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Márta 2020

School Substance Use Policy

INTRODUCTION

Belgrove Senior Girls' School acknowledges that it has an important role to play in drugs education particularly in terms of prevention. This policy applies to the students of Belgrove Senior Girls' School. This policy also applies to teachers, SNA's and ancillary staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the building. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place, e.g. School Tour.

DEFINITION OF DRUGS

For the purpose of this policy, a drug is defined as any substance, which changes the way the body functions mentally, physically or emotionally.

RATIONALE

Why is this policy necessary?

The world in which we live presents us all with many challenges, which affect our 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 student cohort and staff and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.

The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should 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) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.

This policy will enable the school to provide suitable age-appropriate education for our pupils on the subject of drugs. The policy will enable the school to respond appropriately to an issue involving alcohol, tobacco and other legal and illegal drugs.

AIMS OF POLICY

The aim of the substance use policy of Belgrove Senior Girls' School is primary prevention. This policy applies to pupils and all adults on the school premises.

We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs.

We aim to develop in our pupils' better self esteem, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils age appropriate information from educational programmes.

We aim to support parents and staff in understanding and addressing substance misuse. The policy also aims to manage the incidents of substance misuse in a clear and consistent manner.

RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL ETHOS

In line with the ethos of our school, each child's personal, emotional and social development is a priority. The building of each child's self-esteem is of prime importance. We aim to provide a safe and secure environment for our pupils and also for all in the school community.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are as follows:

- To develop positive self-esteem in our pupils and give them the confidence, skills and knowledge necessary to make healthy life choices.
- To help children to appreciate their worth and the worth of others.
- To inculcate in the children a sense of responsibility for themselves and others.
- To help the children to develop strategies to assist in the prevention of substance misuse.
- To ensure teacher training in the various education programmes which relate to substance use, where available.
- To provide guidelines and information for teachers to guide their response to an issue relating to substance misuse.
- To support parents in their primary role as educators of their children in relation to substance use.
- To ensure that the school has correct procedures in place for dealing with any substance misuse incident which may arise in the school.

EDUCATION REGARDING SUBSTANCE USE

We believe that education in school about alcohol, tobacco and drugs is most effective if provided in the broader context of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). Education in the area of substance use is an integral part of SPHE. The Walk Tall Programme is in use in our school. This programme addresses the issues relating to the use of tobacco, alcohol, legal and illegal drugs.

The main themes in the Walk Tall Programme are:

- Self-esteem
- Feelings
- Influences
- Decision-making
- Drugs awareness

Raising the children's self esteem is a primary focus of the Walk Tall and Weaving Wellbeing programmes and is a primary aim of the school. High self-esteem gives children the confidence to make healthy choices.

The themes of the Walk Tall Programme are also developed in other areas of SPHE (i.e. RSE and the Stay Safe Programme) and also in other curricular subjects, particularly in Religion and SESE (Social, Environmental, and Scientific Education).

The scope of our SPHE Programme also allows us to draw on the expertise available from the following, to enhance the work done in class:

- The local community e.g. Parents, Gardaí and Health Board personnel.
- The Education Staff of the Dublin North East Drugs Task Force.

The class teacher is always present during visits of outside speakers.

PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF SUBSTANCE MISUSE:

Note: if a pupil needs to take medication in school (e.g. inhaler, allergy injections etc.) the Board of Management must be informed. Please see our policy on the Administration of Medicines for advice.

SMOKING

- Belgrove Senior Girls' School is a non-smoking area.
- All persons are required by law to comply with this non-smoking regulation.
- Possession of cigarettes, e-cigarettes or other smoking/ vaping paraphernalia by pupils on the school premises is forbidden and would be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.
- Any person who smokes or vapes on the school premises will be reported to the school principal, who in turn will report that person to the Environmental Health Officer.

ALCOHOL

- The consumption of alcohol by a pupil on the school premises or during any school related activity is strictly forbidden and would be treated as a very serious disciplinary matter.
- The consumption of alcohol while carrying out school business is forbidden. Were a teacher or other member of staff to come to school under the influence of alcohol, it will be reported to the principal. A family member or friend would then be called to take them home.
- Teachers should adhere to the Teaching Council *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* which states that *teachers should ensure that they do not practise while under the influence of any substance which impairs their fitness to teach.*
- All staff should ensure that they are not under the influence of any substance which impairs their ability to carry out their school duties.

ILLICIT DRUGS AND SOLVENTS

- Pupils are strictly forbidden to be in possession of, or to use, illicit drugs or solvents on the school premises.
- All adults on the school premises are forbidden to be in possession of, to use, or to sell illicit drugs.
- If illicit drugs or any drug paraphernalia e.g. syringes, are found on the school premises, they will be brought to the Principal's office and the Gardaí will be contacted immediately. **Discovery of illegal substances must be reported to the Gardaí.**
- If a member of staff is of the opinion that a student or other adult is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, she/ he will immediately inform the Principal, who will take the necessary action.

- Where the school suspects the trafficking of illicit drugs, an investigation would be carried out and the advice and assistance of the Gardaí would be sought.

MANAGEMENT OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING SUBSTANCE MISUSE

It is felt that in this school, the response to incidents involving substance misuse would be largely of a pastoral, rather than disciplinary nature.

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

The reporting procedure for such incidences is:

Step 1: Witness to drug related incident informs teacher/ staff member/ Principal.

Step 2: Principal informs parent/ guardian.

Step 3: Principal informs Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Step 4: Gardaí informed depending on the seriousness of the incident.

Step 5: Area Health Board informed for the disposal of items.

PROVISION FOR TRAINING OF STAFF

An effective policy needs to be supported by an ongoing commitment from the Board of Management and School Trustees to training and staff development. Where and when available, all staff will be offered drug information and awareness training. Relevant courses, offered by the Department of Education and Skills, will be offered to staff. Where and when available, First Aid Training will be made available to staff.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents will be informed of an incident involving their own child and will be asked to accept responsibility, cooperate with the school authorities and with the Gardaí if necessary.

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

Parents are encouraged to support the school's efforts to educate pupils in substance misuse prevention and to manage substance use incidents.

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT IS TO:

- Ratify this policy.
- Implement this policy.
- Monitor and evaluate it.
- To sponsor/ provide training for staff members.
- Make decisions involving critical incidents.
- To deal with the media in the event of a critical incident.

This policy puts the following procedures in place to deal with an incident requiring medical intervention.

- ‘Universal Precautions’ will be applied; e.g. the wearing of proper protective gloves etc., washing and making safe an area after an incident; provision of a yellow bin to dispose of needles or other unsuitable appliances. Yellow bin (sharps bin) is located in the secretary’s office.
- First Aid training has been given to multiple staff members who are now qualified and certified to assist with medical emergencies.
- The Board of Management has devised a Critical Incident Policy (see school website).

The school has established an excellent rapport with the local Garda station and welcomes 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, but the Gardaí will be involved in any serious substance abuse incidents.

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

- N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous)
- Child Care & Family Support Services
- Drug Education Officer
- Drug Helpline
- Juvenile Liaison Officer
- Community Garda

Copies of all relevant phone numbers are appended (see appendix 1)

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 practicable, that pupils and other persons in the workplace 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’, in the preceding sentence includes all school related activities taking place under the supervision of a teacher, with the Board’s approval, and both within and away from the 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 at Work Act, 2005.

Should the Principal and/ or Deputy 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 and/or Deputy Principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the safety, health 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 and/or Deputy 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 and/or Deputy Principal shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employees from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the premises.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds that a parent or adult 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 said pupil, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal will be informed and the duty of care will apply to the pupil. The child's safety is paramount. The Child Protection policy will be consulted accordingly.

In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove himself/herself from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy 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 (telephone: 1800 411 057 or e-mail: eas@vhics.ie) is available to teaching staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service.

The Board of Management also 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 such staff member to seek counseling 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.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- Feedback from all parties: staff, parents and Board of Management.
- Effectiveness of policy in dealing with incidents.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The entire school staff are responsible for the implementation of this policy.
- Parents are responsible for supporting the school's goals to educate pupils in substance misuse prevention.
- The Board of Management is responsible for supporting implementation of the policy through staff training and resource provision.

Communication, Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be communicated to staff and the school community as appropriate and will be subjected to regular review. In accordance with the systematic cycle of review of policies adopted in Belgrove Senior Girls' Primary School, it will be reviewed again every two years or if new legislation or an incident requires so.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to be 'P.J. Sexton'.

Siniú:

Datá: 13ú Deireadh Fómhair 2020

Dr. P.J. Sexton, (Chairperson, Board of Management)