



## **Substance Use Policy**

Lisnagry NS, School Road, Lisnagry, Co. Limerick. V94 K599  
Roll number: 18516L

### **Introduction**

In Lisnagry NS, we are committed to addressing the needs of the whole school community regarding substance use. The school recognises that it has an important role in terms of prevention, education, support and handling of drug related incidents and also to support the parents/ guardians who have the responsibility with respect to substance use education.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to the entire school community including staff, students, parents/guardians, users of the school building/ premises and all visitors to the school. It applies at any time the school is being used and to all school related activities, even where these activities are off-campus.

### **Relationship to the School's Mission/ Vision/ Aim**

This policy is in line with the Mission Statement of the school:

"Lisnagry National School is a co-educational primary school, which strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupil are identified and addressed."

This substance use policy reflects the school ethos by:

- Promoting the holistic development of the pupil, encouraging respect for self, society and the world
- Recognising the Board of Management's care for the whole school community
- Seeking to establish a safe and secure environment for learning
- Supporting those who are experiencing difficulties
- Seeking to promote a healthy lifestyle for all in a safe, supportive and non-threatening environment

### **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 2003 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (E.S.P.A.D.) report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among 16 year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 34 E.S.P.A.D. countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland, with girls ranking higher than boys in terms of regular alcohol use. In terms of drug use in Ireland, there was a notable increase in lifetime use of any illicit drug between 1999 (32%) and 2003 (40%), up eight per cent.

With the above in mind, the substance use policy in Lisnagry NS is necessary because:

- The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges in relation to alcohol, tobacco and drugs which affect their health and well-being.
- The school wishes to provide for the needs of our pupils and respond appropriately.

### **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. For the purpose of this policy, we are concerned with drugs which have the power to change a previous mood and the way a person thinks or, drugs on which the taker may become physically or more often psychologically dependent. The policy refers to any substance, drug or chemical such as alcohol, nicotine, solvents, tranquilizers, painkillers and sleeping pills, or any chemical which may be abused or misused.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The aim of the Substance Use Policy in Lisnagry NS is primarily prevention through:

- Providing a comprehensive programme of substance misuse prevention education for all pupils in Lisnagry NS
- Equipping the school to deal with issues relating to substance use in a planned and considered way and in accordance with its statutory responsibilities
- Managing incidents of substance misuse in a clear and consistent manner
- Supporting parents and pupils in understanding and addressing substance misuse
- Minimising the dangers caused to young people by substance misuse within schools/ communities

A specific objective of the Substance Use Policy is to safeguard each person from the potentially harmful effects of any substance and to ensure that no student either uses, supplies to others for use or is offered substances which would be potentially detrimental to his/ her physical or mental health.

### **Content of the Policy**

- (A) Education concerning substance use
- (B) Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents
- (C) Provision for training and staff development
- (D) Monitoring, Evaluating and Review

### **(A) Education Concerning Substance Use**

Education concerning substance use in Lisnagry NS will be provided within the broad context of SPHE by adopting an age appropriate, incidental approach to substance use. The primary resource used for the delivery of Substance Misuse Prevention Education at all class levels is the Walk Tall Programme. This programme is a developmental one and is delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment. Education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs will be carried out by teachers using the Walk Tall Programme. (See appendix A) Visiting speakers may be invited to speak to classes to enhance and supplement work done in school and will work within the curriculum and in the presence of a teacher. Parents will be informed about substance misuse prevention education.

The school ensures compliance with the Best Practice guidelines in the delivery of Substance Misuse Prevention Education in line with DES Circular 0042/2018.

### **(B) Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug- related incidents**

The school will assess the situation and 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. A balance between pastoral and a disciplinary approach will be used. It may be an appropriate response to an incident to also make a referral to a support agency. All incidents will be recorded.

When assessing and managing situations involving substance use, the following will be given careful consideration:

1. Informing and consulting with the principal, Michael Feeney
2. Involving parents, Gardaí and HSE (as appropriate)
3. Referring to other appropriate intervention
4. Balancing a pastoral care approach with disciplinary procedures
5. Maintaining confidentiality
6. Designating one person (only) to deal with media enquiries, if indicated/appropriate
7. Recording a factual account of the incident.

#### **Types of Incident:**

##### **Smoking:**

The school is a non-smoking area for all members of the school community. Students are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on the school premises or in any other place during school related activities. Pupils found smoking on the school premises or in any other place during school related activities will be reported to the principal and the parents will be informed. The incident will subsequently be dealt with in accordance with the school Behaviour Policy. Visitors will comply with the non smoking policy.

##### **Alcohol:**

Pupils, staff, parents or visitors will not consume alcohol on the school premises or during school related activities. If a member of staff is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of alcohol s/he will immediately inform the principal and consult on what action should be taken. Parents /guardians will be informed immediately and asked to come and take the student home. If this is not possible the GP/medical services will be contacted. The incident will subsequently be dealt with in accordance with the school Behaviour Policy.

### *Illicit drugs/ paraphernalia / solvents:*

Pupils, staff, parents and users /visitors to the school are prohibited from being in possession of or using illicit drugs, or misusing solvents on the school premises. All solvent based products are locked away in a safe area. The use of aerosols by pupils is forbidden.

In case of the actual possession of illegal drugs on the school premises or school related activities the following parties will be informed immediately.

- Principal
- Chairperson BOM
- Gardaí
- Parents/ Guardians will be contacted and requested to present themselves at the school or the location of the school related activity where they will be informed of the incident

In the case where a member of staff suspects possession or influence of a substance the principal will be informed immediately and appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the following procedures.

- Assess the situation - the primary focus being the safety of the child that may be under the influence of the above named substances
- Contact Principal - the principal is informed and then parents/guardians. Others are informed on a need to know basis
- Seek medical help
- Contact Parents
- Record Incident - written factual account
- Referral to outside agency
- Contact Gardaí
- Sanctions (Code of behaviour)
- Report (refer to Child Protection Guidelines)

### NOTES :

- In dealing with a drug related incident a balance will be struck between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. Refer to code of behaviour policy
- It is school procedure not to respond or comment to the media in relation to a drug related incident unless the BOM has requested or sanctioned it.
- Administration of Medicines See school policy
- Confidentiality: People will be informed on a "need to know" basis. Parents /guardians will be involved.
- In the case of illegal drugs the Gardaí will be informed by the principal

### **(C) Provision Training and Staff Development**

Staff members are aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of substance misuse within their own class by developing a supportive class environment and implementation of active learning methodologies as recommended in the SPHE curriculum. Procedures are adopted in the school in relation to the administration of medicines and staff are adequately informed of same. New staff, in particular, will be briefed on the substance use policy of the school. Staff will have access to training from different agencies. At present primary schools

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are assisted in this area by the Primary Professional Development Service. Other courses include Drug Information and Awareness Training, First Aid training courses and any other relevant courses or talks which are provided by local agencies and education centres.

### **(D) Monitoring, Evaluating and Review**

The implementation of the Substance Use policy is monitored on an on-going basis to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the school. The policy will be reviewed in line with SPHE plan every 2-3 years or should an incident occur which requires the policy to be reviewed/ amended, or should there be a change in legislation.

### **Success Criteria**

The following indicators will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the Substance Use policy:

- Feedback from all stakeholders
- Education programme evident throughout the school- reflected in cúntas míosúil
- Monitoring children's behaviour
- If an incident occurs, was the procedure outlined effective

This Substance Use Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

Appendix A

Junior/ Senior Infants	
Strand	Myself
Strand Unit	<b>Safety and Protection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realise that many substances used at home or in school are dangerous and that permission should be sought before exploring the contents</li> <li>Identify some of the substances or things that are put onto the body and their associated functions</li> <li>Explore occasions when medicines, injections or pills are needed and the safety rules that apply when taking medicine</li> </ul>
Resources	Walk Tall Junior Infants: Pages 88- 99 Walk Tall Senior Infants: Pages 89- 102

1 <sup>st</sup> / 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	
Strand	Myself
Strand Unit	<b>Taking Care of my Body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise and examine some of the substances that are taken into the body and the purpose and function of each one</li> </ul>
	<b>Safety and Protection/ Safety Issues</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise and explore occasions when medicines are needed</li> <li>Distinguish between substances in the home or school that are safe and those that are dangerous and seek permission before exploring them</li> </ul>
Resources	Walk Tall 1 <sup>st</sup> class: Pages 97- 105 Walk Tall 2 <sup>nd</sup> class: Pages 62- 72

3 <sup>rd</sup> / 4 <sup>th</sup> Class	
Strand	Myself
Strand Unit	<b>Taking Care of my Body/ Health and Wellbeing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be aware of the dangers in using tobacco or alcohol and explore the reasons why people may choose to smoke or drink</li> <li>Know and understand the meaning of the word 'drug' and when it is appropriate or inappropriate to take drugs</li> <li>Identify and categorise a variety of substances that are taken into or onto the body into those that are helpful or harmful, legal or illegal</li> </ul>
	<b>Safety and Protection/ Safety Issues</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin to assess the consequences of risky behaviour</li> <li>Identify items or substances in the home or school that may be dangerous if not used properly and devise a safety strategy for dealing with them</li> <li>Explore and examine the use of medicines</li> </ul>
Resources	Walk Tall 3 <sup>rd</sup> class: Pages 142- 159 Walk Tall 4 <sup>th</sup> class: Pages 125- 138

5 <sup>th</sup> / 6 <sup>th</sup> Class	
<b>Strand</b>	<b>Myself</b>
<b>Strand Unit</b>	<b>Taking Care of my Body/ Health and Wellbeing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise and examine behaviour that is conducive to health and that which is harmful to health</li> <li>• Distinguish between legal and illegal substances, identifying those that are most commonly used, and examine and understand the effects they can have</li> <li>• Explore some of the reasons why people smoke, drink alcohol, misuse any kind of substances or take drugs that have no medical use</li> <li>• Explore the role of personal choice, risk factors and the influence of others when choosing to use non-prescribed substances</li> <li>• Explore and examine attitudes towards the misuse of substances and towards those who misuse substances of any kind</li> </ul>
	<b>Safety and Protection/ Safety Issues</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the substances in the home and school or on the farm that may be dangerous if not used properly and ensure that he/she has learned a safety strategy for dealing with unknown and dangerous substances</li> <li>• Explore and examine the use of medicines</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	Walk Tall 5 <sup>th</sup> class: Pages 68- 90 and 160- 169 Walk Tall 6 <sup>th</sup> class: Pages 78- 94 and 170- 186