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Scoil Mhuire Substance Use Policy 2023

Introduction

The central objective of the Scoil Mhuire Substance Use Policy is the welfare, care and protection of every student, in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Scoil Mhuire acknowledges that the school has an important role in terms of the education of children in relation to alcohol, tobacco, solvents and drugs. This policy reflects our school ethos and seeks to promote self-reliance, knowledge and skills to enable individuals within our school community to make healthy and safe choices. The school will endeavour to work closely with parents/guardians in the implementation of this policy to ensure the health and safety of each child.

Scoil Mhuire recognises the serious danger that drug misuse can have on the individual and on the school community. The main objectives of this policy are to inform the school community on substance misuse and the strategies in place to empower the staff, parents and children.

This policy was developed in consultation with the staff, Board of Management (BOM) and Parents Association of Scoil Mhuire in accordance with recommendations by the Department of Education and the Health Service Executive. It should be read in conjunction with the school Code of Behaviour and Administration of Medication Policy. This policy is applicable to all students, staff, parents and users of the school building during school time and during all school related activities.

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 requires every school to have a substance use policy in place
- As part of the National Drugs Strategy, the Department of Education is mandated 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.

Definition

A drug can be defined as a chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels.

'Drugs' mentioned in this policy refer to any one or all of the following:

- Over the counter (OTC) medicines
- Prescription medicines
- Tobacco/Nicotine/Vaping products
- Alcohol
- Solvents
- Illegal Drugs

School Position on Substance Use

- Smoking and Vaping

Scoil Mhuire is a strictly no smoking or vaping area as indicated by the signs on and around the school premises and car park. Staff, parents and students are not permitted to smoke cigarettes/vape on school premises, during school activities or on school tours. All persons on school premises must comply with the no smoking/vaping policy.

- Alcohol

Scoil Mhuire is a strictly no alcohol area. Staff, parents and students are not permitted to possess or consume alcohol on the premises during school activities or on school tours.

- Solvents

Scoil Mhuire forbids the misuse of solvents by staff, parents or students on the premises during school activities or on school tours. All solvents must be kept in a safe, secure place. Any use of solvents by students is forbidden unless under the direct supervision of a teacher.

- Medication

Any administration or use of medication on school premises during school activities or on school tours must comply with the Scoil Mhuire policy on Administration of Medication. Students are not permitted to share their medication under any circumstances.

- Drugs

Staff, parents and students are prohibited from possession, use or supply of illegal drugs on school premises during school activities or on school tours.

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco, Vape and Drug-Related Incidents

Incidents involving the alcohol, tobacco, vape and drug use might be:

- Use or suspected use of alcohol, tobacco, vape and/or drugs on the school premises or during a school-related activity
- Intoxication
- Disclosure about use

- Possession of these substances

Training and Education

The Scoil Mhuire Board of Management intend to provide a safe and secure learning environment for our students. We believe that education is power and therefore education concerning substance abuse will be taught to pupils through the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum.

The school will provide information and organise training for staff and parents in the area of substance abuse.

Procedures for Managing an Incident

- Incidents involving pupils:

Class teacher will speak to the student about the incident and record details of the conversation and inform the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Principal/Deputy Principal will meet with the student and discuss the incident further.

Student's parents/guardians will be notified and asked to attend a meeting with the Principal/Deputy Principal and the student.

Due care will be important in deciding on a balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. In keeping with our Code of Behaviour, the above incidences would be considered serious offences and will be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

Depending on the severity of the incident, the Gardaí may have to be notified.

- Incidents involving Staff Members/Visitors:

The staff member/visitor will be asked to leave the premises if he/she presents school under the influence.

Principal/Deputy Principal will speak with the staff member/visitor about the incident and record details of the conversation referring to the Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct (in the case for Teachers).

Depending on the severity of the incident, the Gardaí may have to be notified.

- Incidents involving parents/guardians:

The parent/guardian will be asked to leave the premises if he/she presents school under the influence. Pupils will not be released to parents/guardians who are under the influence.

Principal/Deputy Principal will speak with the parent/guardian about the incident and record details of the conversation.

Depending on the severity of the incident, the Gardaí may have to be notified.

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire on **June 15th 2023**. It will be reviewed on a cyclical basis or as the need arises.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Gerard O'Sullivan, Chairperson of Board of Management