THE OLD BOROUGH NATIONAL SCHOOL

Substance Use Policy

Scope of Substance Use Policy

For the purpose of this policy, it is important to state that 'a drug is any chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels. This may include either a legal or illegal substance.' This policy applies to students, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and any others using the school building. It applies during school-times (including break-times) and to all school related activities.

The entire campus of Old Borough N.S. is a smoke-free zone; neither vaping or smoking are allowed. We would ask all who visit the school, whether parents/guardians, service providers or others to respect this.

Aims of Policy

The aim of the Substance Use Policy of the Old Borough National School 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 from educational programmes.

Relationship to School's Ethos

The Old Borough NS is sponsored by the Church of Ireland, the Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough being its patron and, as such, will reflect the general ethos of all Church of Ireland schools.

In the Old Borough NS, pupils experience a sense of caring and belonging, and their spiritual, moral, religious and physical development is encouraged along with their intellectual, social and academic development.

This policy exists to provide a safe and secure environment for learning and to encourage the children to achieve their full potential in line with the school's ethos. This policy recognises that the school encourages pupils to develop their thinking process and to establish loving relationships with themselves, with others, with their environment, and with their Creator. It seeks to educate the children about the potential impact of substance use and misuse, as well as to

offer support for those experiencing difficulties in relation to substance use and misuse.

Rationale

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 National Drugs Strategy '*Building on Experience*' is now government policy and it requires schools to have a Substance Use Policy in place. The report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled '*Drug Use Prevention*' (November 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.

The 1999 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) Report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among sixteen year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 29 ESPAD countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug misused in Ireland whilst the use of tobacco and other drugs was above the ESPAD average.

For the population as a whole, alcohol consumption per capita in Ireland has increased by 41% in the period 1989 to 1999, while the other EU Member States showed either a decrease or a modest increase. Ireland now has the second highest per capita consumption of alcohol in the EU.

The school authority in the Old Borough NS has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.

Policy Content

This policy is necessary given that exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of reality. The old Borough NS aims to promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.

The content of this policy is divided into 3 areas that include:

- Education concerning substance use;
- Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents;

- Provision for training and staff development.

Education Concerning Substance Abuse

There are many resource materials relevant to education on substance use.

These include:

- Social, Personal and Health Education - Primary School Curriculum and Teacher Guidelines
- Walk Tall Programme - SPHE programme for the prevention of substance misuse
- Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Primary Schools
- Substance Misuse Prevention information booklet outlining a multi-strand approach for Boards of Management, Teachers, parents and other Educators
- "On My Own Two Feet" - Educational Resource Materials for Social, Personal and Health Education
- Directory of Alcohol, Drugs and Related Services in the Republic of Ireland - Health Promotion Unit, Department of Education.
- Facts about Drug Abuse in Ireland, compiled by Dr Des Corrigan - Health Promotion Unit, Dept of Health and Children.
- Additional educational resource information is also available on the internet at www.sphe.ie
- Schools can also contact the local Health Promotion Department in their relevant Regional Health Board.

Legislation relevant to substance misuse should also be considered e.g. Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977 and 1984. Schools are advised to be proactive in developing a good working relationship with local Gardaí.

The Old Borough NS will provide education concerning substance use through the SPHE Walk Tall Programme, which will be taught by the classroom teachers.

The use of an outside visitor/speaker to enhance the work done in class can also be considered in the context of the full SPHE programme and will be undertaken in the presence of a teacher and in line with the Child Protection

Statement and Risk Assessment.

The Old Borough NS may also draw on the expertise of local community-based services in the provision of education concerning substance use. This will be done in consultation with teachers, parents and the Board of Management.

Provision for Training and Staff Development

All staff of the Old Borough NS will be aware of and be sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse. Staff will be aware of the laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they relate to themselves, the school and the students.

As training needs arise from staff, these will be addressed and responded to adequately. It is the role of the Principal to ensure staff training needs are met.

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use might include:

- Use or suspected use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs on the school premises or during school related activities;
- Intoxication/Unusual behaviour;
- Disclosure about use;
- Finding substances and/or associated paraphernalia;
- Possession and/or supply on the school premises or during school related activities.
- Disposal of drugs or related items (e.g. syringes) found on school premises.

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

Step 1: Witnesses to drug related incidents must inform the teacher/staff member/Principal.

Step 2: Principal informs parents/guardians.

Step 3: Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management.

Step 4: Gardai informed depending on seriousness of incident.

Step 5: Area Health Board informed for disposal of items (if necessary).

Parents will be involved by accepting the school's Code of Behaviour and Enrolment 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 Gardai 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.

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- 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.

The school will respond to incidents in a planned and considered way. In certain cases, it may be necessary to seek legal advice. Due care will be important in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. The school will make referrals to relevant agencies, where necessary, and deal with individual cases as they arise.

If incidents come to the attention of teachers, they will report them directly to the Principal/Deputy Principal, who in turn will seek advice/make decisions on the best course of action to take in the best interest of the child. This may, in some cases, require involving the local Gardaí or other relevant agencies. However, parents will be fully informed in all matters relating to their child/children.

Should the media become involved in cases relating to the school, the Principal will respond in consultation with the Board of Management and in conjunction with the school's Critical Incident Plan.

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 interests 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 or e-mail: eas@vhics.ie) is available to teaching 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 to promote 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.

Signed: R. Madden

Acting Chairperson, Board of Management Date: 30th September 2026