



## **Substance Use Policy Corpus Christi Primary School**

### **Introduction**

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 students and respond appropriately, to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.

The Education act 1998 provides, that schools 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), underlies the importance of schools developing substance use policies.

The latest drug treatment figures from the Health Research Board, show that 9,523 cases were treated for problem drug use in Ireland in 2014, increasing from 8,684 in 2013. Opiates continue to be the main problem drug, with 4,745 cases presenting for treatment. Cannabis was the most common main problem drug, for new entrants to treatment. A total of 1,696 (45%) new cases identified cannabis, as their main problem drug. The number of cases reporting benzodiazepine as their main problem drug was 914 in 2014, increasing from 773 in 2013.

The 1999 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) report, highlighted the seriousness of the problem among sixteen-year-old in Ireland, as compared to the other 29 ESPAD countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug misused in Ireland, whilst tobacco and other drugs were above the ESPAD average. The drugs market in Ireland in 2013 was valued at €600 million. 679 people died from drugs in 2013. It is estimated that there are 20,000 opiate users in Ireland and 6.8% of the adult population (age 15 to 64), have tried cocaine at least once. Considering these figures, Corpus Christi Primary School deems it of the utmost importance, to try to protect our pupils from the harmful affects of substance use. The BoM has a moral and legal obligation, to ensure compliance with criminal law.

### **Scope of the 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 hours, including breaks and at all times the school is used for different activities and for all school related activities. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area, where a school related activity takes place eg. school tours.

### **Aims of the Policy**

The aim of the substance use policy of Corpus Christi Primary School is primarily prevention. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful affects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs. We aim to develop in our pupils,

self-esteem and resilience, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through our wellbeing framework and educational programmes.

### **Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents**

The school's shared understanding of '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 an illegal substance.
- The possession of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs on school grounds, or at school related activities.
- Disposal of drugs or related items (eg. syringes) found on school property.

The reporting of such incidents is as follows:

1. Witness to drug related incident, informs a teacher/staff member/Principal.
2. Principal informs parent/guardian.
3. Principal informs Chairperson of the Board of Management.
4. Gardaí informed, depending on the seriousness of the incident.
5. Area Health Board informed for disposal of items.

Once parents/guardians are informed of an incident involving their own child, they will be asked to accept responsibility and co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardaí, if necessary.

Parents/guardians will be involved in incidents involving another child, only if deemed necessary by school authorities. If parents/guardians are aware that another child is involved in drug related incidents, under the scope of this policy they should inform a teacher, Principal or a Board Member.

The Board of Management is responsible for:

- The ratification of the policy.
- The implementation of the policy.
- Providing training for staff.
- Make decisions involving critical incidents.
- Deal with the media, in the event of a critical incident.

Procedures in place to deal with an incident requiring medical intervention:

- Universal precautions will be applied e.g. Wearing proper protective gloves, washing and making safe an area after an incident, provision of a yellow bin to dispose of needles, or other unsuitable appliances.
- First Aid training for staff members.
- Copies of relevant phone numbers available. (See below).
- The Board of Management has devised a Critical Incident Policy.

The school has established an excellent rapport with the local Garda Station and will invite representatives from the local Garda station, to speak with senior pupils. Whether or not to inform the Gardaí of minor incidents, will be at the discretion of the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management. Gardaí will be informed of any serious substance abuse incidents.

At local level, the following support agencies are available, to which the students involved in substance abuse might be referred:

- N. A. (Narcotics Anonymous) 01 6728000, 087 138 6120 (6pm to 9pm).
- Limerick Drug and Alcohol Service, 57 O Connell Street, 061 318 633.
- Primary Care Drug Assessment Unit, 57 O Connell Street. 061 318 633.
- Northside We're OK Drugs, Education and Prevention Initiative 061 459 413.
- Northside Family Support Service 061 459 410.
- Sláinte Health Information Service 061 464 349.
- Aljeff 061 318 633.
- Mid West Regional Drugs Taskforce 061 445 392.
- HSE National Drug and Alcohol Helpline 1800 459 459.
- Juvenile Liaison Officer, Mayorstone Park, Limerick. 061 456 980.
- Community Garda.

In the event of media interest in relation to a 'drug related incident,' the matter will be referred to the Board of Management and the Chairperson will issue a prepared statement to the media.

### **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 practical, that pupils and other persons in the work place 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,' includes all school related activities taking place, under the supervision of a teacher with the Board's approval and both within and away from 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 Act, 2005.

Should the 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 shall ask the person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the health, safety 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 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 shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a parent or the person 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 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 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 (phone no:1800 411 057, email:support@carecallwellbeing.ie, website: [www.carecallwellbeing.ie](http://www.carecallwellbeing.ie)) is available for teaching staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the

performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of teaching staff, the Board of Management may request that staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service. The Board of Management 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 that 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.