



Substance Use Policy, St. Brigid's Primary School, The Coombe

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to students, all staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the building. It is applicable during school-time – including breaks and to all school related activities. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place, e.g. School Tour.

Aims of Policy

The aim of the substance use policy of St. Brigid's Primary School, The Coombe is prevention. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs. We aim to develop in our pupils' better self-esteem, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils age appropriate information from educational programmes.

Relationship To School's Mission, Vision And Aims

This substance use policy supports other school policies and our ethos by:

- Drawing together teachers, parents, Board of Management members, our School Completion Programme officers and members of the local community.
- Including reference to substance use in our Code of Behaviour
- Including reference to substance use in our SPHE programme and teaching

Rationale: Why is this policy necessary?

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of this reality. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their student cohort and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.

The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them. The National Drugs Strategy '*Building on Experience*' is now government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place. The report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled '*Drug Use Prevention*' (November 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.

The Board of Management in St. Brigid's Primary School, The Coombe has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.

Implementation Procedures

Copies of the policy were distributed to Board of Management members for ratification in January 2021. When ratified all staff members were sent a copy of the policy and it has been made available to view by the wider school community via www.stbrigidsthecoombe.ie

Monitoring and Review Procedures

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. The policy will be reviewed regularly and any changes deemed necessary will be made.

Policy Content

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

The policy committee members believe that young people are most at risk in relation to substance use in St. Brigid's Primary School, The Coombe in recreational areas, on the way to and from school and at 'out of school' related activities supervised by staff members of St. Brigid's Primary School, The Coombe.

Incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use are addressed in the school's Code of Behaviour and pupils may be suspended or expelled if involved in any drug related incident.

The school's shared understanding of a 'drug related incident' is:

- Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs
- The sale or passing on of any illegal substance,
- The possession of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs on school grounds or at school related activities
- Disposal of drugs or related items (e.g. syringes) on school property.

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

Step 1: Witness to drug related incident informs teacher/staff member/Principal

Step 2: Principal inform parents/guardians

Step 3: Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management

Step 4: Gardai informed depending on seriousness of incident

Step 5: HSE informed for disposal of items

Parents will be involved by accepting the school's Code of Behaviour. They will be informed of an incident involving their own child and will be asked to accept responsibility, co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardai if necessary. Parents will be involved in incidents involving another child only if deemed necessary by the school. If parents are aware that another child is involved in drug-related incidents under the scope of this policy, they should inform a Teacher or the Principal.

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Ratify this policy
- Implement this policy
- Monitor and evaluate it
- To sponsor/provide training for staff members
- Make decisions involving critical incidents
- To deal with the media in the event of a critical incident.

This policy puts the following procedures in place to deal with an incident requiring medical intervention:

- 'Universal Precautions' will be applied; e.g. wearing of proper protective gloves etc., washing and making safe an area after an incident; provision of a bin to dispose of needles or other unsuitable appliances.
- First Aid training will be sought by the school for at least one staff member, who will be qualified and certified to assist with medical emergencies (training will take place in January 2021).
- Important Contact Numbers and Useful Links are provided in this policy (see Appendix 1).
- **Contact has been made with a local doctor/clinic in case of emergencies!!**
- St. Brigid's Primary School, The Coombe is currently updating its Critical Incident Policy.

The school has established a good rapport with the local Gardaí at Kevin's Street Garda Station and will invite representatives from the local Garda station to speak with senior pupils each year, where possible and appropriate. Other outside agencies and community health representatives may also be invited in to speak also.

Whether or not to inform the Gardaí of minor incidents will be at the discretion of the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management, but they will be involved in any serious substance abuse incidents.

At local level the following support agencies are available to which students involved in substance misuse might be referred:

- School Completion Programme
- TUSLA Child and Family Agency
- CAMHS
- YoDA (HSE Youth Drug and Alcohol Service)
- Drug Education Officer
- HSE Drugs and Alcohol Helpline
- Community Gardaí

In the event of media interest in relation to a 'drug related incident', the matter will be referred to the Board of Management and the Chairperson will issue a prepared statement to the media.

Management of Persons in the Workplace Under The Influence of Drugs And/or Alcohol

The Board of Management shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that pupils and other persons in the workplace are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare from persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The term "in the workplace", in the preceding sentence includes all school related activities taking place under the supervision of a teacher, and both within and away from the school premises. Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and others. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented. Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of any contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a parent or adult collecting a pupil from school or presenting themselves on the premises for another reason is unfit to be on the premises or to take care of the said pupil, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal will be informed and the duty of care will apply to the pupil. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the pupil and safeguard their best interests.

In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove him/herself from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all school staff. An Employee Assistance Service (telephone: 1800 411 057) is available to all staff. More information on the Employee Assistance Service can be accessed through the following link <https://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Services/Employee-Assistance-Service/employee-assistance-service.html>

In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of school staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service.

All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded and reported as soon as possible to the Principal and the Board of Management. The Board of Management shall consider all such reports and decide on the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

Ratification and Communication: This school policy was ratified by the Board of Management on January 21st 2021. It is available on the school website www.stbrigidsthecoombe.ie and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Date: 21st January 2021

Signed: Amanda McGarry

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Appendix 1: Important Contact Numbers and Useful Links

Dr. James O'Neill, The Meath Primary Care Centre, Heytesbury Street, Dublin 2, Ireland. 01 708 5700

The HSE National Drug Treatment Centre, 30/31 Pearse Street, Dublin 2 **01-6488600**

TUSLA Child and Family Agency **www.tusla.ie**

Kevin Street Garda Station, 41 Upper Kevin Street, Dublin 8 **01-6669400**

HSE Drugs and Alcohol Helpline **1800 459 459** Email: **helpline@hse.ie**

YoDA (HSE Youth Drug and Alcohol Service) Kilnamanagh Tymon Primary Care, Addiction Treatment Service, Airton Square, Airton Road, Dublin 24. **01-9214978**

www.yourmentalhealth.ie

www.bodywhys.ie

www.headstrong.ie

www.spunout.ie

www.childline.ie

<http://mentalhelp.ie/>

<http://ie.reachout.com/>

<http://ie.reachout.com/parents/>