



Newpark Comprehensive School

Scoil Chuimsitheach Na Páirce Nua

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

1. Introductory Statement

1.1. Newpark Comprehensive School's 'Substance Use Policy' covers the use of substances potentially harmful to health. The underlying emphasis is one of concern and caring for the students of the school.

2. Scope

2.1. This Substance Use Policy applies to:

- a. Alcohol
- b. Tobacco
- c. Illegal drugs or controlled substances and all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act (1977)
- d. Solvents
- e. Prescribed medication
- f. Non-prescribed medication

2.2. This policy applies to students on all school-related activities both on and off the campus.

2.3. Reports of information pertaining to the possible supply, possession or use of drugs or any other breach of the substance use policy by students when on school-related activities off the school premises will be communicated to parents.

3. Rationale

3.1. 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.

3.2. The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.

3.3. The National Drugs Strategy, 'Building on Experience' is now Government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.

3.4. The recent report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drug Use Prevention' underlines the importance for schools to develop substance use policies.

3.5. The 1999 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) Report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among sixteen year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 29 ESPAD countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland whilst the use of tobacco and other drugs was above the ESPAD average.



4. Relationship to the Ethos of the School

- 4.1. An agreed policy governing substance use enhances the vision of a health promoting approach.
- 4.2. The staff of Newpark School values each individual. A warm and friendly relationship exists between teachers and pupils. There is ample provision for Pastoral Care to ensure that each individual is valued. Support services include Guidance Counsellors, form teachers, the School Chaplains and Nurses, as well as Year Leaders who monitor the progress and care of students.
- 4.3. The senior students elect a group of prefects who carry out supervision and pastoral care responsibilities. The democratically elected students' council ensures that issues concerning the pupils at large are being addressed.
- 4.4. Newpark has always had a strong commitment to Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). The school offers a programme which addresses issues such as Relationships, Sexuality, Homophobia, Xenophobia and other forms of discrimination.

5. Goals/Objectives

- 5.1. provide a safe and secure environment within which the development of the school community can take place
- 5.2. To provide a comprehensive programme of education for all students in substance use issues.
- 5.3. To provide education and training for staff in dealing with substance use incidents.
- 5.4. To support parents and pupils in understanding and addressing substance misuse.
- 5.5. To place clear, transparent and fair procedures in place for dealing with incidents relating to substance use.

6. Key Measures

6.1. Education

- a. All Junior Cycle students have Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as part of their curriculum. Substance Use is one module of this course.
- b. Outside speakers are used to supplement substance use education in transition year.
- c. Currently there is no specific provision of substance use education in fifth and sixth year of the Established Leaving Certificate. This is under review.
- d. Students of the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) complete a module on substance use within the social education course.

6.2. Provision for Training and Staff Development

- a. The Board of Management fully supports staff attending SPHE in-service training programmes.
- b. The SPHE and LCA support services provide on-going in-service where resources are distributed and shared.

6.3. Management of Incidents

- a. Where a student or students is believed to be in possession of or under the influence of a prohibited substance, the Principal or Deputy-Principal should be immediately informed. If neither the Principal nor Vice-Principal is available it will be referred to the Year Leader.

- b. At the discretion of the Principal and or Deputy Principal, a student may be referred to a guidance counselor and/or school nurse for support in relation to their substance misuse. They may subsequently be referred to an external support service.
1. Where a student is suspected of being under the influence of a substance.
 - a. If a Student is unfit for class another student will be sent to ask the nurse to come and escort the student to the nurse's office. If the student is deemed to be unfit for class their parents will be asked to collect them immediately. A suspension of two days is recommended. Each incident should be considered a case by case basis in line with the School's Code of Positive Behaviour.
 2. Possession of Prohibited Substances
 - a. When a student is found in possession of prohibited substances a minimum suspension of 5 days will occur. Each case will be referred to the Juvenile Liaison Officer where appropriate and the Board of Management. Each incident will be considered on a case by case basis in line with the School's Positive Behaviour Policy.
 3. Selling or Supply of Alcohol, Illegal Drugs or Solvents
 - a. Where a student is found selling any of the mentioned substances the Juvenile Liaison Officer will be informed. The student will be suspended in line with NEWB guidelines and the School's Positive Behaviour Policy. Expulsion is the recommended sanction in this situation.

7. Links to Other Policies and to Curriculum Delivery

- a. This Substance Use Policy links to the Code of Positive Behaviour.
- b. This policy links with the SPHE, Science, CSPE and Social Education within the broad Junior and Senior Cycle Curriculums.
- c. Administration of medications within the school is referred to in the Nurse's Policy and Protocol. (This will be attached as an Appendix).

8. Implementation Arrangements, Roles and Responsibilities

- 8.1. The Principal has the day-to-day responsibility for implementation of the policy, for ensuring that In-Service training takes place and that all staff are adequately informed to implement the policy.
- 8.2. All staff are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Substance Use Policy and its implementation in their own areas of responsibility and bringing any incidents to the attention of the designated person(s)

9. Ratification and Communication

- 9.1. This policy will be passed to the Board of Management after consultation with the staff, parents (PTA) and the Student Council.
- 9.2. Once the policy has been approved by the Board of Management the policy will be communicated in the following ways:
 - a. The policy will be available on the school website.
 - b. The policy will be included in the school journal to be signed by both the student and their parent/guardian.
 - c. A full copy of the policy will remain in the staff room.
 - d. New members of staff will be given a copy of the policy.

