

Scoil Cholmáin, Corkbeg, Whitegate, Co. Cork

Roll Number – 119921

Tel: (021) 4661622

Email: office@whitegatens.ie

Website: www.whitegatens.ie

Substance Abuse Prevention Policy

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all students, teachers, parents, visitors, coaches and other users of the school premises. It applies during school time, breaks and during all school related activities.

Relationship to School Ethos and Mission Statement

This policy reflects the school ethos in that it will help towards the provision of a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere in our school, where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are developed. It will help enhance respect among children and adults in the school community.

Rationale

- The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- The Social Personal and Health Education curriculum, of which substance misuse prevention education is an integral part, is a mandatory subject on the primary curriculum and must be taught to all primary pupils from junior infants to sixth class (DES Circular 022/2010).
- The National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 requires every school to have a substance use policy in place.
- Action 21 of the National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 mandates the Department of Education and Skills to monitor the implementation of substance use policies in schools through the whole school evaluation process as operated by the Inspectorate. It is also mandated to ensure that best practice is disseminated to all schools.
- The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges that affect their health and wellbeing. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is part of this reality. The Board of Management of Scoil Cholmáin will adopt practices and implement school policies which aims to protect pupils from exposure to drugs.

Definition of a Drug

A drug can be defined as a chemical, which causes changes in the way the human body functions mentally, physically or emotionally.

Aims of Policy

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- To reflect the Ethos/Mission Statement of the School
- To develop a shared understanding of the term “drug” and “Substance Abuse”
- To gain a shared understanding of why children/young people may avail of substance abuse
- To influence people towards healthier activities and away from the need to use drugs
- To help develop a sensible attitude to drugs, understand the benefits and negative aspects to them.
- To help children develop personal skills and values that can reduce the risks of children becoming involved in substance abuse.
- Through the SPHE Programme we seek to develop a framework for education concerning substance misuse in terms of providing information to children.
- We aim to help children develop a common sense approach to alcohol, drugs and everyday substances that can be abused

Education Concerning Substance Misuse

Education on substance abuse and drugs is provided within the framework of a SPHE Programme. This is a developmental programme and delivered within the context of a supportive whole school environment.

We believe the “ Walk Tall” programme to be effective in addressing these issues across the whole school community in an age appropriate manner.

Suitable Visitors from the HSE, DES, Garda Síochána and other relevant personnel may come to talk to the children about substance abuse where appropriate, to enhance the work done in class and in the context of the SPHE Programme.

Management of Drug Related/ Substance Abuse Related Incidents

Smoking / Vaping

Smoking or vaping is not permitted in Scoil Cholmáin, Whitegate N.S. Students, parents, visitors or staff are not permitted to smoke or vape on the school premises. Children are not permitted to possess cigarettes/vape in school or at school related activities. Any child who is found smoking / vaping or possessing cigarettes or a vape on the school premises will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s Code of Behaviour and the Principal and parents/guardians informed. Staff found smoking / vaping on the school premises will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Alcohol

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Scoil Cholmáin is an alcohol free arena. Pupils, staff or visitors are not permitted to consume or possess alcohol on the school premises or at school related activities. If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of alcohol, he/she will immediately inform the Principal and the school's Code of Behaviour will be followed. Parents will be informed and required to come to collect the child immediately. Where a student comes to school under the influence of alcohol, the parent/guardian will be called to take the child home. In the case where the parent/guardian is unable or unwilling to collect their child the local doctor or medical services will be contacted. Any member of staff under the influence of alcohol will be subject to disciplinary procedures and will be required to go home immediately.

Medication

Any administration or use of medication on school premises during school activities or on school tours must comply with the Scoil Cholmáin policy on Administration of Medication. Students are not permitted to share their medication under any circumstances.

Illicit Drugs, Paraphernalia and Solvents

Students and staff are forbidden from being in possession of or using illicit drugs or misusing solvents on the school premises. In the case of suspected or actual possession or use of illegal drugs on the school premises or at school related activities, every effort will be made to locate the offending substance and/or associated paraphernalia and remove same to a locked secure location. The following parties may be informed

- The Principal
- The Chairperson of the Board of Management
- Parents/Guardians
- Garda Síochána where necessary
- HSE/Túsla where necessary

In the case where a child is under the influence of drugs and where the parent/guardian is unwilling to remove the child/children in question, the local doctor or medical services will be contacted. If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of illicit drugs or misusing solvents, he/she will immediately inform the Principal and the Code of Behaviour will apply.

Where the school suspects trafficking of illicit drugs, an investigation will take place and any parent/guardian of children involved will be informed. Advice and/or assistance may be sought from the Garda Síochána or Juvenile Liaison Officer.

It is expected that parents/guardians will inform the Board of Management and/or Principal if they suspect their child of drug taking.

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The school will endeavour to 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 nature of the school's response e.g pastoral or disciplinary. An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving alcohol, tobacco or drug use could include referral to a support agency. Expulsion is the ultimate sanction and it is stressed that this measure is only used as a last resort as it can have the effect of separating a student from mainstream sources of help and may result in a child becoming more involved in the culture of drug abuse.

Where a member of staff is found to be under the influence of drugs or misusing solvents then the Professional Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures will apply. The staff will adhere to confidentiality matters in this regard and support may be offered to the staff member/s in question.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians

The school wishes to make it clear that the primary role of substance abuse prevention lies with the parents/guardians.

Teacher

The Role of the Teacher

- To teach the SPHE Programme involving areas which build self- esteem, teaches about drugs and making decisions. The Walk Tall Programme is particularly effective in educating children about drugs and making good life choices.
- To help foster a school ethos of care, communication, respect and positivity.
- To report matters/incidents involving drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, vapes and solvent misuse to the Principal.

The Principal

- To facilitate CPD where necessary in the area of substance abuse. This could include visitors to speak to Staff, Board of Management or Parent Body
- To assist in investigating incidents of substance abuse and keep a record of such.
- To report incidents to outside agencies where necessary, such as Túsła, Gardaí or the HSE.

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- To ensure the implementation of the Code of Discipline in the school.
- To follow procedures in relation to the Code of Professional Conduct where incidents may involve members of staff

Board of Management

- To provide training in the area of substance abuse for staff and parents where needed.
- To ensure that the school provides relevant educational programmes to children to help prevent the likelihood of children being exposed to, possessing or using drugs.
- To ensure that relevant procedures are followed and policies are implemented and updated
- To ensure that parents and staff have access to procedures and policies which are relevant to Substance Misuse Prevention.

Success Criteria

Substance Misuse Prevention is a complex and demanding task which needs to be approached in the context of increasing drug use among young people. A whole school community approach is needed in order to keep our school community free from substance abuse and the influence of drugs, solvent misuse, cigarettes and alcohol.

The importance of schools in the context of an overall prevention strategy is acknowledged in the development of school-based programmes such as Walk Tall. The success of any programme will be influenced greatly by what is happening both inside and outside school to support young people to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Related Policies, Procedures and Programmes

- Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection
- SPHE Policy
- Walk Tall Programme
- Tours, Afterschool and Initiatives Policy

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- Administration of Medicine Policy
- Home School Liaison Policy
- Critical Incident Policy

Ratification

This Substance Abuse Prevention Policy has been ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date _____

It will be reviewed in 2025 or before this if legislation affects this statement's content.

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