



Portmarnock Community School

Substance Use Policy – A Whole School Approach

Introduction

This policy sets out the framework within which Portmarnock Community School manages issues relating to problem alcohol and substance use. Our objective is the welfare and protection of each member of our school community.

It addresses:

The education we provide to students and staff relating to alcohol and substance use

The management of incidents that relate to these substances

The term ~~substance~~ here includes alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, drugs, prescription medicines and other mind/mood altering substances.

This policy is applied in conjunction with the following policies:

Child Protection Policy and Guidelines

Code of Behaviour and School Regulations

Educational Philosophy, Ethos and Culture

Pastoral Care Policy

Potentially Life Threatening and Chronic Conditions

SPHE, RSE, CSPE Policies

Health and Safety Policy

Scope

This policy has been developed following a consultative process with the whole school community and it applies to that community as a whole including teachers, students, parents/guardians, and all users of and visitors to the school.

It applies during school time and to all school related trips and activities whether occurring inside or outside school hours.

Relationship to our school mission statement

School Mission Statement:

To instill a spirit of intellectual enquiry and academic endeavour, to foster the desire for participation and challenge and to build individual and compassionate men and women of character.

This policy is part of a general approach which has been adopted by Portmarnock Community School to ensure a healthy, caring and supportive teaching and learning community. It has been developed in line with our mission statement which has at its core, care for every member of our school. All procedures and sanctions will be in line with that caring ethos.

Rationale

Portmarnock Community School sees itself as having an important role in the process of enabling students to make good choices in relation to their health and general well-being

Research and reports indicate that the prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and drug misuse continues to pose serious challenges for the school community. The Education Act 1998 holds that we are obliged to promote the social and personal development of our students and to provide health education for them.

Government policy as set out in the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 focuses on the importance of the school's contribution to education and prevention and requires them to have a policy in place (Action 43)

DES guidelines (Circular 18/02) also state that schools should be actively engaged in developing and agreeing a policy.

Policy Aims

Portmarnock Community School aims:

To provide an age appropriate education programme to all of its students which will seek to build on and complement existing programmes in Science, Home Economics, SPHE, RE, PE and CSPE and the junior cycle wellbeing programme.

To equip our students with the knowledge and skills to make informed and healthy decisions around alcohol and substance use.

To encourage students to examine attitudes to alcohol, tobacco and drugs in their lives and in their communities

To ensure that we deal with incidents relating to substance use in a planned, consistent, caring and considered way in accordance with our statutory responsibilities

Policy Content

Portmarnock Community School does not accept or tolerate the possession, use or supply of banned or prohibited substances and/or drug paraphernalia by any member of the school community in the school, on school trips and outings or during any school related activity. While it is recognised that problem alcohol and substance use remains a serious issue it is important to acknowledge that the majority of young people make good decisions around alcohol and substance use.

Parents/Guardians of students taking prescribed medication must inform the school in writing of this fact. No medicines will be administered by staff with the exception of medication supplied by parents/guardians to be administered in medical emergencies.

1. Substance Use Education and Prevention

Portmarnock Community School, within the resources available to it, will provide appropriate education programmes on problem alcohol and substance use for all of its students. Research has shown that the most effective programmes are those provided within the broader structure and context of a Social, Personal and Health Education Programme and in conjunction with the RE, Science, PE and Home Economics programmes. We will facilitate one forty minute period of SPHE per week for each of the three years of Junior Cycle as part of the junior cycle wellbeing programme.

Role of Parents/Guardians:

Parents/Guardians have a supportive role to play in regard to our education programmes in relation to this policy. They are expected to

Recognise their role as partners with Portmarnock Community School in relation to informing and educating their children on this issue

Assist and cooperate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with incidents relating to this policy

Inform themselves on issues relating to this policy with the assistance of the school

2. Management of Incidents

In the event of an incident we will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student(s) involved, the welfare of the rest of the school community and the school's reputation. We will also endeavour to apply restorative principles whenever appropriate. Restorative practice is a fair and respectful method of repairing relationships by establishing trust, developing empathy and repairing harm.

An incident will be defined as

- The use or suspected use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs and/or any mind altering substances on the school premises and/or during a school activity
- Intoxicated behaviour
- Disclosure about use
- Finding substances and/or associated articles
- Possession and/or supply in school or in uniform or during a school activity

The Principal or his/her delegate will be responsible for

- Receiving reports
- Making decisions regarding investigation, communication and disclosure of information
- Keeping all relevant parties informed
- The secure and safe storage of documentation
- Taking possession of any banned substances/articles

Procedure:

1. The safety of the school community is of utmost importance so the school reserves the right to suspend any student suspected of being involved in a substance use incident pending an investigation.
2. The reporting staff member will complete an Incident Report Form.
3. The school will carry out a full investigation.
4. The school will take possession of any substance as described previously and associated articles and a record will be kept of all items unless otherwise instructed by outside agencies.

5. All participants and witnesses will be interviewed and statements will be recorded as will outcomes, decisions taken, disciplinary and support measures and any possible appeals arising.
6. If a student is suspected of supplying/using drugs then the Gardai will be informed. The school will liaise with any appropriate outside agency.
7. The full range of usual sanctions in relation to a verified incident may be implemented by the school as outlined in our Code of Behaviour and School Regulations.
8. The school will provide appropriate pastoral supports and information in relation to counselling/medical services, (see appendix 1).

Media

The school will not comment on any individual matter during an investigation other than to outline its policy and procedures. In the interests of the school the Board of Management may decide to clarify the school's position after an investigation has been concluded.

3. Training

Portmarnock Community School will provide practical training for staff in such areas as the recognition of substances and their effects. We will facilitate training for teachers who are delivering the relevant programmes. We will provide opportunities to attend information meetings/workshops to Parents/Guardians and Board Members.

We will also endeavour to enable students to educate each other through peer mentoring whereby a number of students will be trained to inform their peers.

Policy reviewed on: 28 March 2017

Chairperson: Ms Siobhan Murray

Appendix 1

Links - Services & Information:

North Dublin Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force

www.ndublinrdtf.ie

SAND App - Substance Abuse North Dublin Support Services

Local services:

SASSY Drugs Counselling, Swords
Cross Care Outreach Team, Swords
YSS Project, Swords
Cuis Project, Balbriggan

Alcohol Action Ireland

www.alcoholireland.ie

Alcoholics Anonymous

www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie

Al-Anon/Alateen-Ireland - Support for families and friends

www.al-anon-ireland.org

Anna Liffey Drugs Project

www.aldp.ie

Aware Ireland

www.aware.ie

Citizens Information

www.citizensinformation.ie

Citywide- Drugs Crisis Campaign

www.citywide.ie

Community Awareness of Drugs

www.cadaboutdrugs.ie

Counselling Directory

www.counsellingdirectory.ie

DrinkHelp.ie

www.drinkhelp.ie

Family Support Network

www.fsn.ie

GAA ASAP - Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention

www.gaa.ie/clubzone/asap-programme

HRB National Drugs Library

www.drugsandalcohol.ie

HSE

www.hse.ie Freephone 1800 459 459

MABS - Monetary Advice and Budgeting Service

www.mabs.ie

Merchants Quay Ireland

www.mqi.ie

Mental Health Ireland

www.mentalhealthireland.ie

Narcotics Anonymous

www.na-ireland.org

Reach Out - Youth and Mental Health

www.reachout.com

Release - Drugs, The Law and Human Rights

www.release.org.uk

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org

www.dublinsamaritans.ie

SPHE - Social, Personal and Health Education

www.sphe.ie

Spunout - Ireland's National Youth Site

www.spunout.ie

Talk to Frank - UK Drug Info Site

www.talktofrank.com

Walk Tall

www.walktall.ie

Local and Regional Drug Task Forces

Ballyfermot Local Drugs Task Force

www.ballyfermotldtf.ie

Dublin North East Local Drugs Task Force

www.dnedrugstaskforce.ie

North Dublin City and County Regional Drugs Task Force

www.ndublinrdtf.ie

Additional reading and resource Books For Children

Don't Lose the Head, Gerard Kelly/Crosscare support booklet for parents/guardians in dealing with the issues of drugs and alcohol in the family. See details on

www.ndrdaft.ie

Taking the Lid Off, Teen booklet - a resource for young people living with parental substance use. Available to download at www.ascert.biz in the resources section.

