

# Eureka Secondary School Kells

EUREKA



## **Draft** **Substance Use Policy**

## *Mission Statement*

1. Eureka Secondary School aims to provide the highest quality education possible to meet the needs of all students, within the limits of available resources, and within the environment and ethos that promotes Christian values, mutual respect and responsible citizenship.
2. The school aims to offer opportunities equally to all its students, whatever their ability, circumstances or religious experiences, in order to develop each person's potential to the full. Programmes are provided to facilitate students whose goal is further education, those who wish to enter the world of work, and those who wish to return to full-time study.
3. The school is committed to maintaining a supportive partnership with parents who are the primary educators of their children, with employers, schools, the local community and the parishes from which the pupils come.
4. The staff, the schools most valued resource, are supported and encouraged in their work, and we aim to promote their individual and corporate development through supportive structures and in-service training, both internal and external.
5. The school is committed to developing a community where mutual respect reigns, where personal standards of work and behaviour are high and where students grow to recognise fully their responsibilities both to themselves and to others. Our hope is that when they leave school they may be better able to take their place in society as mature and responsible citizens imbued with the Christian values which are the inspirations of this school.

# *Substance Use Policy*

## *Draft*

### **Content:**

1. Introduction
2. School Policy
3. Programmes for Alcohol, Tobacco, Volatile Substances and Drug Education
4. Procedures for Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Related and Substance Abuse Incidents.
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## INTRODUCTION

1. The policy applies to the entire school community, including staff, students, parents/guardians and users of the school buildings.
2. The Policy is part of a general pastoral approach being adopted by the school to ensure a healthy, caring and supportive learning environment. The Substance Use Policy is one of many that serve to incarnate the school's ethos.
3. The prevalence of tobacco, alcohol, and drug misuse pose challenges and opportunities for the school community as an important social partner in providing drug awareness and education.

The Board of Management recognises and accepts the seriousness of various research findings regarding the problems associated with drug and in particular, alcohol misuse.

- ◆ The school policy aims to co-operate fully with the strategic plan adopted by the government under the National Drugs Strategy 2001 – 2008 and made mandatory for schools in circular 18/02.
- ◆ The Education Act 1998 provides that schools promote the social and personal education of students and provide health education for them.

## SCHOOL POLICY

### *School Position on drugs:*

The school does not accept or tolerate the possession, use, or supply of banned or prohibited and/or drug paraphernalia by any person in the school, on school trips and outings, or during any school related activity.

The school makes an exception for the use of properly prescribed drugs and insists that parents/guardians of students taking prescribed medication inform the school in writing of that fact.

## **PROGRAMMES FOR ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, VOLATILE SUBSTANCES, AND DRUG EDUCATION**

### *Education Programmes:*

The school, within the limited resources available to it, will provide appropriate education programmes for all its students. This programme of education will be age-appropriate and will seek to build on and complement existing programmes already being taught in the school – SPHE, RE, Wellbeing, Science, PE, CSPE, Home Economics.

### *Role of Parents:*

Parents are expected to:

- ◆ Acknowledge the importance of these programmes
- ◆ Recognize that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse
- ◆ Assist and co-operate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

To assist the parents in their role the school will

- ◆ Provide them with information on what is happening in the school regarding education programmes (e.g. SPHE etc)
- ◆ Encourage and welcome consultation with parents on the best use of available resources in the community to support the school in its programme and policy implementation.

## **PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING ALCOHOL, (TOBACCO), DRUG RELATED, OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE INCIDENTS**

### *School Management and the Investigation of an Substance Use Incident*

In the event of an Substance Use incident, the school will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student or students involved and the welfare of the school community as a whole and the reputation of the school.

1. Where it is apparent that there is immediate danger to students or the school community, the school reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school any student involved in a suspected abuse incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident.
2. A Substance Use Incident Report Form will be completed (Appendix 1).
3. The school will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any abuse incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this.
4. The school will take possession of any banned or prohibited substance and drug paraphernalia associated with abuse incident, carefully recording all such items and retaining them pending completion of the investigation, unless otherwise instructed by appropriate outside agencies.
5. In the event of an incident, the school will seek statements from all persons involved in, concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident and will record these statements.
6. The school will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of an incident, including records referred to in the above steps, communications with other people or agencies involved or concerned with the matters under investigation, the investigation outcome, decisions taken and the rationale for these decisions, any penalties or disciplinary measures imposed following an investigation, and the management and outcome of any appeal that may arise following an investigation.
7. The school, as its own discretion, will liase with any appropriate outside authority and seek advice or assistance as it deems appropriate in relation to its investigation of an incident.
8. A statement that if the circumstances merit and the investigation is continuing, the school will put the full particulars of the incident to the students concerned and their parents in the following manner:
  - a) Copies of all records deemed relevant to the position of the student concerned and to the nature of the complaints or allegations that a student is facing will be made available to the student and her parents – at the discretion of the school – in time to permit the student a reasonable opportunity to make her own reply to the matters at issue and any representations that she would wish to make or have made on her behalf.
  - b) The school will allow the student concerned and her parents reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. The school will take into account any response so any other relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.
  - c) The school shall shortly thereafter inform the student and her parents of the school's findings and their reasons for these. If the school finds that the student has been guilty of or involved or implicated in an incident, it shall indicate the penalty or sanctions that it intends to impose in the circumstances.

9. In relation to a verified and investigated incident, the Board of Management may implement disciplinary actions or sanctions, including an oral warning, a written warning, a suspension of three days duration, a suspension of more than three days duration, other Pastoral Support sanctions short of expulsion, and expulsion.
10. The school can, at its sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstances or representations that it considers should be taken into account. The school asserts the right to exercise an appropriate show of mercy.
11. The school will ensure the pastoral supports are offered to the student/students and parents affected by an incident of substance abuse. The services of a counsellor, etc, will demonstrate the school's Christian commitment at this time of personal crisis.

## **THE INVOLVEMENT AND ROLES OF VARIOUS PARTIES IN AN INCIDENT INVESTIGATION**

### ***The Role of the Principal***

The Principal his/her delegate is the person responsible for all matters relating to this area. He/she may nominate the Deputy Principal or Year Head or other nominated staff to act on her behalf in the investigation of a substance abuse incident. The duties and responsibilities of the Principal (hereafter to be understood as meaning the Principal or his/her nominee) in this regard include the following.

- (i) The Principal is responsible for dealing with abuse incidents arising at the school.
- (ii) All reports of abuse incidents or suspected incidents must be reported to the Principal.
- (iii) The Principal makes all decisions regarding investigation of an incident; communication with, liaison with, and reporting to relevant parties; and disclosure of information regarding an investigation.
- (iv) The Principal is responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed regarding investigation developments.
- (v) The Principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any written documentation and records associated with an incident.
- (vi) The Principal is responsible for taking possession of any banned or prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia and deciding what should be done with same upon appropriate advice.
- (vii) The Principal may seek the assistance of the Deputy Principal, Year Head and/or school guidance counsellor in conducting an investigation.

### ***Notifying and Communicating with Parents and Students***

The previous section has dealt with the procedure for communicating with parents and students in the event that an abuse incident continues to be investigated, and the school is required to put the particulars of the matter to the student or students concerned.

However, independent of such a development, the school may wish to contact the parents of a student for a variety of reasons regarding *suspected* substance use incident.

In such an event, the school will immediately inform parents – particularly where there is a concern regarding the health and welfare of a child – and share any available information that may help parents in attending to their child’s health and wellbeing and will keep students informed about what is happening and why. It is important to clarify that such actions will be undertaken without prejudice to the school’s separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage any abuse incident.

### ***Issue of Confidentiality***

The school recognises the importance in limiting, as far as is practicable, the number of people involved in investigating and managing an abuse incident and that it is the aim of the school only to involve those properly concerned with an incident. However, it should ensure that students and their parents accept that:

1. The duty of teachers and staff to the school community preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any students when they come in contact with an abuse incident or suspected abuse incident.
2. The school may be required in a given situation to contact, as appropriate, such authorities as the Gardai, HSE, Tusla, Probation Service or Officers of the Courts.
3. The school may need to engage the expert assistance of an appropriate third party to properly investigate an incident.
4. The school may be duty bound to notify certain persons about an incident and/or the outcome of an incident investigation under statute, regulations, or DES guidelines.

### ***Media Inquires***

The school

- ◆ Will not comment on any individual matter when investigation is in progress other than to outline its policy and procedures for managing incidents.
- ◆ However, it should also make clear that in the interests of the school’s reputation, the Board of Management may clarify the school’s position regarding an incident after the investigation has been completely concluded.

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Training Provided or Facilitated by School. The school will release teachers to attend in-service days where provided by the HSE.

In relation to **Parents & The Board of Management** the school

- ◆ Will provide information sessions and workshops in relation to Substance Use Policy.
- ◆ Will provide appropriate information, guidance, and support to the board regarding issues relating to investigation of and adjudication on incident investigations.

In relation to the **students** the school will:

- ◆ Offer all students programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco, and drug education within the context of the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate Programmes.

## **MONITORING, REVIEWING, AND EVALUATING**

The school community (Parents/ Teachers/Students) will monitor, review, and evaluate the Policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

# APPENDIX 1

## Definitions:

- ◆ The “School” includes all school buildings, grounds, play areas, public areas where student’s congregate coming to and going from school, and any other specific area.
- ◆ A banned or prohibited substance include all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non-validated prescription medication, all alcohol, and tobaccos used contrary to the law of the land. The school reserves the right to determine that substance found at the school qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance.
- ◆ Any banned or prohibited substance as defined above, any items that may be deemed to be used in the taking of illicit substances, and any written or printed material promoting the use of illicit substances.
- ◆ Any incident related to banned or prohibited substances that occurs in the school or during school functions or outings or such incident that may be deemed damaging to the health or welfare of the student concerned, to other students, or to the Policy or reputation of the school.
- ◆ It should also state that the School reserves the right to determine whether a specific incident constitutes an abuse incident. To be addressed under the terms of the Policy.
- ◆ For the purposes of the Policy, Parents should be defined to include natural parents, foster parents, step parents, or guardian of the student concerned as applicable, or any person acting in loco parentis, either on a temporary or permanent basis, on the date of an abuse substance.
- ◆ In the Policy, reference to the Principal should be taken to mean the principal for the time as being appointed by the School and defined in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 or Deputy Principal where the principal is either unavailable or has delegated to the Deputy Principal.

## CATEGORIES OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES REGARDING SAME

### 3 Main Areas

Smoking

Alcohol

Illegal Drugs

#### **Smoking:**

- ◆ Smoking on school grounds, on school trips or school related activities, or being in possession of cigarettes on the school grounds is not allowed.
- ◆ It is against the law to smoke on the school premises as it is a public place.
- ◆ Parents will be automatically informed if a student is found smoking on the school premises and detention will follow for first offence. More serious sanctions will apply if a breach of this rule is repeated.

#### **Alcohol:**

- ◆ Students are not allowed to have in their possession, consume or be under the influence of alcohol on the school premises.
- ◆ It is illegal to consume or be under the influence of alcohol on the school premises (as it is a public place).
- ◆ The same school rule applies to all school related activities. eg. Educational trips etc.
- ◆ Parents/Guardians will be automatically informed of an alcohol related incident.
- ◆ If it is suspected that a student is under the influence of alcohol, he/she will be immediately withdrawn from class and parents/guardians immediately informed.
- ◆ Being in possession, consuming or being under the influence of alcohol may/will result in suspension.

## **Drug Misuse – procedure for dealing with suspected incidents.**

- ◆ Interview by Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head, preferably at least two staff present at interview.
- ◆ Student to write their account of incident.
- ◆ If a student is caught in possession of, or distributing, or under the influence of an illegal substance, the school will contact the parents/guardians and invite them immediately to the school to discuss the problem.
- ◆ The student may be immediately suspended.
- ◆ Suspected incidents of drug misuse while on educational trips, games etc. will be dealt with in a similar way to an 'in school' incident.
- ◆ The Principal will inform the Board of Management and the Garda of all incidents of suspected incidents of drug misuse.
- ◆ If one of our students is found by one of the Garda to be involved in a misuse of drugs incident, unconnected with the school, it is the responsibility of the civil authorities to deal with it.

Later: Write a report of the incident, 3 copies, Principal 2, retain 1

## **TEACHERS'S GUIDELINES FOR SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF DRUG MISUSE**

### **IF URGENT**

1. Send other student for Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head or other Staff Member.
2. Make situation safe for all students.
3. Stay with student involved until other staff member arrives.
4. Afterwards fill in incident form attached. (Appendix 2)

### **IF NOT URGENT**

5. Inform Principal as soon as practicable
6. Afterwards fill in incident form attached. (Appendix 2)



