

Solas Chríost National School

Substance Use Policy

Introduction

This version of the school's Substance Use Policy was formulated in February/March 2014 by the school staff, parents and Board of Management of Solas Chríost National School. This policy will be implemented taking into account other school policies as appropriate.

Rationale

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.

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 is government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place. The school authority in Solas Chríost NS has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the law.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to students, teachers, ancillary staff members, parents, 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 the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place, e.g. School Tour.

Aims of Policy

- To ensure the welfare, care and protection of every young person as provided for in the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.
- To provide pupils with information and skills through the implementation of the SPHE curriculum as well as developing the pupils' self-esteem.
- To protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs.
- To minimise the dangers caused to children by drug misuse and drug misusers within schools/communities.
- To manage drug related incidents in a planned manner.
- To support parents and pupils in addressing drug misuse.

Relationship to School's Ethos

This Substance Use Policy reflects the school's ethos through its promotion of a 'child centred philosophy of education' as stated in the school's Mission Statement.

Implementation Procedures

Copies of the policy were distributed to Board of Management members for ratification in March 2014. When ratified and amended, copies were given to:

- All staff members.
- Parents' Association.
- Committee members.
- School Community on request.
- The policy will also be displayed on the school's website www.solaschriost.ie

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

Children are most at risk in relation to substance use in Solas Chríost National School in recreational areas, on the way to and from school and at out of school related activities supervised by staff members of Solas Chríost NS.

What is a 'drug related incident'?

- 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 (e.g. syringes) found on school property.

Reporting Procedure for such incidents are:

Step 1: Witness to drug/alcohol/tobacco 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 as necessary.

Parents will be informed of any incident involving their own child and will be asked to accept responsibility, co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardaí if necessary.

Monitoring and Review Procedures

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. There will be an annual meeting of this Substance Use Committee to monitor and review procedures to be held in March each year. 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. The school Principal and the Board of Management have agreed to take responsibility to monitor procedures and ensure they are being adhered to.

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 for an appropriate yellow clinical waste bin will be made available.
- First Aid training has been given to a staff member who is now qualified and certified to assist with medical emergencies.
- Training of staff will be provided as necessary.
- Copies of all relevant phone numbers are available in Appendix 1 of this policy.

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.

Management of Persons in the Workplace (Under the Influence of Drugs and/or Alcohol)

The Board of Management shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that pupils and other persons in the workplace are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare from persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The term "in the workplace", in the preceding sentence includes all school related activities taking place under the supervision of a teacher, with the Board's approval, and both within and away from the school premises.

Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and others. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of any contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace.

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.

In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove him/herself from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to remove the person in question.

The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers. An Employee Assistance Service (telephone: 1800 411 057 or e-mail: eas@vhics.ie) is available to teaching staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service.

The Board of Management also acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all other staff members. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the non-teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to seek counseling or other professional intervention.

All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded by the Principal/Deputy Principal 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.

Education Concerning Substance Use.

The SPHE curriculum will be implemented in the school and will incorporate the Walk Tall learning programme.

Review

Thus policy will be reviewed annually. The next review will take place in March 2015

Ratification of the Substance Use Policy

This policy was adopted and ratified by the Board of Management on March 4th 2014

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: _____

Date of next review: March 2015

Appendix 1

Contact Details

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)	086-8629308
Child & Family Support Agency	01 6352854
Drug Education Officer	087 – 9117753
Drug Helpline	01 4649303 (Tallaght) 1800 341 900 (National)
Juvenile Liaison Officer	01 6666042
Community Garda / Tallaght Garda Station	01 451
Emergency Services	999