



## **St. Nicholas' NS, Adare**

### ***Substance Misuse Policy***

Attached is our school's substance misuse policy drawn up by the teachers with the Regional Health guidelines and approved by the Department of Education and the Board of Management.

This policy is in place for the safety of all students, teachers, parents and users of the school building. It is intended that this policy will apply during school hours 9.00am – 3.00pm, and during the afterschool hours 3pm – 6pm.

It is the ethos of St. Nicholas School to provide a safe and secure environment for learning. Our overall aims and goals in relation to this policy is to educate pupils and staff with regards to drugs so they will make healthy choices for the future. These goals will be achieved through classroom activities such as the Walk Tall programme which deals specifically with these issues. When considering prevention our school policy also takes into account the development of the child, his/her needs and life experiences in a holistic way. The policy therefore takes into consideration the following:

- Helping students take responsibility, their worth and the worth of others
- A structured SPHE programme which has a substance misuse prevention and is an integral part
- Having a safe school environment, including safety with regard to disregarded items in the school yard and the safe storage of items such as solvents
- Strengthening the co-operation between parents, the school and the wider community in dealing with the substance misuse prevention.

#### *What is a drug?*

In the broadest terms a drug is 'any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The definition does not discriminate between:

- alcohol
- tobacco/vaping/e cigarettes
- over the counter drugs
- prescribed drugs\*
- illicit drugs

rather it focuses on changes in the body and/or behaviour brought about through the use of these substances.

\*In certain circumstances when a child needs to be administered prescribed drugs during school hours the class teacher may do so in accordance with the medication policy.

### ***Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents***

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use might include:

- use or suspected use on the school premises or during school related activity
- 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
- other

The school will respond to incident involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use in a planned and considered way. Depending on the complexity of the misdemeanour the following sanctions will apply.

- verbal warning and reprimand
- referral to the Principal Teachers
- referral to parents

In the case of incidents involving illicit drugs the gardaí would be contacted.

#### *A successful policy*

An effective policy relies on the support and ongoing commitment from the Board of Management, Parents, Trustees and Staff. All teachers will also be encouraged to further develop their knowledge of the subject area by taking part in courses, and training days when the opportunity arises.

Health boards also provide a wide range of supports for schools.

This policy will be circulated to all of the various parties in school community and will be reviewed annually.

During the review we will gauge the effectiveness of the policy and evaluate to ascertain what changes and evaluate the policy to ascertain what changes, if any are necessary.

Board of management  
St. Nicholas' School  
February 2025

