

HAROLD'S CROSS NATIONAL SCHOOL

SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

RATIONALE

Creating an environment where drug use (primarily alcohol and tobacco) is openly discussed in an age appropriate manner, where concerns are addressed and policies and procedures are put in place is vital, if our society is serious about dealing with this issue. We in Harold's Cross N.S. have therefore formulated the following policy in line with directives laid down in "Building on Experience", in order to meet its central objective- the welfare, care and protection of every young person. The National Drugs Strategy requires all schools to have a substance use policy in place. In line with the strategy laid down in "Building on Experience" and to meet with the central objective of a substance use policy i.e the welfare, care and protection of every young person (The Education Act 1998 and the Education Welfare Act, 2000) we have formulated the following policy.

BACKGROUND

In preparation for the drawing up of this policy and in line with step 3 laid down in the guidelines:

- 1) A review of the current situation in the school regarding substance use policy issues was carried out. This was done through the use of a questionnaire focussing on a current provision regarding alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

The following was looked at:

- a) Staff awareness as to existing school policies connected to this issue
 - b) Staff knowledge and understanding in relation to drug use (alcohol, tobacco etc.
 - c) Staff needs in relation to knowledge building and training.
- 2) A questionnaire was also sent out to every family in the school focussing on:
 - a) Parental awareness of knowledge of drugs.
 - b) Parental needs as to education and training.

The results of these questionnaires which were collated and are included in the Appendix have informed the development of this policy.

- 3) Assistance was sought from members of the Crumlin Drugs Task Force in the drawing up of this policy. Olivia Carr, Canal Communities Local Task Force

and Ruth Colgan, Drug Education Officer (Drugs Task Force) advised and worked with the Core Committee.

Sergeant John McGing from the Drugs Task Force also gave his time and assistance in providing information. We are very grateful to these people, their agencies and organisations, for their input, commitment and dedication.

THE SCHOOL ETHOS

Harold's Cross NS is a Catholic co-educational school which seeks to promote the full and harmonious development of each child. Education flourishes in an environment where good relationships are encouraged, where people feel valued and where there is genuine tolerance for fairness and support for those in difficulty.

We are committed to addressing the needs of the school community in relation to drug use (legal and illegal). We believe that the teachers, Board of Management, parents, the pupils themselves and other relevant agencies need to work together to ensure that drug education is seen as part of an integrated and holistic approach in each young person's development. To this end representatives from each of the above sections of the school and wider community have come together to draw up our school's Substance Misuse Policy. This policy applies to all who use or visit our school/hall (pupils, teachers, parents, ancillary staff and visitors) within the official school day and also applies to all school related activities outside that same timetable.

OVERALL AIMS OF OUR SUBSTANCE MISUSE PROGRAMME

1. To provide a safe and healthy environment which promotes healthy positive behaviour.
2. To increase each child's self esteem and confidence thereby helping the child to say "**no**".
3. To support those individuals and families who are experiencing difficulties in a sensitive and realistic manner.
4. To help pupils make right choices and to support them in those choices and in their overall development and growth.
5. To minimise the harm caused by drug use by offering supportive interventions.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following people were responsible for the formulation, implementation and ongoing evaluation of the Policy:

- Ms. Bernadette Kehoe, Principal
- A small group of pupils from 5th/6th Class
- The Board of Management and the teaching and ancillary staff of Harold's Cross National School.
- Parents from the school community.
- Member of the Local Drugs Task Force and Gardai

The following roles and responsibilities are essential to the development, implementation and evaluation of this policy:

1. The Board of Management will support and facilitate a whole school approach to Substance Misuse and ensure the approval and review of the Substance Misuse Policy as part of our school planning.
2. The Board recognises that parents are their child's primary educators and will have a primary role as in the Substance Use education of their child. We will provide opportunities for their contribution to the development and implementation of this policy in the school by ensuring:
 - Their representation on the core committee.
 - Their participation in school planning and review.
 - By asking their support in implementing particular aspects of the education programme.
 - Providing opportunities to attend information evenings, courses and talks around the area of Substance Use.
3. The Principal will ensure the Substance Misuse Policy is effectively implemented in the school in accordance with the whole school plan. She will encourage and enable the staff to adopt and apply some of the new strategies of the various educational programmes. She will encourage and enable staff to implement procedures for responding and managing incidents involving Substance Use. In many instances the Principal will be the liaison between the Board of Management staff, parents and the wider community.
4. Each class teacher will be responsible for the delivery of various educational programmes (Stay Safe, RSE and Walk Tall) in their class in the context of the SPHE curriculum. Our whole school programme will involve consistency in approach, sharing of expertise and collaborative planning at each class level.
5. In highlighting the role of the ancillary and support staff, we recognise the need to ensure that our wider school community supports the implementation of our Substance Use Policy. Therefore representatives from ancillary and support staff were involved in the drawing up of this policy and all support staff will be included in any in-service, education sessions and staff meetings concerning this policy.

FOCUS OF OUR SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

- Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.
- Managing Drug Related Incidents.
- Training and Staff Development.
- Implementation of the Programme

1. ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND DRUGS EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

AIMS:

- a) To provide a comprehensive and time-tabled drug education programme for all students as part of the Social Personal and Health Education Programme (SPHE) currently running in the school.
- b) To increase awareness, knowledge and understanding among the pupils and parents as to the potential life threatening and life changing consequences involved in using drugs.
- c) To provide latest age appropriate information on drugs

These aims will be met through the following actions:

For pupils:

- i. Specific modules of the Walk Tall and RSE programmes will be completed with all classes throughout the school.
- ii. Outside speakers such as a representative from the local Drugs Task Force will be brought in to speak fifth and sixth classes.

For staff:

As requested by staff (Questionnaire Substance Use).

- i. Staff teaching the Walk Tall Programme will be given the opportunity to avail of training in its use, if available
- ii. Outside professionals from the Local Drugs Task Force, members of the Garda Task Force and other professional bodies may be brought in to speak at staff meetings, planning days etc. if necessary.
- iii. Regular audits of staff training needs will be taken.
- iv. All new staff will receive a copy of this policy and will be briefed on interventions and prevention procedures.

For parents:

Parents will be made aware of and kept informed of what is happening in the school with regard to drug education through the school Newsletter or specific letters relating to the policy and through the school's website.

- i. All parents will be made aware of the school's position on substance use and the procedures and sanctions for dealing with drug incidents in the school.

- ii. A copy of the Drugs Use Policy will be available on request from the Office and will be posted on the school's website.
- iii. All parents of new pupils will be informed of the school's position, policy procedures etc. at the Orientation Evening for new Parents/Pupils and will be informed that when accepting a place for their child here they are concurrently agreeing to all the school's policies.
- iv. Outside professionals, facilitators and representatives from the local communities involved with solvent abuse will be asked to inform, educate and support parents
- v. Information will be provided for all parents on request containing information on
 - o What is solvent abuse.
 - o Products used in solvent abuse.
 - o Why young people use drugs.
 - o The various stages of drug use.
 - o Signs and symptoms.
 - o How to help your child.

2. **MANAGING DRUG RELATED INCIDENTS**

A drug is any substance, which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically, and emotionally. (ERHA) Possible drugs used by members of the school community or visitors to the school may include:

<i>Legal Drugs</i>	<i>Prescribed Drugs</i>	<i>Illegal Drugs</i>	<i>Solvents</i>
Cigarettes Alcohol Caffeine Additives	Inhalers Ritalin Insulin Epilepsy Drugs Tranquilizers Painkillers Epi-pen Anti-depressants	Cannabis Hash LSD Heroin Ecstasy Cocaine Amphetamines	Glue Markers Tippex Aerosols Cleaning Agents Detergents Petrol

THE SCHOOL APPROACH:

We acknowledge that in all situations involving any form of drugs there needs to be a balance between the needs of the child, the needs of the school community and the reputation of the school.

The school does not accept the possession, use of or supply of alcohol, tobacco or drugs in school, on school related trips or in non-school time by any member of the school community. The only exception is for legitimate medicinal use about which the school has been informed and which has been dealt with under the school's Policy on Medication.

POSSIBLE DRUG INCIDENTS

The following are examples of a drug incident:

- Intoxication/unusual behaviour.
- Suspicion/rumour of drug use, possession or dealing.
- Disclosure by another person.
- Possession of a legal/illegal drug on the school premises or on a school related activity.
- Selling/supplying legal/illegal drugs.
- School grounds being used for drug activity.
- Drug paraphernalia found on school property.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS:

Assessing a Drug Incident:

- i. In all cases where there is no immediate danger to the child it is important to take time to assess the situation before deciding on a course of action. Differing incidents will require different approaches.
- ii. Listening, separating fact from myth will be the initial approach to a situation. Rumour must not be taken as evidence of drug use.

Recording a Drug Incident:

- i. A written recoding procedure will be used (see appendix). This will ensure a fair process of challenging the student about his/her behaviour is in place. All written documentation will be held confidentially by the Principal.
- ii. A limited number of people will be involved in managing the incident People will be informed on a “*need to know basis*”. The Principal, teacher and persons directly involved will be informed.
- iii. Parents/guardians will be informed in a sensitive manner and where and when possible support will be offered to them.
- iv. In the case of serious drug related incidents and when the welfare of a child is tantamount the relevant authorities such as the Gardai, Garda JLO, Garda Community Officer and the SWAHB will be immediately informed.
- v. The pastoral care system of the school will be our first response to a drug related incident. For some young people their involvement with drugs may be masking some underlying difficulties and for others it may be a phase of experimentation, which they will pass through safely.

In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered. If the person has a serious drug problem then referral to an appropriate service will be recommended.

Media: The Principal or a nominated spokesperson will handle all media queries. The school will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the School Policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Drug related incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules are broken, sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature and severity of the offence. These will be consistent with school rules regarding breaches of conduct (see the school's *Behavioural Policy*)

3. TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- a) As far as practicable and as funds allow, teachers will be supported in attending such training courses as may be of benefit to the whole school.
- b) All new staff will receive a copy of this policy and will be briefed on intervention and prevention procedures.

Pupils

- a) The school will offer pupils drug education programmes within the context of the *SPHE Policy*.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMME

The three areas are:

- Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents
- Parent, Staff and Management Training

Review of the Policy:

The Policy was reviewed initially after the first year of implementation and again in 2011. It was most recently reviewed in 2016. It will be reviewed every four years thereafter in the light of:

- i. changing information and legislation,
- ii. significant changes in the school community situation,

DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

Copies of the Policy will be available from the Principal's Office, on the school's website and will be given to all new staff as part of their introduction to the school. Young people will be made aware of the Policy as part of their drugs education within the context of the Social Personal and Health Education Programme (Walk Tall Programme).

APPENDICES

- i. Staff Questionnaire and Results
- ii. Parents' Questionnaire and Results
- iii. Administration of Medicines (Indemnity)
- iv. Report Form for recording Incidents involving Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use.
- v. Support Services within Local Area.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE (STAFF) QUESTIONNAIRE

1. In your teaching of the SPHE Programme, this year and former years, have you included a component on drug education?
 Yes [] No []
2. If your answer is yes, can you please specify which aspects.
 - Cigarettes 0
 - Drugs – legal/illegal 0
 - Alcohol 0
3. If yes what resources have you used in the teaching of that module? Please list:
4. Was the resource adequate or suited to the realization of your objective?
 Yes[] No []
5. Would you like to have outside agencies/professionals address the staff on Substance Use?
 Yes [] No []
6. Have you had to deal with a situation where you have suspicions, concerns around solvent/alcohol abuse (i.e. alcohol, tobacco, medicines, other drugs)?*
 Yes [] No []
7. Are you aware if the school has a policy on the following? (*Please be entirely open in answering this question*).

• Smoking	Yes	0	No	0
• Alcohol	Yes	0	No	0
• Drugs	Yes	0	No	0
• Use/storage of medicines	Yes	0	No	0
• Disciplinary procedures	Yes	0	No	0
• Reporting incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use	Yes	0	No	0
8. Are you aware of the level and range of drug use in our immediate community and the environs of the school?
 Yes [] No []
9. Have you attended In-service on:

○ SPHE	Yes	0	No	0	Don't Know
○ Stay Safe	Yes	0	No	0	
○ Walk Tall	Yes	0	No	0	0
○ Substance Misuse	Yes	0	No	0	0
10. Do you feel they need training in any the above areas?
 Yes [] No []
 If yes, please list.

• Substance Misuse	0
• Stay Safe	0
• Walk Tall	0

PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

- Q. 1 Is this (alcohol, smoking and drug abuse) an issue that you are concerned about?
- Yes [] No []
- Q.2 Do you as a parent feel you have adequate information in relation to the problems of drug abuse in our society?
- Yes [] No []
- Q. 3 Have you had personal experience in your immediate or extended family of alcohol, tobacco or drug abuse?
- Yes [] No []
- Q. 4 Would you like to learn more about any of the following aspects.
- What is solvent abuse
 - Yes [] No []
 - What are the products abused
 - Yes No []
 - The stages of drug use
 - Yes [] No []
 - Slang terms
 - Yes [] No []
 - Why do young people use drugs
 - Yes No []
 - Signs and symptoms of drug use
 - Yes [] No []
 - How to help your child
 - Yes [] No []
- Q.5 What format would you like this assistance to take?
- Information packs for parents
 - Yes [] No []
 - Talks by professionals working in this area
 - Yes [] No []
 - Talks to pupils in senior classes by recognised professionals
 - Yes [] No []
 - Representatives from the community engaged in working with solvent abusers
 - Yes [] No []

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINES (INDEMNITY)

HAROLD'S CROSS NATIONAL SCHOOL

THIS INDEMNITY made the _____ day of 20 _____ BETWEEN
(lawful father, mother or guardian of _____)
of _____
(hereinafter called 'the parents guardian) of the One Part AND
for and on behalf of the Board of Management of
School situated at _____
in the County of _____ (hereunder called 'the Board') of the Other Part.

WHEREAS:

1. The parents or guardian are respectively the lawful father, mother or guardian of a pupil of the above school.
2. The pupil suffers on an ongoing basis from the condition known as _____
3. The pupil may, while attending the said school, require, in emergency circumstances, the administration of medication, viz. _____
4. The parents have agreed that the said medication may, in emergency circumstances, be administered by the said pupil's classroom teacher and/or such other member of staff of the said school as may be designated from time to time by the Board.

NOW IT IS HEREBY AGREED by and between the parties hereto as follows:

In consideration of the Board entering into the within Agreement, the parents or guardian, as the lawful father, mother or guardian respectively of the said pupil HEREBY AGREE to indemnify and keep indemnified the Board, its servants and agents including without prejudice to the generality the said pupil's class teacher and/or the Principal of the said school from and against all claims, both present and future, arising from the administration or failure to administer the said medicines.

IN WITNESS whereof the parties hereunto set their hands and affixed their seals the day and year first herein WRITTEN.

SIGNED AND SEALED by the parents or guardian in the presence of:

SIGNED AND SEALED by the said in the presence of:

**REPORT FORM FOR RECORDING INCIDENTS INVOLVING
ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND DRUG USE**

Date: _____

Name of Teacher: _____

What happened? *Include only the facts. What was seen? What was said? Who was involved?*

What are your concerns? *Is this incident related to others? Do you have suspicions aroused by the incident?*

Who has been informed?

What action has been taken?

What further action is necessary?

Signed: _____

