

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY OF ST. MARK'S BOYS NATIONAL SCHOOL.

Introduction:

St. Mark's Boys National School is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school regarding substance use.

This policy was developed by a committee consisting of parents, teachers and members of the local community. The school community has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and handling drug related incidents.

We understand that a 'drug' is

any substance which changes the way the body functions mentally, physically or emotionally

Relationships to School's Mission/Vision/Ethos:

Mission Statement:

St. Mark's School is a Catholic primary school which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and safe environment where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the boys in its care are identified and provided.

St. Mark's School will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community. It will imbue in the Pupils respect for people and property. It will encourage pupils to be responsible for their actions and for the results of these actions.

The school's ethos and aims are reflected in our drugs policy because it also aims

- to provide a safe, secure and healthy environment of learning.
- to promote self-esteem and self awareness of students
- to promote positive health behaviour
- to increase knowledge about health.
- to engage the partners in the education process.

Why a substance policy:

We need to provide pupils with the opportunities to develop the life skills, which will enable them to deal with the many challenges, which affect their health and well-being. We acknowledge the role we play in the prevention and misuse of substances.

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

Objectives of Policy:

The aim of this policy is the welfare, care and protection of every young person in line with the Education Act 1998.

Our objectives are to enable the child to:

- to develop skills such as valuing themselves and others, communication, co-operative, decision-making and critical awareness.
- to be aware of attitudes that affect people's decisions and exploration of what seems to be the acceptability of certain drugs such as alcohol.
- to acquire accurate, age-appropriate information about drugs and to distinguish between myths and facts about drugs.

Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents:

In the management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents this school is committed to providing education on substance use within the broad context of Social, Personal and Health Education.

The school's position on alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents include the following:

Smoking and Tobacco:

- This school is a No-Smoking Area.
- All people on this premises must comply to this policy.

Alcohol:

- Members of school community are not permitted to consume alcohol on school premises while children are in attendance or on school trips.

Illicit Drugs:

- Members of the school community are prohibited from possession, use or supply of illicit drugs on school premises or on school activities.

Solvents:

- The school does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances.
- All chemicals on school premises are prohibited for student use unless under a teacher's supervision.

Medication:

- It is preferable that medication be administered at home and by a guardian. However, in special circumstances and with written consent from guardian's, medication may be administered by child himself or teacher.

When a case of a substance misuse incident is suspected, witnessed or reported – the following procedures will be adopted:

1. In all cases where there is no immediate danger to the young person/s, it is important to take time to assess the situation before responding.
2. If the person appears to be in immediate danger, we will try to determine the nature of substance, if possible, and contact 999 or one of the relevant services.

Procedure:

1. The Principal must be informed.
2. The teacher investigates the circumstances and keeps a written record of same.
3. Parents will be informed and invited to meet with the school authorities.
4. The Principal in consultation with relevant staff (possible Board of Management) will decide on a course of action.
5. Incidents will be handled sensitively and sanctions will be implemented in accordance with school policy.

The school acknowledges that in certain cases it may be necessary to seek legal advice or notify relevant authorities.

Scope of Policy:

This policy applies to the entire school community students, staff and parents/guardians.