

Substance Abuse Policy

Ballyfacey National School

18257N

Introduction.

The abuse of substances or the presence of drugs has thankfully not impacted Ballyfacey National School to date. Unfortunately substance abuse is to be seen throughout the society we live in nowadays. Bearing this in mind, the Board of Management of Ballyfacey National School has a policy in place which will educate and protect the children in our care and also prepare them for the future. The policy will also equip the teachers to deal with issues relating to substance abuse in accordance with the statutory responsibility of the Board of Management.

Definition:

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

However, rather than being over concerned about an exact definition of what a drug is, we will use as our guideline that any substance which is generally considered unsafe, unhealthy or not recommended for the children to use is one which we may consider a drug for our purpose.

The Role of the School:

The school sees itself as having a role in the process of enabling students to increase control over their own health, over the choices they make in life and the decisions they will have to make when faced with the availability of drugs.

We endeavour to promote the well being of students by:

1. Providing a safe and healthy environment.
2. Promoting positive health behaviours.
3. Increasing knowledge about health.
4. Promoting the self-esteem and self-awareness.
5. Working in partnership with the parents and pupils.

To this end and in response to the encroaching drug culture in our society we feel the need to implement a comprehensive policy to address the problem of substance misuse.

The Aims of our Policy:

The aims of the School Policy on Substance Abuse are as follows:

1. Education concerning substance abuse and prevention of same.
2. A framework for the management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents.

Education:

Through the various sections of the Social, Personal and Health Education programme we will provide the children with a broad knowledge of drugs, their effects, the choices that face them in life and hopefully prepare them to face these choices wisely.

While teachers, under the guidelines of the Department of Education, may use S.P.H.E. syllabus in a menu fashion, choosing those topics and sections which they consider are most suited to their own class and school environment, the Board of Management recommends strongly that each class participate in lessons each year which cover the topics of drugs, drug awareness, making choices regarding drug use and their own health and safety with regard to drug use.

We also recommend to teachers to make use of the lessons which are included in such programmes as Stay Safe, Walk Talk, and materials available from the HSE.

Prevention:

While the children are attending Ballyfacey National School we wish to provide a safe environment for them. We will endeavour to ensure the no dangerous substances are available to the children in the school, that children do not bring in any unsafe substances to the school and that the children are educated to recognise dangerous substances and to avoid them.

School Protocols regarding Substance Abuse and Drugs:

Smoking

- The school premises are a no smoking area.
- Students are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on the school premises or in any other place.
- Visitors will comply with the restricted smoking policy.
- Pupils found smoking on school premises will be reported to the Principal and parents will be informed.

Alcohol

- The school is an alcohol free area.
- Pupils will not be allowed to bring into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school activities.
- If the teacher 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.
- Where a student comes to school under the influence of alcohol, their parents will be called in to take them home.
- Students breaking these rules will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary procedure.

Illicit Drugs and Solvents

- Students are forbidden from being in possession of or using illicit drugs or solvents in the school premises.
- Illicit drugs found on school premises should be locked away and the Gardaí contacted to dispose of them. Teachers are advised not to transport illicit substances at any time.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.
- The school B.O.M. will expect parents to inform the Principal or teacher if they suspect their child of drug taking.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The class teachers will be vigilant in their observation of children's behavior in classrooms, corridors and the playground, as well as at school based activities such as school tours or sporting events.

Success Criteria:

The continued avoidance of any issues relating to substance abuse in the school will be viewed as effective co-operation by all stakeholders.

Timeframe for Implementation:

This policy was reviewed at the Board meeting of 28th September 2022.

Timetable for Review:

This policy will be reviewed again in the school year 2025-26 unless an earlier review is deemed necessary.

Chairperson: Thomas Sale Date: 28th Sept 22

Principal: Tommie O'Garra Date: 28/9/22