



SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

*Presentation Secondary School,
Miltown, Co. Kerry*



For the purpose of this policy “Drugs” and “Illegal /Harmful Substances” shall be taken to mean;-

- 1) Any chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels
- 2) All drugs/substances whose use by school children is prohibited by law.

Rationale

The world we live presents young people with many challenges that affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs is part of this reality.

The National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 ‘Building on Experience¹,’ sets out a detailed programme of action to be implemented by Government Departments and Agencies to combat the very serious problem of drug misuse in our society. The strategy highlights the important contribution that schools are making in the area of education and prevention and requires them to have use policies in place.

Mission

In accordance with our ethos and mission we aim to provide a safe and secure environment for learning by encouraging each individual to develop a sense of self-worth and self-respect. We aim to assist our young people on their journey to adulthood by equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary for them to make informed decision and to develop an awareness of the challenges they will face.

Aims

The central objective of Presentation Secondary School’s drugs policySAbuseP is the welfare, care and protection of every young person provided for in the Education Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. Our will concerning alcohol, tobacco and drugs relating to these substances

STEP 2: The preparation of a draft policy will consider: We aim to develop positive relationship with outside agencies such as An Garda Síochána and the Environmental Health Officers in relation to the laws relating to drugs (Misuse of Drugs Acts, 1977 and 1984). Offences under these acts include possession with intent to supply and possession for personal use.

Roles & Responsibilities

Role of the Board of Management

- ❖ To ensure that a policy is in place and that it is reviewed as specified.
- ❖ To support staff in the implementation of this policy, including up-to-date staff development/training.
- ❖ To decide on appeals by parents or students with respect to decisions made by the Principal.
- ❖ To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Role of the Principal/Deputy Principal

- ❖ To formulate a draft policy in consultation with the teaching staff, students, parents, Board and Trustees.
- ❖ To monitor the implementation of the policy and to ensure that it is reviewed as specified.
- ❖ To support other staff in their implementation of the policy and arrange relevant staff training.
- ❖ To ensure all referrals are investigated in accordance with this policy and the schools Code of Behaviour.
- ❖ To liaise with parents and outside agencies including An Garda Síochána and local authorities.
- ❖ To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Role of Teaching Staff

- ❖ To advocate positive and healthy lifestyle decisions.
- ❖ To treat the possibility of substances abuse as a serious threat to the welfare of students.
- ❖ To inform themselves regarding the signs, symptoms and effects of substance abuse.
- ❖ To be alert to disclosure by students regarding their own or other's involvement in substance abuse.
- ❖ To implement the policy & bring any information/concerns to the attention of the Principal immediately.
- ❖ To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Role of School Counsellor(s)

- ❖ To offer advice and support to any student who may be involved in substances abuse.
- ❖ To advise parents/guardians where further support and information may be found.
- ❖ To liaise with outside agencies concerning counselling and related support

Role of Students

- ❖ To cooperate fully with the school in the implementation of the policy.
- ❖ To bring any such information or suspicions to the attention of a member of staff immediately.

Role of Parents

- ❖ To support the policy and to cooperate fully with the school in its implementation.
- ❖ To inform the school authorities of any information/concerns they have in relation to substance abuse.
- ❖ To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Substance Abuse Education

Current Provision of Substance Abuse Education

We aim to provide education on substances abuse through:-

- 1) Our ethos and mission which promote self-respect and confidence in our young people. Through this we aim to develop in each student the ability to make informed decisions when faced with situations where they may be at risk from substance abuse.
- 2) SPHE - Students currently receive education on drugs, alcohol & tobacco through the Junior SPHE programme, and through some areas of the Senior Religious Education programme.
- 3) Subject specific areas which lend themselves to opportunities to inform students about the harmful effects of such substances.
eg:- Science – effects of substances abuse on the human body.
Home Economics – identifying risks related to domestic/toxic substances.
Construction – developing awareness of safety hazards including solvents / glues.
Physical Education to develop a positive attitude towards a healthy lifestyle.
English – exploration of relevant issues through literature, role play, drama etc.
- 4) Outside speakers from relevant bodies such as An Garda Síochána and Local Health Authorities. All external speakers/groups will be pre-approved by the Principal

Future Development of Substance Abuse Education

- 1) Formalise the Senior programme on Substance Abuse Education
- 2) Develop further links with external groups in order to strengthen these programmes with outside speakers and workshops.
- 3) Development of a training programme for staff, based on how to deal with drugs related incidents and providing Substance Abuse Education.

Reporting of Substance Abuse Related Incidents

Substance Abuse related incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use might include;

- Disclosure about student(s) substance abuse
- Use or suspected use on the school premises or during school-related activities, including intoxication / unusual behaviour.
- Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia.
- Possession of alcohol or an illegal/harmful substance during school time or during a school-related activity.
- Supply of alcohol or an illegal/harmful substance to other students whilst in the school's care.

All reasonable suspicions and/or incidents relating to smoking, alcohol or drugs must be reported to the Principal / Deputy Principal. Written records should be kept at each stage of any investigation.

Procedures for Substance Abuse Related Incidents

“Cigarette smoking, or smoking, possession, consumption, inhalation or otherwise of taking drugs or alcohol or any harmful substance or any attempt to encourage or involve others in such activities while in school uniform is strictly forbidden.”

(Code of Behaviour - applies to students whilst they are in school uniform and/or on all school related activities.)

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Prescribed Medicines

- 1) Prescribed medicines/tablets must not be brought to school unless accompanied by a letter from a parent/guardian.
- 2) All medication must be handed into the school office and will only be administered when it is absolutely necessary as per written instruction from parents.

Chemical Substances / Solvents

- 1) School personnel will ensure that potentially harmful substances are stored safely and students are supervised carefully in the event of them having to be used in the course of their work.
- 2) Students' use of correction fluid and aerosol sprays will be discouraged at all times.
- 3) Misuse of such substances will be dealt with inline with the “Illegal/Harmful Substance” procedure below.

Tobacco / Cigarette Smoking / Vapping

In the event of students being found with tobacco/cigarettes/Vapping utensils on their person the items will be confiscated, the parents/guardians will be informed and action will be taken in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

1) First Offence

- ❖ Parents will be informed via a letter home.
- ❖ Students will be banned from leaving the school premises during breaks for a period of two weeks.
- ❖ Smoking also carries a €10 fine.

2) Subsequent offences will merit suspension and parents will be sent for.

Alcohol & Illegal/Harmful Substances

The School will seek, as far as possible, to support for those who are experiencing difficulties with substance abuse. However, we are also dedicated to the care of the whole school community and this must be considered when sanctions are applied.

Incidents involving possession, use of, or intoxication from alcohol, drugs or illegal/harmful substances will necessitate the following:-

- 1) Student(s) will be removed from class immediately.**
- 2) Parents/guardians will be sent for.**
- 3) Such incidents will result in suspension pending a full investigation, after which further sanctions may be applied. This may include a further period of suspension or exclusion. Each individual case will be assessed and different levels of sanctions will be used according to the seriousness of the incident and the student's involvement.**

Any substance which changes the way the body functions – mentally, physically or emotionally.



- 4) The Juvenile Liaison Officer of An Garda Síochána will be informed of all drugs or substance abuse related incidents.**
- 5) Where appropriate relevant support agencies will also be contacted.**
- 6) Students involved in alcohol/substance abuse related incidents may also be required to speak with the school counsellor.**

Advice for School Personnel

All school personnel should be aware of the legal implications of discovering a young person in possession of drugs/illegal substances and how they are expected to deal with such an event.

In relation to dealing with alcohol or drugs-related incidents, staff are advised that:

- i. Any concerns or suspicions should be reported to the Principal / Deputy Principal.
- ii. Searches of student's personal belongings should only be carried out with the student's consent, and in his/her presence and that of another adult witness.
- iii. Lockers are school property and as such do not require students permission to be search. However it is important that the student(s) and another adult witness are present when any search takes place
- iv. Teachers should never guarantee confidentiality in relation to a disclosure by a student, as we have a legal obligation to pass information regarding a criminal activity to the police. Students disclosing information should be told that relevant personnel/agencies may have to be told in order to protect students from harm, but that all efforts will be made to help those involved.

Responding To the Press

- Refer all enquiries to the Principal
- Make no further comment
- Hang up. The Press may tape-record your conversation so be wary of making further comment.

Further Advice for School Personnel

See Appendix 1 & 2

Provision for Training and Staff Development

Parents/Guardians are to be made aware and informed of what is happening in the school with regard to both drug education and policy from the time of enrolment of the student.

Training for staff on the issues surrounding Substance Abuse will form part of our School Development Plan so that staff members are sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse.

We aim to ensure that staff are aware of the role schools can play in the prevention and reduction of substance abuse.

Teachers are encouraged, where appropriate, to contribute to the overall aims of this policy through their own subjects and also by encouraging a supportive class environment and self-confidence. Relevant literature/resources will be acquired to assist teachers in this area.

School Personnel

It is important that substance abuse among adults also be recognised through this policy.

Support and advice will be available for school personnel who may find themselves suffering from any form of substance abuse.

However, intoxication from alcohol or any illegal substance whilst at work may put students and other staff at risk. Such incidents will be dealt with by the Principal, in confidence and in the interest of all parties involved and to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.

Conclusion

The welfare of our students and staff is our paramount concern. We shall work with the students, staff, parents and external agencies to provide a safe, drugs-free environment and ensure the well-being of all those in our school community.

Policy Review Date :- April 2018

Emergency Procedures

The following procedures should be adopted when dealing with loss of consciousness or intoxication due to drug or substance abuse.

In first instance call a designated first aider and additional support if necessary.

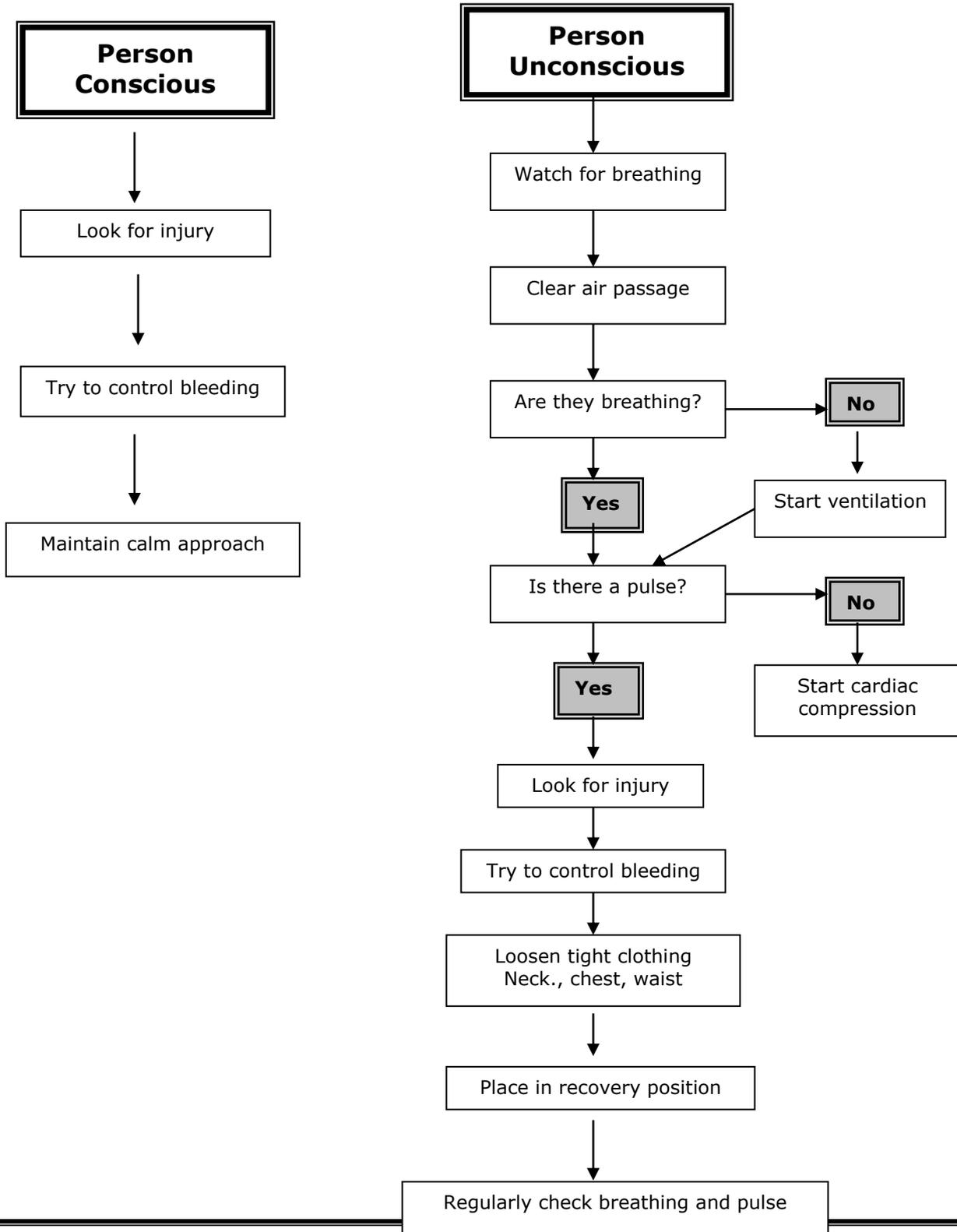
- 1. Remain Calm**
- 2. Send for First Aid Person**
- 3. Send for Help**
- 4. Establish Control Over Group Associated with the Incident**
- 5. Consider Personal Safety (and safety of others)**
- 6. Stay with the Casualty**
- 7. Arrange for an Ambulance**
- 8. Collect any tablets, bottles, syringes and vomit to take to hospital to help medical diagnosis. If handling syringes use a rigid container. Always use gloves. *These are available in the First Aid Draw (Outside the Office)***
- 9. A member of staff should stay with casualty - including travel to the hospital.**

The member of staff initially involved should write a full account of the incident as soon as possible and give a copy to the Principal.

First Aid Procedures

Advice for Staff

Where a student is ill or injured as a result of an alcohol/drug related incident send for a person trained in first aid immediately. Where this is not possible or may take some time the following guidelines should be applied.





Relevant Legislation & Publications

- Misuse of Drugs Act (1977)
- Misuse of Drugs Act (1984)
- Education Act (1998)
- Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- Walk Tall Programme----a Social, Personal and Health education programme for the prevention of Substance Misuse - Department of Education and Science.
- Substance Misuse Prevention information booklet outlining a multi- strand approach for Boards of Management, Teachers, Parents and other Educators – Department of Education 1997.
- “On My Own Two Feet” – Educational Resource Materials for Social, Personal and Health Education - Department of Education and Science.
- Junior Cycle Post Primary Curriculum and Teacher Guidelines for Social, Personal and Health Education – Department of Education and Science / NCCA (2000).
- Directory of Alcohol, Drugs and related services in the Republic of Ireland – Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health and Children.
- Facts about Drug Abuse in Ireland, compiled by Dr Des Corrigan - Health Promotion Unit, Dept of Health and Children.