



Westport Educate Together National School

Substance Use Policy

Overview of policy

“To support parents in their important role of educating their children against drug use; to protect and prevent our pupils from using tobacco, alcohol and all illegal drugs and to develop a healthy respect for medicines”

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| Signed by Principal | |
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| Approved by Chairperson name | Linda McNulty |
| Approved by Chairperson signature | |
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1. Scope

This policy applies to:

All staff, paid and voluntary

- Parents/guardians/carers
- All guests and visitors

It is understood that the policy is in effect:

- In all buildings
- Yard areas
- On all school related activities
- Extra-curricular activities

2. Relationship to School's Vision

Westport ETNS is dedicated to the care of the whole school community and to provide a safe and secure environment for learning. Our Ethos is underpinned by four principals:

- Equality-based
- Co-educational
- Democratic
- Child-centred

Westport ETNS is committed to placing the child at the centre of all education. In accordance with our Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) policy, the school consistently endeavours to enhance the self-esteem of every child. In doing so, it is hoped that the child will be enabled to make healthy and safe choices in his/her life.

3. Rationale

- The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education
- The National Drugs Strategy Building on Experience is now government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place
- It will enable the school to respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues involving alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- The 2001 report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drugs use Prevention' underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies

4. Aims/Objectives

The aims of this policy are:

- To support parents in their important role of educating their children against drug use
- To protect and prevent our pupils from using tobacco, alcohol and all illegal drugs
- To develop a healthy respect for medicines

The school aims to achieve this:



- Through building our pupils self-esteem
- Through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere
- Through giving pupils age appropriate information

5. Policy Content

Education and Prevention

A substance misuse/use prevention programme (Walk Tall Programme) will be implemented at all class levels annually in the month of May/June. Through Social Personal and Health Education which is generic in approach and spiral in nature, our pupils will practise specific skills and experience a value system which supports the content objectives relating directly to substances in an age appropriate manner. Copies of the Walk Tall Programme are available to read and inspect in the school.

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

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 will be taken in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving tobacco, alcohol and drug use may include referral to a support agency. Alcohol must not be consumed on the school premises when children are present. In accordance with Irish Law, smoking is prohibited in all school buildings and throughout the school grounds. For information on the administration of medicines in Westport ETNS please refer to our policy entitled 'Policy on the Administration of Medicines/First Aid'.

Provision for Training and Staff Development

At present teachers are assisted by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme and Walk Tall Support Office. Health Boards also provide supports including health education and health promotion, smoking cessation, support and adolescent counselling services. The school endeavours to train staff to be sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse. From time to time a guest speaker may be invited to talk to staff/parents. Such guest speakers, should they be talking to the children, will always do so in the presence of a teacher.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The class teacher will be responsible for ensuring that the content of the programme is age appropriate and relevant to their class group.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.