

**SUBSTANCE USE POLICY SCOIL NIOCLÁS NAOFA**

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This Substance Use Policy of Scoil Nioclás Noafa is the result of collaborative work between teachers, parents and the Board of Management.

It is subject to evaluation, review and alteration where necessary in terms of Risk Evaluation procedures.

# **Scope:**

This policy applies to all users of Scoil Nioclás Naofa.

This policy applies to all users of the school building, students, teachers, ancillary staff, users of the school and visitors. It is applicable during school time and during ALL school activities. It applies to the school building, the school grounds and where any school related activity takes place.

# **Relationship to the School’s Ethos:**

Scoil Nioclás Naofa is a Catholic Primary School under the patronage of the Archbishop of Tuam. It promotes a Catholic ethos while welcoming and respecting the values of children of all denominations.

Our aim is to impart Christian values and standards within a constructive learning environment. We endeavour to ensure that the individuality of the child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption-free environment.

Our Code of Behaviour shows caring and concern for each child and we nurture self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.

We encourage the active learning of each child at his/her own pace and to his/her full potential. We strive 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.

Scoil Nioclás Naofa promotes excellence in teaching and learning.

We in Scoil Nioclás Naofa subscribe to the aims of education:

* To enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realize his or her potential as a unique individual.
* To enable the child to develop as a social being through living and cooperating with others and so contribute to the good of society.
* To prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning.

[Revised Primary School Curriculum]

In our Mission statement, it is stated that, "every effort will be made to ensure that the child’s all-round development is healthy and harmonious."

The Substance Use Policy reflects the school ethos in that it is dedicated to the care of the whole school community and it aims to provide a safe and secure environment for learning.

The school environment endeavours to create a culture which:

* values respect in interpersonal relationships.
* helps children to take responsibility for themselves and others.
* provides outlets for creativity and enjoyable healthy pursuits and activities.
* provides a safe school environment.
* strengthens the co-operation between parents/guardians, the school and the wider community in dealing with substance misuse prevention.

# **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.

# **Definition of a Drug;**

In this policy, we understand the term ‘drugs’ as follows - A drug is any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. This description includes many substances we normally think of as drugs as well as substances we might not usually consider to be drugs such as coffee, tea, alcohol, solvents and tobacco (Corrigan, 2003 cited in Best Practice Guidelines in Substance Misuse Prevention Education 2010).

# **Goals and Objectives:**

This Substance Use Policy has the following objectives:

* That the School Community will be better informed with regard to Substance Use in all its guises, by providing honest and age appropriate information on substances.
* To give children the confidence, skills and knowledge to make healthy choices.
* We seek to avert, or at least, delay the experimentation with substance and reduce the demand for legal and illegal drugs.
* We intend to highlight the clear and concise procedures the staff of the school will follow in the event of a drug related incident.
* To minimise the harm caused by substances, by offering or facilitating supportive interventions.
* To provide reassurance for parents as to the role the school plays in highlighting the issue of substance abuse.

# **Policy Content:**

## **Education Concerning Substance Use:**

Education concerning substance use in Scoil Nioclás Naofa will be provided, within the broad context of the subject of Social Personal and Health Education which is developmental and delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment.

All classes will follow the Walk Tall SPHE Programme. This programme has tailored classroom materials to cater for a diverse pupil population and makes an explicit link between Walk Tall and the content objectives of the Social Personal and Health Education curriculum (SPHE).

Formal SPHE lessons will be allocated one 30-minute slot weekly, within a two-year framework as outlined below.

Our work will be reinforced by project work using supplementary materials, and talks from local Gardaí and Public Health Nurses.

Imparting knowledge, skills and values will be our guiding principles.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **STRANDS**  | **STRAND UNITS YEAR 1 (2020-21)**  | **STRAND UNITS YEAR 2 (2021-22)**  |
| **Myself**  | Self-identity: (September/ October)  Safety and Protection: (January/February)  Making Decisions: (March/April)   | Growing & Changing: (January/February)  Taking care of my body: ( March/April )  |
| **Myself and Others**  | My friends and other people: (November/December)  | Myself and My Family: ( September/October)  Relating to others: (November/ December)   |
| **Myself and the wider world**  | Media Education : (May/June )  | Developing Citizenship:  (May/June )   |

# **Management of Alcohol, Tobacco, e-cigarettes/vapes and Drug related incidents.**

Scoil Nioclás Naofa is an alcohol/tobacco/drug free zone.

In the event of pupils using or being suspected of using alcohol or any prohibited substance the following procedures apply:

* The adult in charge will confiscate the substances if possible.
* Any medical emergency will be dealt with immediately.
* The pupil involved will be brought to the Principal, acting in his/her role as DLP.
* Parents will be informed immediately and asked to come to the school.
* Parents will be requested to take the child home.
* In the interests of all concerned, a pastoral rather than disciplinary response will be emphasised.
* Advice on referral to the HSE for further help will be provided. Parents of other children in the class will be contacted, informed in a general way that an incident has occurred, and asked to observe their children for signs of substance use.
* Confidentiality will be maintained out of consideration for the individual involved.
* In accordance with the Code of Behaviour sanctions may have to be invoked.
* In the case of illegal drugs, the Gardaí will be informed immediately.
* In the case of persistent alcohol abuse the school will report the matter to the local health authority as it falls under the realm of

“child neglect” in the Children First Guidelines. ( See contact details for the local Social Worker in the Child Protection folder. )

* A record of the incident will be kept in the secure and locked filing cabinet in the SEN Room.

The Principal/ Deputy Principal is designated to respond to all media enquiries.

In the case of handling a potentially harmful substance e.g. a syringe, the adult in charge is obliged to wear surgical gloves which are found in the first-aid kit.

Any illegal drugs found on the premises will be left undisturbed (unless the location presents a risk to others) and the Gardaí will be informed.

Members of staff who come to the school in an intoxicated state will be requested by the Principal to excuse themselves for the day and to seek help from the Employee Assistance Service. The matter will be reported to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

In the event of a parent, who is evidently under the influence of alcohol or other prohibited substances, attempting to collect a child from school, the principal will endeavour to contact any other adult listed on the school Admissions Form, to bring the children home.

All efforts will be made to prevent the children from leaving the school premises in the company of this adult. Gardaí will be called if necessary.

In the case of tobacco/vapes/e-cigarettes use, the following guidelines apply:

* Scoil Nioclás Naofa is a tobacco-free zone for all who use the building and its grounds. This is clearly sign-posted throughout the building.
* If pupils smoke or bring tobacco/vapes/e-cigarette products to school these will be confiscated and the parents contacted.
* If members of staff use tobacco/vapes/e-cigarettes products in school or on school grounds, they will be asked to remove them from sight with immediate effect by the school principal. The matter will be reported to the chairperson of the Board of Management
* If there is a suspicion that the pupils were sold these tobacco products the Gardaí may be informed.
* Tobacco products will not be used as prizes in school fundraising events.

In the case of solvent abuse, the same procedures apply as those relating to alcohol and prohibited substances. All aerosols, solvents, industrial glues, deodorants and perfume sprays are strictly forbidden.

\*SEE ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINE PROCEDURE

# **Provision for Staff Training and 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 informing the pupils and the implementation of active learning methodologies as recommended in the SPHE Curriculum. e.g..

* [Drama activities](http://pdst.ie/node/781) including Role Play
* [Co-operative games](http://pdst.ie/Cooperative-games)
* [Pictures, photographs and visual images](http://pdst.ie/Pictures-photographs-and-visual-images)
* [Discussion](http://pdst.ie/Discussion)
* [Written activities](http://pdst.ie/Written-activities)
* [The media and ICT](http://pdst.ie/SPHE-Media-ICT)
* [Looking at children’s work](http://pdst.ie/Looking-at-childrens-work)

There is a shared understanding among the staff of the contribution that SPHE programme makes to the prevention of substance misuse.

Each staff member is committed to teaching the appropriate strand units of the SPHE strand units in their class.

All staff members have access to the Online Primary Curriculum Support Programme, and the PDST websites.

All staff members are sufficiently aware of, and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse through their participation in the Walk Tall in-service training day and CPD courses.

All staff members are vigilant on yard duty, making sure that children are active and participating in wholesome activities.

All staff have access to and have familiarised themselves with this policy and its place in the overall SPHE Policy.

Staff are interested in accessing the skills of local Gardaí and HSE professionals in this area.

All educational material by way of planning and advice in this area-within the sphere of Wellbeing-is available to staff via the following link [https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/af24b-wellbeing-guidance-documents-forparents-students-and-schools/#information-for-school-staff](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/af24b-wellbeing-guidance-documents-for-parents-students-and-schools/#information-for-school-staff)

New staff, in particular, are made aware of this policy as part of the overall duty of care.

Reports, surveys and recommendations from Health Boards, Department of Environment, DES, etc. are brought to the attention of all staff.

Staff are aware of the linkage between this policy and policies on P.E., Healthy Eating, Internet Safety, RSE, Wellbeing, etc.

# **Roles and Responsibilities:**

The roles and responsibilities associated with this policy are as follows:

**Role of Teachers:**

**Policy Development:** Through meetings and consultation with parents, the Board of Management and relevant outside agencies.

**Policy Implementation:** Use of Active learning methodologies.

**Policy Evaluation:** Review at the end of each two-year cycle, taking cognisance of changing information, legislation, school development planning and feedback from staff and parents.

**Role of Parents:**

**Policy Development:** Through consultation with school staff at the Board of Management and Parents Association level.

**Policy Implementation:** To support school policies as outlined above, bearing in mind that the primary role in substance use prevention rests with the parents.

**Policy Evaluation:** To provide feedback to teachers on the success or otherwise of the programme and associated procedures.

**Role of Board of Management:**

**Policy Development:** Through consultation with the staff at the Board of Management level.

**Policy Implementation:** Circulation of the draft policy, ratification of the finalised draft policy and the provision for CPD.

**Policy Evaluation:** review, evaluation and ratification on a bi-annual basis.

# **Success Criteria;**

The following indicators will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the Substance Use Policy in Scoil Nioclás Naofa:

* 2-year SPHE plan being implemented
* Active learning methodologies being employed
* Knowledge, skills, and values being learned by the pupils
* Teachers’ evaluation and feedback
* Pupils’ evaluation through oral reports, project work, written work.
* Cúntas Míosúil
* Parental feedback

# **Monitoring Procedure:**

Implementation of the Substance Use Policy is monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the school.

This process is led by the Principal.

To ensure that the policy is working, the Principal assesses the quality of teaching and learning by visiting the classrooms to question the children on the knowledge, skills and values they have acquired, as set out in the policy. Active learning methodologies are encouraged.

# **Timeframe For Implementation And Review:**

Implementation of this Substance Use Policy will take effect from September 2023.

The policy will be monitored by the staff as a whole, and any observations recorded by the Principal as part of the agenda for staff meetings and planning days.

Amendments to the policy if necessary, will be made for the following school year 2024-25, the end of the current 2-year cycle. Amendments will also be necessary in response to any critical incident, which may occur in this area.

# **Ratification:**

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on

Signature of BOM Chairperson :