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CBS Primary Dundalk Substance Use Policy

Introduction

CBS Primary Dundalk recognises that issues are surrounding the taking of drugs and their consequences. This school does not allow teachers to administer medicines to pupils. In very exceptional circumstances, a Special Needs Assistant or Teacher will administer medication on completion of an Administration of Medicines Form (see relevant policy).

This policy aims to give clarity with the following categories of drugs:

- Over the counter (OTC) medicines.
- Prescription medicines
- Nicotine
- Alcohol
- Solvents
- Illegal Drugs

The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote students' social and personal development and provide health education for them. We refer to the National drugs strategy, 'Building on experience', which is currently Government policy. We also refer to a report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drug use prevention' (November 2001) which underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.

Our school currently delivers an SPHE programme to our students. This explores themes such as self-identity, taking care of my body, safety and protection, making decisions and developing citizenship. This policy is to be considered in the context of a variety of other school policies.

- Health and Safety statement
- Code of behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Department of Education - Child Abuse Prevention guidelines / Children First.

Development

The whole school community developed this policy. It was initially developed in draft form by Eileen Hart (Principal), Sarah Coggins (Teacher) and Pete Jones (Secretary). This policy was circulated to the broader school community for input, i.e. school staff members, parent association, and board of management. The policy will be adjusted accordingly and ratified by the B.O.M. in June 2021.

Content

The school shall respond to incidents in a planned and considered way. In some instances, it may be necessary to seek legal advice. Due care will be critical in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and disciplinary response. An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving drug misuse may include referral to a support agency. Parental involvement at an early stage is central to such an approach. The content of this policy is divided into two sections:

Drug Policy concerning:

- **Children**
- **Staff, Parents and other Adults**

Children

Over the Counter (OTC) medicines:

Teachers cannot administer medication under any circumstances, notwithstanding the administration of basic first aid. If a child requires OTC medicines during school time, the parent may come to school to administer the same.

In exceptional circumstances, where the child could not participate in school otherwise, prescription drugs may be administered by a staff member, parental permission will be sought. We refer to our Administration of Medicines Policy which states that express parental consent is required to administer any medication.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Solvents:

Any incident of consumption of these substances amongst students shall be treated as unacceptable behaviour. With regards to our school's behaviour policy, the above breach of rules will automatically be treated as a gross misbehaviour. A repeat of any of these offences may result in further suspensions and possible expulsion.

Illegal Drugs and associated paraphernalia:

Offences under the Misuse of drugs acts, 1977 and 1984 include possession with intent to supply and possession for personal use. The school shall take due action in line with legislation. This will usually include a referral to a support agency. Any breach shall be noted to facilitate review.

If illegal drugs are found in a child's possession, they will be taken from the child and reported to Gardai. Any found drugs will be confiscated and reported to Gardai. The same steps as in section 3.1.2 will also be taken.

Staff, Parents and other Adults

Smoking:

As CBS Primary Dundalk is a designated workplace, a no smoking policy is enforced within the grounds and the building. Should an adult be found to be smoking within the building,

they shall be requested to cease immediately. Should they continue to do so, it may be necessary to contact the local environmental officer and/or Gardaí.

Alcohol:

No staff member shall be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substance during pupil contact time. The school's duty of care towards students shall dictate this. In this instance, the staff member shall be removed from duty. Should a staff member require support, the school may consider facilitating links with an Employee Assistance scheme.

Should a Parent/Guardian be under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance when presenting to collect a child, it may be necessary to contact an alternative guardian on our file to provide for the child's safety and ensure his welfare.

If Parent/Guardian is aggressive and deemed a danger to staff and pupils Gardaí will be contacted immediately, and the parent/guardian will be asked to leave school premises.

If a parent insists on taking the child, the school has no option but to allow the child to leave with the parent/guardian. However, the Gardaí will be called to make them aware of the situation.

Drugs/Illegal Substances:

Any adult found in possession or under the influence of drugs will be reported to Gardaí or Social Services.

Any incidence of illegal drug misuse shall be dealt with in accordance with procedure. This shall be in the context of the Misuse of drugs act 1977 and 1984. Should the Principal/Secretary have a suspicion that any visitor to the school's environs is in possession of any illegal substance with intent to supply, the local Gardaí shall be contacted immediately.

Responsibilities

All parties in the school community have a role in developing, implementing, and evaluating this policy.

We recommend a community approach in this regard.

Within this approach, the following roles shall apply:

Eileen Hart (Principal) shall:

- Research and develop this policy in conjunction with all parties involved.
- Circulate the draft version to the teaching staff for analysis/discussion/feedback.
- Make all new teachers in the school aware of the contents of the policy.
- Provide for implementation of the policy within the school.
- Ensure that parents of new entrants to the school are aware of the policy.
- Parents should have access to the policy.
- Circulate the draft version amongst the parent body within the school and encourage feedback/analysis/discussion.
- Circulate the draft version to BOM level and encourage analysis/feedback/discussion.

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for policy implementation within the school.

The Board of Management shall:

- ratify the amended and completed policy
- provide any supports were necessary for the implementation of the policy.

Eileen Hart (Principal) is the school's Designated Liaison Person (DLP), and Petrina Hanratty, the deputy DLP. Eileen Hart shall liaise with local Gardaí to improve staff awareness of the symptoms of substance misuse. This should produce a proactive, rather than reactive, approach.

Implementation and Review

The Board of Management adopted this policy on November 2021.

Signed: Deirdre Kerr, Chairperson, BOM Date: October 2024.

Signed: Eileen Hart, Principal, Date: October 2024.

Date of next review: October 2025