



## Substance Use Policy

Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together National School recognises that there are issues surrounding the taking of drugs and their consequences. This school does not allow staff to administer medicines to pupils unless an Administration of Medication to Pupils Form has been completed (see relevant policy).

This policy aims to outline Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together National School's policy in relation to the following categories of drug:

- Over the counter (OTC) medicines
- Prescription medicines can be taken in the school, providing that they are prescribed by a GP, necessary in the school because of the scheduling of dosage, with an indemnification and explanation of dosage technique.
- Nicotine
- Alcohol
- Solvents
- Illegal Drugs

**Definition of a drug:** A drug is a chemical substance which alters how the body functions physically, how we behave mentally, how we think emotionally and how we feel. Drugs, for the purpose of this document, include nicotine, alcohol, solvents, illegal drugs, over the counter medications, prescription medications, and food or drinks containing high levels of caffeine.

The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them. We refer to the National drugs strategy, 'Building on experience' which is currently Government policy. We also refer to a report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drug use prevention' (November 2001) which underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.

The school currently delivers a Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme to the students. This explores themes such as self-identity, taking care of my body, safety and protection, making decisions and developing citizenship.

This policy should also be considered in the context of the following school policies i.e.

- Health and Safety statement
- Code of Positive Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement

- Department of Ed. and Skills- Child Abuse Prevention guidelines/Children First.

This policy was developed by the Principal, teachers and the Board of Management.

Scope: This policy applies to all students, school, staff, parents and all users of the school buildings.

When does it apply? To activities in the school building and yard. All school related activities that involve children.

Objective: we work to ensure that our pupils will grow up in a healthy environment, helping them to develop skills, values and attitudes to make positive responses to the problems of substance misuse.

Policy Content – Education and Prevention: A substance misuse prevention programme will be implemented at all class levels in accordance with our Social Personal and Health Education Primary Curriculum Programme. Through S.P.H.E., our pupils will practise specific skills and experience a value system which supports primary prevention in a holistic, caring and supportive environment. We will address the content objective relating directly to substance use in an age appropriate manner using discreet S.P.H.E. time.

#### **Management of School drug related issues:**

**Smoking:** the entire school is a smoking free zone in accordance with the Tobacco Act 2002.

**Alcohol:** Pupils will not be allowed to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school activities. If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of alcohol, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken.

Where a student comes to school under the influence of alcohol, their parent or guardian will be called in to take them home. Students breaking these rules will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary procedure.

If a staff member appears to be under the influence of alcohol or any prohibited substance, it will be reported to the Principal who will act in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy and consult section 24 of the Education Act accordingly.

If alcohol is required for an adult only school function to be held on school premises, permission shall be sought from the Board of Management. If prizes of alcohol are donated to the school, they should only be used at adult only events.

If an adult arrives to collect a child under the influence of alcohol (or illegal drugs) and is in the opinion of the class teacher, unable to provide appropriate care to the pupil, school guidelines should be followed:

- Class teacher will ask the adult to wait and will get a member of the ISM team
- A parent/guardian or emergency contact from the child's record forms will be contacted.
- The class teacher and ISM member will do their best to persuade the parent/carer to keep the child(ren) on the premises while finding an alternative appropriate adult to come and escort them home and provide care.
- If this is unsuccessful we will contact TUSLA in line with our Child Protection Policy.

**Illicit Drugs and Solvents:** Students are strictly forbidden from being in possession of or using illicit drugs or solvents on school premises. Illicit drugs found on school premises should be locked away and the Gardaí contacted to dispose of them. Teachers are advised not to transport illicit substances in any circumstances.

If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult as to what action should be taken.

When a school suspects trafficking of illicit drugs, an investigation will be carried out.

Parents of any student involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Community Police Officer or the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer will be sought.

The school Board of Management will expect parents to inform the Principal or class teacher if they suspect their child of drug taking.

**Training and Staff Development:** An effective Substance Use Policy needs to be adopted and supported by on-going commitment from the Patron, Board of Management and Parent Teacher Association, to training and staff development in this area. Teachers will be encouraged to avail of training opportunities and keep themselves up to date. B.O.M and P.T.A. will provide on-going training and support for parents and staff about drug/alcohol abuse.

A teacher may not administer medication to a child even where requested to do so by a parent unless an Administration of Medication to Pupils Form has been completed.

Medicines can be administered only if parents/guardians sign the following: Administration of Medication to Pupils (Appendix 2 Health and Safety Policy).

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 15th January 2020.