



Powerstown Educate Together National School

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Substance Use Policy

This policy has been formulated by Powerstown ETNS to comply with legislation and Department of Education and Skills circulars.

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1. Introduction

Introductory Statement

For the purpose of this policy it is important to state that 'a drug is any chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels. This may include either a legal or illegal substance'.

This policy applies to students, teachers, parents and any others using the school building. It applies during school-times (including break-times) and to all school related activities.

Powerstown Educate Together National School recognises that there are issues surrounding the taking of drugs and their consequences. This school does not allow teachers to administer medicines to pupils. In very exceptional circumstances, a staff member will administer medicines on completion of an Administration of Medicines Form, (see relevant policy).

Rationale

This policy exists to provide a safe and secure environment for learning and to offer supports for those experiencing difficulties.

This policy is necessary given that exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of reality. Powerstown Educate Together National School aims to promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.

Aims

This Substance Use Policy aims to give Powerstown Educate Together a policy in relation to the following categories of drug:

- Over the counter (OTC) medicines.
- Prescription medicines
- Nicotine
- Alcohol
- Solvents
- Illegal Drugs

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 an 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 is to be considered in the context of this policy and also in the context of other school policies i.e.

- Health and Safety statement
- Code of behaviour

- Child Protection Policy
- Department of Ed. and Science- Child Abuse Prevention guidelines / Children First.

2. Content

The school shall respond to incidents in a planned and considered way. In certain cases it may be necessary to seek legal advice. Due care will be important in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and disciplinary response. An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving drug misuse may include referral to a support agency. Parental involvement at an early stage is central to such an approach. The content of this policy is divided into three sections:

Drug Policy in relation to:

- Children
- Staff, Parents and other Adults

2.1 Children

2.1.1 Over the Counter (OTC) medicines:

Teachers cannot administer medication under any circumstances, not withstanding administration of basic first aid. If a child requires OTC medicines during school time the parent may come to school to administer same.

In exceptional circumstances, where the child could not participate in school otherwise, prescription drugs may be administered by a staff member. We refer to our Administration of Medicines Policy which states that express parental consent is required for administration of any medication.

2.1.2 Alcohol, Tobacco and Solvents:

Any incident of consumption of these substances amongst students shall be treated as serious misbehaviour. **With regards to our school's behaviour policy, the above breach of rules will be automatically be treated as major misdemeanour.** Sanctions for this major misdemeanour will include a discussion with parents, staff including the principal to include a verbal and/or written worksheet together with any or all of the following sanctions: removal from class, formal communication with parents/guardians by letter, referral to principal, sent home early (informal suspension) with parent, BOM informed, formal suspension for up to 3 days, immediate suspension for up to 3 days, use of the individual behavioural plan procedure, expulsion & reporting to Gardaí.

The breach shall be noted to facilitate review and performance. A repeat of any of these offences will result in suspension and possible expulsion, **(see Behaviour Policy)**

2.1.3 Illegal Drugs and associated paraphernalia:

Offences under the Misuse of drugs acts, 1977 and 1984 include possession with intent to supply and possession for personal use. The school shall take due action in line with legislation. This will usually include referral to a support agency. Any breach shall be noted to facilitate review.

If illegal drugs are found in a child's possession they will be taken from child and reported to Gardaí. Any found drugs will be confiscated and reported to Gardaí. The same steps as in section 3.1.2 will also be taken.

2.2 Staff, Parents and other Adults

2.2.1 Smoking:

As Powerstown Educate Together NS is a designated workplace, a no smoking policy is enforced within the grounds and the building. Should an adult be found to be smoking within the building, they shall be requested to cease immediately. Should they continue, to do so, it may be necessary to contact the local environmental officer and/or Gardaí.

2.2.2 Alcohol:

No staff member shall be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substance during pupil contact time. The school's duty of care towards students shall dictate this. In this instance, the staff member shall be removed from duty. Should a member of staff require support, the school may consider facilitating links with an Employee Assistance scheme.

Should a Parent/Guardian be under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance when presenting to collect a child, it may be necessary to contact an alternative guardian on our file to provide for the safety of the child and ensure his welfare.

If Parent/Guardian is aggressive and deemed to be a danger to staff and pupils Gardaí will be contacted immediately and parent/guardian will be asked to leave school premises.

If a parent insists on taking child the school has no option but to let child leave with the parent/guardian. However the Gardaí will be called to make them aware of the situation.

2.2.3 Drugs/Illegal Substances:

Any adult found in possession or under the influence of drugs will be reported to Gardaí or Social Services.

Any incidence of illegal drug misuse shall be dealt with, with regard to procedure. This shall be in the context of the Misuse of drugs act 1977 and 1984. Should the Principal/Secretary have a suspicion that any Visitor to the environs of the school is in possession of any illegal substance with intent to supply; the local Gardaí shall be contacted immediately.

3. Education Concerning Substance Use

- Powerstown Educate Together will provide education concerning substance use through the SPHE Programme (Social, Personal & Health Education). This will be provided by teachers.
- Powerstown Educate Together will draw on the expertise of local community-based services in the provision of education concerning substance use. This will be done in consultation with teachers, parents and the Board of Management.

4. Provision for Training & Staff Development

All staff of Powerstown E.T.N.S. will be aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse. Staff will be aware of the laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use and how they relate to themselves, the school and the students.

As training needs arise from staff, these will be addressed and responded to adequately.

It is the role of the Principal to ensure staff training needs are met.

5. Responsibilities

All parties in the school community have a role in the development, implementation and evaluation of this policy.

We recommend a community approach in this regard.

Within this approach, the following roles shall apply:

Helena Regan (Principal) shall:

- Research and develop this policy in conjunction with all parties involved.
- Circulate the draft version to the teaching staff for analysis/discussion/feedback.
- Make all new teachers in the school aware of the contents of the policy.
- Provide for implementation of the policy within the school.
- Ensure that parents of new entrants to the school are aware of the policy.
- Parents should have access to the policy.
- Circulate the draft version amongst the parent body within the school and encourage feedback/analysis/discussion.
- Circulate the draft version to BOM level and encourage analysis/feedback/discussion.

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for policy implementation within the school.

The Board of Management shall:

- ratify the amended and completed policy
- provide any supports where necessary, in the implementation of the policy.

Helena Regan (Principal) is the school's Designated Liaison Person (DLP) with Lorraine Cullivan, the deputy DLP. Helena Regan shall liaise with local Gardaí with a view to improving staff awareness of the symptoms of substance misuse. This should produce a proactive, rather than reactive, approach.

6. Ratification

This policy was initiated in January 2013.