

## *Curragh Post Primary School*

### **Introduction**

Curragh Post Primary School is committed to addressing the needs of its students in relation to substance use and particularly alcohol, tobacco and drug use.

The policy has been drawn up and accepted by the Board of Management, Principal, Teachers, Parents / Guardians and Students. It is necessary that all involved work together to implement this policy. It is vital that parents / guardians actively work with the school to implement this policy to ensure their children's health and safety.

The Board of Management of Curragh Post Primary School has agreed this Substance Use Policy for students as a means to adopt a co-ordinated response to student education about or use of the substances referred to above. It is intended to illustrate the minimum standards of behaviour and co-operation expected of all students and to inform students, their parents / guardians and staff how the school will respond to related issues as they arise.

In this policy "Drug" means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The School recognises that drugs, both legal and illegal, are available in the local community and that Curragh Post Primary School, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents.

### **Relationship to school's Mission / Vision / Aims:**

Curragh Post Primary School's Mission Statement is as follows:

#### **Mission Statement**

*Our School values the gifts and talents of students and staff in their development in an atmosphere of equity, caring and mutual respect. Can we achieve this? Yes, we can. Is Féidir Linn.*

#### **Ráiteas Misin**

*Luachanna ár scoil ná na buanna, taillainne agus fireann na scoile i bhfobairt san atmaisféar cothromais, comhbhách agus coimhease. An féidir linn é a dhéanamh? Is Féidir Lin seo a dhéanamh.*

#### **Définition de notre mission**

*Notre établissement a pour vocation de valoriser les capacités et les talents de ses étudiants et de son personnel dans leur évolution, dans un esprit d'équité, de sollicitude et de respect mutuel. Pouvons-nous accomplir cela? Oui, nous le pouvons.*

This Substance Use Policy is another important framework within which “the development of whole people, empowered to lead effective lives in the wider society” is enhanced in our school. The community of the school works in a holistic manner to ensure that dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world. The dignity of each student, staff member and parent / guardian is honoured and reflected in school policies and structures, including this policy.

This policy is informed by the school's Mission Statement which commits us to preparing all students for the challenges of adolescent and adult life and to respecting the dignity, worth and individuality of every member of the school community.

### **Key Points to Note:**

- Students who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school must inform the school Principal and must have the Principal's permission for their use in the school / at school related activities.

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- Curragh Post Primary School must be informed if a student has a medical condition and relevant teachers, e.g. P.E. teacher / team coach must be informed also.
- A student or teacher or other staff member may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine.
- Curragh Post Primary School does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco in the school or on school related activities by any student.
- Curragh Post Primary School does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the school, or on outside activities or in non school time by any member of the school community.
- Curragh Post Primary School does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances. Students may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only.
- Chemicals in school laboratories will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under teacher supervision.

The Policy is focused on four key areas:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes;
2. Managing Drug Related Incidents;
3. Training and Staff Development and
4. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation.

### **Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes:**

Curragh Post Primary School is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programme for all students. Our educational aims are:

- To increase the self esteem and confidence of our students;
- To equip our students with personal and social skills;
- To enable our students to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions;
- To provide clear and age appropriate information on drugs and
- To minimise the harm caused by drug / substance abuse by offering supportive interventions.

These aims will be achieved by a range of measures, some of which include the following:

1. Teachers are offered Drug Awareness training, S.P.H.E. training or any relevant training through regular in-service training.
2. Outside speakers are used where appropriate to reinforce the work done in class.
3. An Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Awareness Week is organised annually by the school's Student Council.
4. Parents / Guardians will be consulted on the need for alcohol, tobacco and drug education and will be informed of what is happening in the school. Drug information and drug awareness sessions are organised for parents / guardians as requested by the Parents' Council.

Student Drug / Substance Use or Abuse Education will be achieved through:

- The S. P.H.E. Programme;
- Some Religious Education and Science classes and
- Outside / visiting speakers will address students where appropriate.

### **Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Related Incidents:**

We acknowledge that, in all situations involving substance use / abuse, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the individual student(s), the needs of the school community, the reputation of the school and legal considerations.

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Assessing a drug incident: If there is no damage to the student(s), it is important to:

- Take time to listen and assess before responding;
- Separate fact from rumour;
- In situations of confirmed use or possession or supply, all details must be recorded and acted upon and
- Then, the Drugs Incident Report Form should be completed (See Appendix 1).

### **Procedures for Noting and Reporting Incidents of Substance Use / Abuse:**

#### **What should students do?**

- Students should discuss any incident of substance use / abuse with a parent / guardian or teacher or another trusted adult within the school system; this is responsible behaviour rather than “telling tales”.

#### **What should Parents / Guardians do?**

- Parents / guardians should contact the Year Head in person regarding incidents of substance use / abuse which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents / guardians.

#### **What should School Staff do?**

Allegations of / incidents of substance use / abuse which are drawn to the attention of a staff member will be dealt with in the following manner:

- The staff member who suspects that substance use / abuse may have taken place or is taking place and / or to whom an allegation has been reported should complete the attached “Drugs Incident Report Form”.
- Where a staff member has been told of substance use / abuse, he / she should advise the person reporting the allegation / incident that he / she is obliged to complete the Drugs Incident report form and to pass it on to the Principal. It should be noted that reporting is obligatory and that the matter will be dealt with by the “Student Support Group”.
- The “Substance Misuse Incident Report Form” should be handed to the Principal in person. If the Principal is not readily available, the form should be handed to the Deputy Principal.
- The Principal, (and in the absence of the Principal, the Deputy Principal), will discuss the matter with the reporting staff member.
- He / she may, then, convene a meeting of the “Student Support Group” who will decide how to deal with the issues and person(s) allegedly involved.
- The “Student Support Group” consists of the Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal, Year Head (of the student(s) involved) and another member of staff. A valid meeting of this group requires two persons to be present; both genders must be represented.
- The “Student Support Group” will have discretion as to how to deal with the report.
- As a minimum, they will be expected to nominate at least one of their members to speak to the persons(s) allegedly involved.
- If deemed appropriate by the Principal, parents / guardians may be contacted at any stage of the process.
- The parents / guardians of the persons alleged to be involved must be informed. Thus, they will be given the opportunity of discussing the matter and are in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.
- Where parents / guardians are going to be consulted, the Principal should be informed in advance and invited to meet with parents / guardians when they come in.
- If there is a serious incident, the Principal and parents / guardians will be involved and appropriate sanctions applied by the Principal.

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- Where the incident is deemed to be more serious, (e.g. gross misbehaviour), the Principal should inform the Board of Management, if necessary.
- At the end of the process, the Principal (or Deputy Principal) will speak to the person who made the initial report to a staff member and inform him / her in general terms how the matter has been dealt and acknowledge his / her wisdom in making the initial report.
- At the end of the process, the Principal (or Deputy Principal) will speak to the staff member who made the initial report to him / her and inform him / her in general terms how the matter has been dealt and acknowledge his / her wisdom in making the initial report.
- Throughout the process, the Year Head will be kept informed of all incidents, as appropriate, and have access to relevant written records. Afterwards, the Year Head will monitor the progress of students involved in a substance use / abuse incident by liaising with the staff member and students involved (separately or jointly) at follow-up meetings.
- The incident will no longer be considered if there is no recurrence within that academic year.
- Where sanctions are involved, they will be based on the provisions made in the school's Code of Behaviour and may include suspension or expulsion.
- The written record (i.e. completed report form) will be kept in a secure location by the Principal for at least three years after the student(s) involved have left school. This report will not form part of the school's normal student file.

### **Managing a Drugs Incident:**

A limited number of people are involved in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents. People within the school community will be informed on a "need to know" basis. All written records will be held confidentially by the Principal or Deputy Principal, acting in the absence of the Principal, Parents / Guardians will be involved. They will be informed sensitively and support offered to them. In the case of illegal drugs, the Principal or Deputy Principal (acting in the absence of the Principal), may contact Gardai, (possibly, the Juvenile Liaison Officer), and any drugs obtained will be dealt with by the Gardai. In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered.

If a student has a problem with substance abuse, then referral for external help will be recommended to the student's parents / guardians. Parents / Guardians, staff and other students involved in the incident will be offered support.

Confidentiality is a complex issue. It is important that the limits of confidentiality are discussed with students before any disclosure is made. The well being and welfare of the students and teachers / school staff must be a primary focus.

The Principal or the Deputy Principal (acting in the absence of the Principal) will handle all media enquiries. He / she will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.

### **Disciplinary Procedures:**

Substance misuse incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. These will be consistent with school rules (see the school's Code of Behaviour).

### **Training and Development:**

**Staff:** The school will facilitate training for staff involved in the S.P.H.E. programmes. All staff will be offered drug information and awareness training regularly.

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Specific training will be made available to key staff in relation to managing drug related incidents. First Aid training will be made available to all staff as required by K.W.E.T.B.

### **Roles of Parents / Guardians:**

The school is a supportive organisation in respect of the primary educators – parents / guardians. Our efforts to provide education, guidance and support to students, in its various forms, are most meaningful and effective when parents / guardians both understand and support our aims and activities and participate (as appropriate) in the school's work. The school will provide opportunities to attend drug workshops, information evenings and sessions on the School Drugs' Policy as appropriate in the current year.

### **Monitoring the Policy, Review and Evaluation:**

The Student Support Group will monitor the policy once every two years to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the school. The review will be recorded and made available to the Principal.

The areas of:

- Drug Education Programmes;
- Managing Drug Related Incidents and
- Parent / Guardian, Staff and Management Training / Information

will be reviewed.

### **Dissemination of this Substance Use Policy:**

Copies of this policy will be distributed to all the school's staff, the Students' Council and the Parents' Council. Students will be made aware of the policy within the context of the S.P.H.E. programme. Copies of this policy are available on request from the Principal / Secretary Board of Management.

### **Review Procedures:**

This Substance Use Policy will be reviewed regularly and by the Board of Management every four years. Any staff member who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible. The Parents' Council and / or Student Council may request a formal review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible by the Board of Management.

***Policy Approved: ??? 2015***

***Policy Review Date: November 2017***

