

## **Substance Use Policy**

This policy applies to all members of the school community, which includes staff, pupils and all users of Blackwater Community School. This policy applies to the school building and its environs, 24 hours a day, including all school trips and activities.

### **Definition of a Drug**

Any substance which changes the way the body functions physically, mentally and emotionally.

Categories of drugs covered in the policy

Legal - Can include, but is not restricted to, tobacco, alcohol, solvents, prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

Illegal - All illegal drugs

### **Rationale**

We feel that Blackwater Community School needs a Substance Use policy for the following reasons:

- Legal regulations and requirements
- To provide structure and procedures
- Health and Safety considerations
- To make people aware that a policy exists.
- to educate pupils, parents and staff.
- to protect pupils, staff and stakeholders of the school.

### **Goals and Objectives**

#### Goals

- To provide a safe and healthy environment for all members of the school community.
- To educate our pupils in a holistic manner through the SPHE programme.

#### Objectives

- Deal with drug related incidents in a fair and consistent manner.
- Provide teachers and parents with drug education as and when they require it.

### **Definition of "the school"**

Anywhere within the school grounds and its environs. All school related trips and activities.

### **Contents**

1. **Drug Education** - Education concerning substance use for students will be available to all pupils through the SPHE programme established within the school.
2. **Outside speakers** - We believe that trained teachers are in the best position to carry out during education but accept that, at times, it may be appropriate to use outside speakers to supplement or reinforce the work carried out in class.
3. **Management of Alcohol and Drug related incidents including:**
  - **Procedure for suspected use** - Once a teacher has a suspicion of drug use they must inform the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible. A range of options will then become available including contacting a parent, member of the Gardai, a health care professional or Juvenile Liaison Officer. All incidents will be recorded in a safe place, not on a computer disk.
  - **Disclosure** - This will be in line with the Child Protection Policy of the school.
  - **Finding Substances** - If substances are known to exist, the relevant authorities will be notified.
  - **Possession/Supply On or Off the premises**: In the incidence of possession or supply on or off the school premises, the relevant authorities will be notified.

- **Reporting, Referral and Recording Procedure** - A written record of all incidents will be kept in secure locations. Access to information will be restricted to relevant students, parents and staff. Possible agencies that information will be referred on to may include, but will not be restricted to, a Drug Education Officer, Juvenile Officer and Social Services.
- **Students Over 18 Years** - All students will be expected to fully comply with school regulations.
- **Involvement of the Media** - In the event of a drug related incident there will be no involvement of any kind with the media.
- **Pastoral Care Context** - The school will aim to treat all pupils in a pastoral care context.
- **Roles and Responsibilities** - Those involved in the development and evaluation of this policy including members of teaching staff, Parents Council, Student Council and the HSE. It is the responsibility of the whole school to ensure the contents of this policy are adhered to.
- **Provision of Training** - A Drug Education Officer will provide staff with training when and as required. Family Communication and Self Esteem programmes will be on offer within the school to all parents.

#### **Success Criteria for the Policy**

If the following questions have been answered positively, we feel the policy has been successful:

- Have all pupils received substance use/misuse education through the SPHE programme?
- If there has been a drug related incident, was it handled in the appropriate manner?
- Have parents and staff availed of the Drug Education Programmes on offer?

#### **Monitoring Procedure**

The drug policy working group will meet approximately to evaluate the policy