

*Ballinakill N. S.*



*Roll No. 17273G*

## **Substance Use Policy**

**This is our School's Policy on: ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND DRUG USE**

### **Introduction**

Ballinakill N. S. is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs. The policy has been drawn up and accepted by the Principal, Teachers, Parents/Guardians, Board of Management and Students. It is necessary that all involved work together to implement this policy. It is vital that parents/guardians actively work with the school to implement this policy to ensure their children's health and safety. In this policy "Drug" means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The School recognises that drugs both legal and illegal are available in the local community and that the School, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents.

### **THE SCHOOL ETHOS**

As stated in the School's mission statement, Ballinakill N. S. is committed to enabling students to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, cultural and physical potential. It also is committed to fostering the development of personal responsibility. This is the ethos which guides the School Health Policy.

- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the school, or on outside activities or in non school time by any member of the school community.
- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco in the school or on school activities by any student.

- The School does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances. Students may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only.
- Students who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school long term must inform the school.
- The School must be informed if a student has a medical condition.
- A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter "medicine.

### **Aims;**

- To enable children to become accurately informed on the effects, good or bad of drugs on health and make healthy informed choices
- To enable children to experience up to date coverage of the risks and legal aspects of drug taking
- To give children the opportunity to develop their abilities to communicate their concerns and take responsible decisions

Drug education should start at least two to three years before likely age of drug experimentation.

Junior Infants - 2<sup>nd</sup> Class; How to keep healthy and the role of drugs as medicine

3<sup>rd</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> Class; All medicines are drugs but not all drugs are medicines. They should also begin to be aware of the harmful effects on health of abuse of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. As part of the Walk Tall programme, substance use issues can be reinforced throughout the child's education so matching their increased understanding and maturity.

Outside agencies may be involved in the planning and teaching of drug and alcohol education and will be adhered to school policy.

This Substance Use Programme will provide pupils with opportunities to;

- Explore attitudes and values around drug misuse
- Practise decision making skills
- Become aware of peer pressure
- Develop assertiveness skills
- Consider the consequences of risk taking
- Learn how to access sources of help and information
- Emphasise the benefits of a healthy lifestyle
- Evaluate media messages on drug use

### **Pastoral Support;**

Ballinakill N. S. encourages the importance of its pastoral role and will support all concerned in ensuring the well being of all its pupils. Parents will be encouraged to become involved as much as possible in order to achieve a successful drug education programme.

### **Steps;**

All incidents or concerns will be logged by the Principal or teachers of Ballinakill NS. Parents will be informed, unless linked to an abuse case and provisions made for any outside professional help such as Gardaí or health professionals. Where illegal substances are involved, these outside agencies will automatically be involved. If a pupil voluntarily discloses information about drug abuse or alcohol abuse, it is important to;

- Not over-react
- Listen to pupil's point of view
- Not jump to conclusions
- Staff should not guarantee confidentiality as they will have to inform DLP, Gardaí, Túsla.

### **Managing Drug Related Incidents In School;**

'In school' is taken to mean on school premises including building and grounds. The school policy applies to off-site activities, visits and school trips. The policy will also relate to pupils use of premises and grounds beyond the school day.

### **Hearsay;**

Drug use is often discovered by hearsay. This should be passed onto the DLP who should record the matter as hearsay evidence and report to Túsla/Gardaí

### **Suspicious Behaviour;**

Behaviour that could indicate involvement with drugs should also be passed onto DLP an, recorded and reported to Túsla/Gardaí

### **Finding Substances;**

If a harmful, illegal substance is discovered it should be removed to a place of safekeeping in the presence of a witness from the teaching staff. If the substance is known or suspected to be illegal, the Gardaí must be informed. If the substance is found on a pupil, the above procedure should be followed and the incident recorded and reported to Túsla. Record must include;

- Date and time of find or retrieval
- Size and appearance of the substance
- Names of those concerned
- Action taken

### **Finding Drug Misuse;**

If a pupil is found in possession of tobacco, glue, alcohol. Solvents, or prescribed or over the counter medicines, parents will be informed and the above steps taken.

In an emergency from an incident involving abuse the well-being of the pupil is paramount. In all instances

- Separate the child involved from the rest of the pupils
- Implement next steps as per 'Children First Act 2015'
- Inform Parents

### **Supplying Illegal Substances;**

It is an offence to produce or supply any controlled drugs on a school premises. The Gardaí and Túsla will be involved in such circumstances.

### **Staff Development;**

All staff need to;

- Understand and support the rationale and aims of drug education
- Be aware of the legal implications and their responsibilities as per 'Children First Act 2015'

The staff, children, parents/guardians and Board of Management of Ballinakill N. S. will work together and safeguard the well-being of all pupils in our care by educating them about the dangers of drug misuse.

**Outside Visitations;** Gardaí and appropriate guest speakers will be invited to give talks and workshops on the area of Substance Use/misuse/ abuse.

### **Ratification and Communication;**

*This policy was reviewed on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024*

*Ratified by the Board of Management of Ballinakill N. S. \_\_\_\_\_*

Signed; \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson BOM

Date; \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of next review; June 2026**

\_\_\_\_\_ Principal

Date; \_\_\_\_\_