

# Gaelscoil an Inbhir Mhóir

## Substance Use Policy

### Scope of Policy

This policy applies to students, teachers, auxiliary staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the building. It is applicable during school time - including breaks and to all school related activities. It applies to classrooms and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place, e.g. School Tour.

### Aims of Policy

The aim of the substance use policy of Gaelscoil an Inbhir Mhóir is primary prevention. 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 better self-esteem in our pupils through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils age appropriate information from educational programmes.

### Rationale

Why is this policy necessary?

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which affect their 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 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.

The school authority in Gaelscoil an Inbhir Mhóir has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.

### Implementation Procedures

Copies of the policy were distributed to Board of Management members

All staff members  
Parents' Association  
Committee members  
School Community on request

## **Monitoring and Review Procedures**

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. A copy of this policy will be issued to all staff members and a reminder of its contents will be given at the first staff meeting of each year.

## **Policy Content**

### Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

Incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use are addressed in the school's Code of Behaviour and pupils may be suspended or expelled if involved in any drug related incident.

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 found on school property.

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

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

Step 2: Principal inform parents/guardians

Step 3: Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management

Step 4: Gardaí informed depending on seriousness of incident

Step 5: Area Health Board informed for disposal of items

Parents will be involved by accepting the school's Code of Behaviour. They will be informed of an incident involving their own child and will be asked to accept responsibility, co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardaí if necessary.

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. 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.

First Aid training has been given to a staff member who is now qualified and certified to assist with medical emergencies.

The school has established an excellent rapport with the local Garda station and will invite 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 they will be involved in any serious substance abuse incidents.

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.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe 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 the said pupil, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal will be informed and the duty of care will apply to the pupil. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the pupil and safeguard their best interests.

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.

The policy is always open to review and change where deemed necessary and appropriate.