Tall Programme) will be implemented at all class levels annually. Through Social, Personal, and Health Education which is spiral in nature, our pupils will practise specific skills and experience a value system which supports the content objectives relating directly to substances in an age appropriate manner. Copies of the Walk Tall Programme are available to read and inspect in the school.

2. Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

The school will respond to incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use in a planned and considered way. In certain cases it may be necessary to seek legal advice. Due care will be taken in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving tobacco, alcohol and drug use may include referral to a support agency. Alcohol must not be consumed on the school premises when children are present. **In accordance with Irish Law, smoking is prohibited in all school buildings and throughout the school grounds.** For information on the administration of medicines in D.P.E.T.N.S. please refer to our policy entitled 'Policy on the Administration of Medicines'.

3. Provision for Training and Staff Development:

At present teachers are assisted by the SESS and PDST. TUSLA and the HSE also provide supports including health education and health promotion, smoking cessation, support and adolescent counselling services. The school endeavours to train staff to be sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse. From time to time a guest speaker may be invited to talk to staff/parents. Such guest speakers, should they be talking to the children, will always do so in the presence of a teacher, in accordance with our policy on visiting speakers.

Roles and responsibilities:

The class teacher will be responsible for ensuring that the content of the programme is age appropriate and relevant to their class group.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed in 2020.