



SCOIL FIONNTÁIN NAOFA

Substance Use Policy

Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois

Uimhir Rolla: 17489G

Introductory Statement

This policy on Substance Use was formulated by the Board of Management, Staff and Parents' Association of **Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe** in August 2021. It was reviewed by the aforementioned parties in **November 2023** in line with our cyclical review of organisational and administrative policy documents.

Scope of the Policy

The term 'substance' will be interpreted in the widest possible sense to cover all non-prescribed drugs whose use by pupils is prohibited by law and to include alcohol, tobacco, 'vaping', illegal drugs and all mood-altering substances including solvents and inhalants.

While this policy addresses substance use issues in respect of pupils mainly, the policy applies also to all teaching and other school staff, parents/guardians and visitors whilst on the school premises or when connected with school related activities and events, and others insofar as measures under the policy relate to them.

This policy will apply during school time (including break times) to all school personnel and to parents/guardians and visitors and others insofar as measures relate to them and will include all school related activities and events to include sporting events/activities, school tours & outings, field-trips, fundraising events, school productions etc.

Rationale

It is necessary to formulate a policy on substance use because:

- 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;

- The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them;
- The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, of which substance misuse prevention education is an integral part, is a mandatory subject on the primary curriculum and must be taught to all primary pupils from junior infants to sixth class (DES Circular 022/2010);
- The National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 requires every school to have a substance use policy in place. Action 21 of the National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 mandates the Department of Education to monitor the implementation of substance use policies in schools through the whole school evaluation process as operated by the Inspectorate. It is also mandated to ensure that best practice is disseminated to all schools;
- The 2003 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (E.S.P.A.D.) report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among 16 year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 34 E.S.P.A.D. countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland, with girls ranking higher than boys in terms of regular alcohol use. In terms of drug use in Ireland, there was a notable increase in lifetime use of any illicit drug between 1999 (32%) and 2003 (40%), up eight per cent.

Definition of a Drug

A drug is any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. This description includes many substances we normally think of as drugs as well as substances we might not usually consider to be drugs such as coffee, tea, alcohol, solvents and tobacco (Corrigan, 2003 cited in Best Practice Guidelines in Substance Misuse Prevention Education 2010).

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school (school's mission/vision/aims)

In **Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe** we welcome and cherish each individual child in our care. The school recognises the dignity and value of each person made in the image and likeness of God. In **Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe**, we endeavour to create a safe, happy, positive, stimulating, orderly, inclusive and productive learning environment, where high quality teaching and learning will flourish. This is reflected in the organisation and practices of our school and in its admission and policy documents. To this end, we see substance use education as being an important component of education provision situated within the context of a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which is underpinned by a strong element of care and support for both our pupils and staff.

Goals/Objectives

The objectives and goals of this policy are

- to provide a comprehensive age appropriate programme of education for all pupils in substance use issues;
- to equip the school to deal with issues relating to substance use in a planned and considered way and in accordance with its statutory responsibilities;
- to reinforce the role of the school in contributing to local and national strategies in relation to substance use education & prevention;
- to minimise the dangers caused to young people by substance misuse within schools/communities;
- to manage incidents of substance misuse in a clear and consistent manner in line with relevant legislation;
- to support parents and pupils in understanding and addressing substance misuse issues.

Key measures (content of the policy)

This policy document is divided into three key areas:

- 1. Education concerning substance use**
- 2. Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents**
- 3. Provision for training and staff development**

1. Education concerning Substance Use

In **Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe** we fully recognise and acknowledge that education about alcohol, tobacco, drugs and solvents is most effective when provided within the broader context of a Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum which is age/class appropriate, developmental in nature and delivered within the context of a safe and supportive whole school environment. In this regard, substance misuse prevention will be taught through the medium of the revised '*Walk Tall*' programme launched during the school year 2016-2017 <http://pdst.ie/walktall>. Please also refer to our school's Whole School Plan for SPHE for information regarding the delivery/implementation of the '*Walk Tall*' programme. Our school's Whole School Plan for S.P.H.E can be accessed here:

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/sphe-whole-school-planpolicy.html>

Class teachers will have responsibility for delivering the revised '*Walk Tall*' Programme within the broader context of the S.P.H.E curriculum.

2. Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use might include:

- Use or suspected use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, vaping on the school premises or during a school-related activity (Smoking or vaping isn't permitted in any area on the school grounds);
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour;
- Disclosure about use;
- Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia:
- Possession and/or supply on the school premises or during a school-related activity or event:
- Other;

The school will respond to incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use in a planned and considered way. In certain cases, it may be necessary to seek legal advice. Due care and consideration will be important in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving substance use may include referral to a relevant support agency (please see below).

Smoking/Tobacco and Vaping

- The school is a no smoking area;
- People are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes/tobacco products on the school premises or on school related activities;
- Pupils are not permitted to possess cigarettes/tobacco products on the school premises or on school related activities;
- Tobacco will never be permitted as a prize for school raffles;
- Vaping is not permitted on the school premises and/or on school related activities.

Alcohol

- The school is an alcohol restricted area;
- People will not be allowed to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school related activities;
- If alcohol is required for an adult only school function within the school, permission shall be sought from Board of Management in the first instance and a final decision shall be made by the Board of Management regarding the matter;
- If alcohol is to be a prize in school raffles or fundraising events, it must be delivered to and collected from the school by an adult.

Illegal/Illicit Drugs and Solvents

- People are forbidden from being in possession of or using illicit drugs or solvents in the school or on school premises

The following reporting procedure will be followed within the school:

Step 1:The witness to a drug related incident informs the teacher or staff member who in turn informs the Principal. In certain circumstances, the witness to the drug incident may inform a trusted adult who in turn will inform the Principal. In the event that a substance misuse incident concerns a teacher/staff member, the witness should go directly to the Principal. If it is concerning the Principal, the witness should go directly to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Step 2:The Principal informs parents/guardians (if concerning a pupil in the school).

Step 3:The Principal informs the Chairperson of Board of Management;

Step 4:The Gardaí may be informed depending on the seriousness of the incident and who is involved and the substance in question.

Step 5: The HSE will be contacted to remove any substance related paraphernalia (if applicable/relevant).

Other courses of action that will be considered include:

- Seeking advice from outside agencies i.e 'Midland Regional Drug and Alcohol Taskforce' 1800 459 459;
- Seeking advice from outside agencies i.e Tusla/Duty Social Worker;
- Convening an emergency meeting of the Board of Management if the drug related issue is concerning a staff member;
- Implementing the procedures and protocols as outlined in our 'Critical Incident Management Plan' if the incident relating to the substance misuse meets the criteria for being considered a critical incident. Our 'Critical Incident Management Plan' can be accessed here <https://shanahoens.weebly.com/substance-use-policy.html>
- Providing an appropriate medical or first aid response if required. In certain instances medical assistance may be required and the emergency services will be contacted if this is the case;

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 or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of a drug (as defined above) or a substance, the Principal or Deputy Principal (in the absence of the 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;

- Should the Principal 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 a drug (as defined above) or a substance, 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 a drug or substance, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal 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/Designated Liaison Person or the Deputy Principal/Deputy Designated Liaison Person (in the absence of the Principal/Designated Liaison Person) will be informed and a duty of care to safeguard the welfare and health of the pupil 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 or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to remove the person in question;
- Staff members who present at the school under the influence of a drug as defined by the scope of this policy will be dealt with in line with the relevant disciplinary procedures;
- The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare and wellbeing at work of all staff members. To this end, staff members are regularly reminded of and directed to the the Employee Assistance Service '*Wellbeing Together: Folláine le Chéile*' and are provided with the relevant contact details for same. These are also on display in the staffroom.
- All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of a drug or substance, shall be recorded 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.

An appropriate course of action will be decided on once all of the issues/factors have been carefully considered. Facts only will be recorded and no subjective interpretations of events will be put forward.

All reports regarding substance related incidences will be carefully recorded and filed in line with the provisions of the school's '*Data Protection Policy*'.

3. Provision for Training and Staff Development

An effective '*Substance Use Policy*' needs to be supported by an ongoing commitment from the Board of Management to training and staff development. In this regard, advice will be sought from advisors in the health and wellbeing team of Oide regarding the delivery of the SPHE curriculum/'*Walk Tall*' programme within the school, where and when required. Staff in the school fully understand the importance of delivering the revised '*Walk Tall*' programme as a means of both (a) developing an awareness around the dangers associated with substance use/misuse and (b) preventing substance misuse among the pupil body. The main aim of the '*Walk Tall*' programme is to give pupils the confidence, skills, attitudes and knowledge to make safe and healthy choices in their lives.

Staff members are sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse. Furthermore, staff are sufficiently aware of laws relating to alcohol, tobacco, drug and substance use and how they relate to themselves, to the school and to the pupils.

New staff members in the school will be provided with a copy of this '*Substance Use Policy*'. Also, parents will be provided with a copy of the policy and a copy of the policy will be uploaded to the school's website .

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/substance-use-policy.html>

The Principal and the Board of Management will be responsible for staff training and development. **N.B There is a dedicated section in the school's '*Safety, Health & Welfare Statement*' outlining the specific procedures and protocols that must be adhered to in relation to the administration of prescribed medications.** The school's '*Safety, Health and Welfare Statement*' can be accessed here:

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/safety-health--welfare-statement--risk-assessment.html>

Links to Other Policies and to Curriculum Delivery

Identify any links to related school policies

School policies need to be consistent with one another, within the framework of the overall School Plan. The following policies may be among those considered and referred to in conjunction with this '*Substance Use Policy*':

- Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment;
- Safety, Health and Welfare Statement & Risk Assessment;
- Code of Behaviour;
- Critical Incident Management Plan;
- SPHE Policy/Whole School Plan for SPHE;

Links to curriculum delivery

- SPHE Policy/Whole School Plan for SPHE
<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/sphe-whole-school-planpolicy.html>
- SPHE Programme: 'Walk Tall' programme <http://pdst.ie/walktall>

Implementation Arrangements, Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for implementing this policy

- Board of Management;
- Principal & Deputy Principal;
- Teachers;
- Parents' Association/Parent Body

People who have particular responsibilities for aspects of this policy are:

- A Core Committee comprised of the Board of Management, Staff and Parents' Association is responsible for formulating and reviewing this policy;
- The Board of Management is responsible for ratifying and reviewing this policy;
- The Principal is responsible for ensuring effective communication and implementation of this policy at school level, on behalf of the Board of Management of the school;
- Class teachers are responsible for delivering core programmes and interventions namely the age/class appropriate 'Walk Tall' programme and in supporting the implementation of this policy;
- All staff members are responsible for supporting the implementation of this policy;
- All staff members are expected to fully adhere to the provisions of this policy in relation to substance use;
- Each pupil is responsible for their own behaviour and conduct in line with this policy and the school's 'Code of Behaviour'.
- Parents/Guardians and visitors to the school are responsible for supporting the implementation of the policy at school level.

Success Criteria

The following will be considered as success criteria

- an acute awareness among our pupils of the dangers associated with substance use and misuse through the delivery of the 'Walk Tall'

programme across the school in line with the content of the programme itself, together with the provisions of our Whole School Plan for S.P.H.E as a subject area;

- a sense of competence and confidence among teaching staff members in relation to teaching about issues pertaining to substance use/misuse education;
- a robust awareness among all stakeholder groups including the Board of Management, staff and parents in relation to the school's policy regarding substance use and misuse and the appropriate procedures and protocols to be followed in relation to issues surrounding substance use/misuse at school level;
- the implementation of an appropriate and considered response to any incidences and issues of substance use/misuse in line with the specific procedures and protocols as outlined in this policy;
- positive feedback being received from different stakeholder groups including the Board of Management, Staff, Parents and the wider school community regarding the school's implementation of this policy;
- positive feedback being received from outside agencies such as the Gardaí, the HSE, the Health and Wellbeing team in the Oide Support Service, the school's NEPS psychologist and the inspectorate etc. regarding the implementation of this policy .

Ratification & Communication

This policy on Substance Use was ratified at the Board of Management meeting of **Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe** on

4 December 2023

Michael Delaney

Chairperson of the Board of Management:

Implementation Date

This policy will apply from the date of ratification by the Board of Management of **Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe**, as outlined above.

Monitoring the implementation of the policy

The Board of Management and Principal of the school will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policy.

Reviewing and evaluating the policy

This policy will be reviewed and reevaluated in **November 2025** and prior to that in light of any changes in legislation/statutory requirements and

guidelines within this domain. The Board of Management and the Principal will be responsible for overseeing the review of the policy.