

## **Kentstown National School Substance Use Policy**

***Kentstown National School is a Catholic Primary School, which operates under the auspices of the DES and under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath Most Rev Michael Smith. The school caters for children from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. We currently have 263 pupils on roll.***

### **Introduction**

A drug can be defined as a chemical, which causes changes in the way the human body functions mentally, physically or emotionally. For the purpose of this policy we are concerned with:

- (a) Drugs/substances which have the power to change a previous mood, and the way a person thinks.
- (b) Drugs on which the taker may become physically or more often psychologically dependent i.e. smoking, alcohol, illicit drugs, and solvents, misuse of solvents, misuse of prescription medicines and over the counter drugs.

Currently, there is no evidence of any drug/substance abuse in the school.

### **Scope:**

This policy applies to pupils, teachers, ancillary staff, users of the school building and any person attending school related activities. This school substance use policy is an active learning programme, which enables children to develop personal strengths and social skills, that will help them to make responsible decisions with regard to drug/substance use.

### **Relationship to School Ethos:**

As this policy is dedicated to the care of the whole school community, we understand the need and importance of having a School Substance Use Policy. This school policy is part of a wider programme (SPHE), and many themes which relate to other programmes such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Relationship and Sexuality Education. Self-esteem is the core theme, as all programmes aim to develop each child's confidence and self-esteem. The school sees itself as having a role in the process of enabling pupils to increase control over and improve their health. We endeavour to promote the well being of pupils by:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment.
- Promoting positive health behaviours.
- Increasing knowledge about health.
- Promoting self-esteem and self-awareness of pupils.
- Working in partnership with parents and pupils.

### **This policy will focus on the following aims:**

- To develop positive self-esteem and to give children the confidence, skills and knowledge to make healthy choices.
- To help children appreciate their worth and the worth of others.
- To help children take responsibility for themselves and others, by developing strategies for the prevention of drug/substance abuse, through Walk Tall, Stay Safe, RSE, Alive-O, Grow in Love, Friends for Life and other SPHE programmes.
- To support parents in their important role of educating their children against drug abuse.
- To educate teachers and staff re safe storage of solvents.
- Guidelines and information for teachers to improve their response to the problem of substance misuse.
- To formulate procedures for dealing with drug incidences in the school in accordance with Kentstown National School's Code of Conduct/Discipline policy.

### **Prevention**

#### **Education regarding Substance Use:**

It is accepted among the teaching staff in Kentstown School that education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs is most effective, if provided in the broader context of a Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E) programme.

Education concerning substance abuse will be provided by the SPHE programme – through Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Alive–O. The class teacher will take responsibility for implementing the school-based element of the programme. The role of the teacher will be that of facilitator or leader. The approach is child centred, and will always take the age and stage of development of the pupils into account. Delivery will be by way of a timetabled core, where appropriate, and cross-curricular links in the context of a supportive whole school environment.

Suggested teaching methods may include Discussion, Artwork, Co-operative games, Circle work, stories, Poems, Songs and Rhymes, Role-play and Mime, Visualisations, Group work, Project work, Brainstorming and Movement.

This SPHE Programme would also draw on the expertise available from the community i.e. Parents, Gardai and Health Service Executive, and include projects focusing on safety with visits from the Health Nurse and local Gardai. The use of outside visitors/speakers to enhance the work done in class, will be considered in the context of our full SPHE programme and will be undertaken in the presence of a class teacher. Where it is planned to have the support of other agencies or visiting speakers, the school will inform the parents in advance.

## Smoking

### School Policy:

- The school, in accordance with legislation is a no-smoking area.
- Visitors will comply with the no-smoking policy.
- Persons found smoking on the school premises will be reported to the Principal.

A record will be taken of incidents of smoking/unusual behaviour and will be reported to Parents and to the Health Service Executive. The Gardai will be informed if necessary.

## Alcohol

### School Policy:

If a staff member is of the opinion that any person on the school premises is under the influence of alcohol, he/she will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken. If a member is concerned that a child may be at risk, Gardai/B.O.M. may be informed.

Where a member of staff comes to work under the influence of alcohol, a family member/taxi will be called to take them home. Guidelines of the Department of Education and Skills will be followed.

If alcohol is required for an adult only school function, permission will be sought from the B.O.M.

Alcohol will not be used as a prize in school raffles.

## Illicit Drugs and Solvents

### School Policy:

- Pupils are forbidden to be in possession of, or use illicit drugs or solvents.
- Pupils will be protected from the effects of certain solvents that may be used on the premises. Tippex/permanent markers/aerosols/toxic glues must only be used in a well-ventilated area where children will be unaffected.
- The First-Aid box will be kept in the Secretary's office and staffroom.
- Prescribed medicines for pupils with written consent and authorisation from the Board of Management will be kept in a safe place out of reach of children. (See administration of medicines policy)
- No plasters will be used on children's cuts unless bleeding occurs, and the parent/guardian will be informed at dismissal time of the application of plaster, and the need to continue inspecting the cut after school hours.

- Illicit drugs found on the school premises/grounds will be locked away and the Gardai contacted to dispose of them. Teachers are advised not to transport illicit substances at any time.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that any person on the school premises is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, he/she will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Where the school suspects trafficking of illicit drugs, an investigation will be carried out. Parents of any pupil involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Office will be sought.
- The school B.O.M. will expect parents to inform the Principal or teacher if they suspect their child is taking drugs.
- Storage of cleaning products, bleach etc. Those cleaning products used in the school will be kept in a locked cupboard out of reach of pupils.
- Staff members to ensure any O.T.C. (over the counter) drugs are kept out of the reach of children. Prescribed drugs and or O.T.C. drugs may only be administered following written consent of parent or guardian.

#### **Provision for training and staff development:**

1. Local Health Service Executive teacher training days.
2. Local Health Nurse demonstration on administering Anapens.
3. Local Garda drug identification lectures for teachers.
4. Walk Tall team teacher training.

#### **Implementation of the Policy:**

The policy will be available from the Principal, the B.O.M., Teachers and other staff members. Parents and guardians may be given a copy of the policy on enrolment of their child in school.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

**The school wishes to make clear that the primary role of substance misuse prevention rests with the parents. The Board of management of this school will work in conjunction with the local Gardai and Health Service Executive to implement this policy.**

#### **Success Criteria:**

The policy will be regularly evaluated to check that any incidents that occur are dealt with correctly.

#### **Monitoring Procedures:**

School Principal, teachers, parents and Board of Management will monitor our policy by observation.

**Review Procedures:**

This policy will be reviewed when necessary, but no later than December 2017 to evaluate its effectiveness and to ascertain what changes, if any, are necessary.

Ratified by the Board of Management

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Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_