

# Scoil Mhuire, Latton Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan

A75 P033

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## **Substance Use Policy**

### **Introduction**

This policy was first developed by the staff, parents and Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire in 2013. We are committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to substance use, noting that a drug is 'any substance that changes the way a body functions: mentally, physically or emotionally'. The school recognises that drugs, both legal and illegal, are available in the wider community and that the school, as part of the community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, and of supporting those who are affected by drugs. The school proposes to work closely with parents/guardians to implement this policy, to ensure their child's health and safety. It is emphasised that the primary role of substance misuse and prevention rests with the pupils' parents/guardians.

### **Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to students, teachers, auxiliary staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the building. It is applicable during school-time – including breaks and to all school related activities. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place, e.g. School Tour, etc.

### **Aims of Policy**

The aim of the Substance Use Policy of Scoil Mhuire is primary prevention. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs. We aim to develop in our pupils better self-esteem, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils age-appropriate information through educational programmes.

### **Relationship to School's Mission, Vision and Aims.**

The characteristic spirit of this school has been developed and agreed with our partners in education. Scoil Mhuire is committed to enabling children to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, social, cultural and physical potential. Education flourishes in an environment where positive relationships are encouraged, where people feel valued and respected and where there is tolerance and support for those in difficulty.

Scoil Mhuire endeavours to promote the well-being of pupils by:

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

This Substance Use Policy reflects the school policy by:

- Drawing together teachers, parents, Board of Management members and members of the local community in the committee responsible for formulating the policy.
- Including reference to substance use in the Enrolment Policy
- Including reference to substance use in our Code of Behaviour and School Rules.

## **Rationale**

### **Why is this policy necessary?**

- The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of this reality. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their student cohort and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.
- 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 (SPHE) Curriculum, of which substance misuse prevention education is an integral part, is a mandatory subject on the Primary School Curriculum and must be taught to all primary pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class (DES Circular 0022/2010).
- The National Drugs Strategy (Interim 2009-2016) is now government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.

The school authority in Scoil Mhuire has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with criminal law.

## **Policy Content**

### **Education Concerning Substance Use**

- Education concerning substance use will be provided in the broad context of a Social, Personal and Health Education as outlined in our SPHE School Policy.
- The primary resource used for the delivery of Substance Misuse Prevention Education in all classes is the Walk Tall Programme.
- The Grow In Love Programme as part of the delivery of Religious Education promotes self-esteem, self-awareness and positive healthy behaviour.
- Guest Speakers/visitors may be invited to enhance the work being done in class, e.g. Gardaí, Health Care personnel.

### **Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug related incidents**

The policy committee members believe that young people are most at risk in relation substance use in Scoil Mhuire in recreational areas, on the way to and from school and at out of school related activities supervised by staff members of Scoil Mhuire.

The school's shared understanding of a 'drug related incident' is:

- Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs
- The sale or passing on of any illegal substance,
- The possession of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs on school grounds or at school related activities
- Disposal of drugs or related items (e.g. syringes) found on school property.

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

**Step 1:** Witness to drug related incident informs teacher/staff member/Principal

**Step 2:** Principal inform parents/guardians

**Step 3:** Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management

**Step 4:** Gardaí informed depending on seriousness of incident

**Step 5:** Relevant Department of HSE informed for disposal of items if required.

Incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use are addressed in the school's Code of Behaviour Policy and pupils may be suspended or expelled if involved in any drug related



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incident. The School's Disciplinary Procedures will be invoked where considered necessary. The Board of Management has devised a policy on the Administration of Medicines to Pupils. It has also devised a Critical Incident Policy.

Parents will be involved by accepting the school's Code of Behaviour and Admissions Policies. They will be informed of an incident involving their own child and will be asked to accept responsibility, co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardaí and other agencies if necessary.

Parents will be involved in incidents involving another child only if deemed necessary by the school authorities; if parents are aware that another child is involved in drug-related incidents under the scope of this policy they should inform the teacher, Principal or a Board member. Confidentiality will be respected by teachers concerned notwithstanding their obligations to liaise with An Garda Síochána, Túsla, and the HSE where necessary.

### Alcohol

- The school is an alcohol free area.
- Pupils are not permitted to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school activities.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a pupils is under the influence of alcohol, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Should a pupil come to school under the influence of alcohol, his/ her parents will be contacted and asked to take him/ her home.

### Tobacco

- The school premises are a No-Smoking area. Smoking is prohibited in accordance with present national legislation.
- Pupils are not permitted to smoke or possess tobacco/cigarettes/ e-cigarettes on the school premises or at any school-related activity. Any such incidences will be reported to the principal and parents will be informed.
- Staff should not smoke in view of pupils either in school or on outside school activities.
- Visitors will comply with the no-smoking policy.

### Illicit Drugs and Solvents

- Pupils are forbidden from being in possession of or using illicit drugs on the school premises or at any school related activity.
- Illicit drugs found on school premises should be locked away and the Gardaí contacted immediately to take possession of them.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a pupil is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- Where the school suspects trafficking/ selling illicit drugs, Chairperson of the BOM will be informed. Parents of any pupil involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer will be sought. HSE will be informed where appropriate.

- Where illegal substances are involved, the Gardaí Juvenile Liaison Officer will automatically be involved. The Board of Management will be notified.
- The Board of Management expects parents to inform the principal if they suspect their child of drug taking.

If an incident occurs when children speak inappropriately about misuse of any substance teachers will seek to redress the situation through the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Curricular Programme.

## **Adults**

### **Management of Persons in the Workplace Under the Influence of Drugs and/or Alcohol**

The Board of Management shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that pupils and other persons in the workplace are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare from persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The term “in the workplace”, in the preceding sentence includes all school related activities taking place under the supervision of a teacher, with the Board’s approval, and both within and away from the school premises.

Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and /or Deputy Principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interest of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and others. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented.

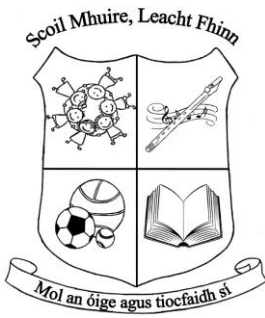
Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of any contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and /or Deputy principal shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a parent or adult collecting a pupil from school or presenting themselves on the premises for another reason is unfit to be on the premises or to take care of the said pupil, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal will be informed and the duty of care will apply to the pupil. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the pupil and safeguard their best interests.

In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove him/herself from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers. An Employee Assistance Service (telephone: 1800 411 057, SMS or WhatsApp ‘Hi’ to 0873690010, or e-mail: eap@spectrum.life) is available to teaching, SNA and all



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school staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service.

The Board of Management also acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all other staff members. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the non-teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to seek counselling or other professional intervention.

All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded and reported as soon as possible to the Board of Management. The Board of Management shall consider all such reports and decide on the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

### **Implementation Procedures**

The policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022. When ratified and amended, it will be published on the school's website, and copies will be distributed to:

- All staff members
- Parents' Association
- School Community, on request

### **Monitoring and Review Procedures**

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. A copy of this policy will be issued to all staff members and a reminder of its contents will be given at the first staff meeting of each year. The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Review and ratify this policy
- Implement this policy
- Monitor and evaluate it
- To sponsor/provide training for staff members
- Make decisions involving critical incidents
- To deal with the media in the event of a critical incident.

This updated policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022. It will be due for review during the 2025-2026 School Year.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

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