



MILFORD NS SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
RATIONALE - WHY IS THIS POLICY NECESSARY?	2
RELATIONSHIPS TO SCHOOL'S MISSION, VISION AND AIMS	3
GOALS/OBJECTIVES	3
POLICY CONTENT	3
i. Education concerning substance use	3
ii. Management of tobacco/smoking/ e-cigarettes, alcohol and drug/solvent incidents involving pupils	4
iii. When medical intervention is necessary the following will apply:	6
iv. Provision for training and staff development	7
MANAGEMENT OF PERSONS IN THE WORKPLACE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS AND/OR ALCOHOL	7
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	8
SUCCESS CRITERIA	10
IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME	10
MONITORING AND REVIEW OF PROCEDURES	10
APPENDIX 1: IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS	10
APPENDIX 2: SIGNS OF DRUG USE	11
APPENDIX 3: LETTER OF INDEMNITY & ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION FORM:	11

INTRODUCTION

At the outset of this policy document, the Board of Management, would like to reassure parents that substance use is not nor has been an issue in Milford National School. However, the Board of Management aims to provide a safe and secure school environment and therefore, approaches substance use as an extremely serious issue. The central objective of this substance use policy is to provide for the welfare, care and protection of every student in line with the Education Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

This policy applies to pupils, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff members, parents, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the building. It is applicable during school-time, including breaks, and to ALL school related activities. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place, e.g. school outings/tours. This policy addresses both education concerning alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes and drugs and the procedures for managing incidents relating to these substances. Parents and guardians will be referred to the policy on the school website on the enrolment of their child in the school. Enrolment to the school will be conditional on acceptance of this and other school policy documents by the child's parents.

The school wishes to make clear that with respect to pupils the primary role of substance misuse prevention rests with the parents/guardians.

RATIONALE - WHY IS THIS POLICY NECESSARY?

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco, E-Cigarettes and drugs is part of this reality. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their pupil 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 National Drugs Strategy 'Building on Experience' is now government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place.

The report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drug Use Prevention' (2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies. The most recent European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) (2019) highlights the seriousness of the problem amongst sixteen year olds in Ireland, as compared to 35 other European Countries. The report details that traditional smoking has started to decline in Ireland, but the use of e-cigarettes is on the rise. Furthermore, there has been a slight increase in alcohol use and in heavy episodic drinking. The use of drugs, inhalants and tranquillizers has remained the same amongst young people. In addition, the school authority in Milford National School has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with criminal law. This policy will enable the school to provide suitable developmentally-appropriate education for our pupils on the subject of drugs.

RELATIONSHIPS TO SCHOOL'S MISSION, VISION AND AIMS

We see Milford National School as a place where pupils enjoy learning in an atmosphere of contentment, fulfilment, respect and positive affirmation. We encourage curiosity, cooperation and active participation so that pupils will appreciate their own worth as physical

and spiritual beings and of their potential contribution to society. Central to this philosophy must be the creation of a secure and safe environment for learning and the provision of support for those experiencing difficulties. This understanding of the school ethos has been developed and agreed with the partners in the school community (teachers, parents/guardians, pupils, trustees/ Board of Management) through the involvement of the partners in the development and delivery of school policy. The school ethos is expressed in the day-to-day working of the school and in respect of all school activities. The school climate is a supportive one where the needs and well-being of all members of the school community are considered and respected including those students who may be particularly vulnerable.

This substance use policy supports other school policies and our ethos by:

- Drawing together teachers, parents, Board of Management members and members of the local community.
- Including reference to substance use in our SPHE programme and teaching
- Including reference to substance use in the context of other school policies i.e.
 - Accident/Injury policy
 - Administration of Medication
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Health and Safety
 - Prescription Drugs Administration Form

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

This Substance Use policy intends to:

- Support staff in providing an Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education programme for all students through the teaching of the Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes.
- To equip our students with personal and social skills.
- To enable our students to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions.
- To provide clear and age appropriate information on drugs.
- To minimise the harm caused by drug abuse by offering supportive interventions.
- To manage incidents of substance use in a clear and consistent manner (see School Accident/Injury Policy)

POLICY CONTENT

i. Education concerning substance use

What is a drug? A drug can be defined as a chemical, which causes changes in the way the human body functions mentally, physically or emotionally. For the purpose of this policy we are concerned with drugs which have the power to change a previous mood and the way a person thinks. The policy will take into account drugs which the taker may become physically or more often psychologically dependent. The policy will also cover prescribed drugs detailed in the Administration Of Medications policy. The school will adopt an age appropriate, incidental approach to substance use with more formal lessons at senior level. Education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs will be carried out by teachers through the S.P.H.E. programme, which is taught in our school. We would also draw on the expertise of the Gardai, Health Service etc.

When it is necessary to use glue, varnish or other similar products in the school, the dangers

will be explained and they will be used under supervision. As a general rule, where possible, these substances will be used in a ventilated room/space. Children are not allowed to use Tippex in school nor to bring it to school. Outside speakers may be invited to speak to enhance/supplement work done in school, they will work within the curriculum boundary and in the presence of a teacher. Parental Consent/Parental involvement will be sought where appropriate/relevant.

ii. Management of tobacco/smoking/ e-cigarettes, alcohol and drug/solvent incidents involving pupils

The following comprises the school guidelines in relation to the use of alcohol, tobacco, E-Cigarettes and drugs in the school building and grounds. Incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco, E-Cigarettes and drug use are categorised as Level 3 behaviours in the Milford N.S. Code of Behaviour which may result in a pupil being suspended or expelled if involved in any drug related incident.

The school's shared understanding of a '**drug related incident**' is:

- Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs
- The sale or passing on of any illegal substance,
- The possession of alcohol, tobacco, E-Cigarettes or illegal drugs on school grounds or at school related activities
- Disposal of drugs or related items (e.g. syringes) found on school property
- Disclosure about drugs & solvent use.
- Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia
- Illicit use of other substances e.g. sprays, aerosols, chemicals, medicines and any other everyday substances that have the potential to cause harm to health

Reporting Procedure

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

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

Step 1: Witness to drug related incident informs teacher/staff member/Principal and complete the School Incident Report Form

Step 2: Principal investigates incident, clarifies, and where relevant confiscates and stores relevant substance

Step 3: Principal informs parents/guardians

Step 4: Incident is recorded in writing and filed

Step 5: Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management

Step 6: Proceed as per Code of Behaviour and relevant sanction is discussed and decided

Step 7: Gardaí informed depending on seriousness of incident

Step 8: If applicable, Area Health Board informed to allow for disposal of items.

Step 9: If applicable, seek advice from Gardai/ Health Board regarding intervention, follow up, support, counselling etc. from outside agencies

Tobacco/Smoking/ E-Cigarettes

- The school building and grounds are designated as non-smoking. In accordance with the Public Health Tobacco Act 2002, it is ILLEGAL for anyone to smoke in the school building or on the school grounds.
- No smoking signs are displayed at the school entrance for the purpose of communicating this policy to everyone.
- Staff are not permitted to smoke in the school building and grounds.
- Students are not permitted to smoke or be in possession of cigarettes on the school premises or on any other school related activity.
- Visitors to the school will comply with the non-smoking policy.
- Pupils found smoking or in the possession of cigarettes, will be reported to the Principal and parents/guardians will be informed.

Alcohol

- The school building and grounds is an alcohol free area.
- Nobody will be allowed to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in school or during any school activities.
- If alcohol is required for an adult only school function, permission shall be sought from B.O.M.
- If a teacher is of the opinion that a student is under the influence of alcohol, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken. (see School Accident/Injury Policy)
- Where a student comes to school under the influence of alcohol, their parents will be called in to take them home.
- Students breaking these rules will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary procedure.
- If alcohol is to be a prize in school raffles, it must be delivered to and collected from the school by an adult
- Where a staff member comes to the school under the influence of alcohol, the Principal will take appropriate action, as outlined later in this policy document.

Illicit Drugs And Solvents

- Students, staff and all visitors are forbidden to be in possession of or using illicit drugs or solvents on the school premises.
- Illicit drugs found on school premises should be locked away and the Gardai contacted to dispose of them.
- Staff are advised not to transport illicit substances at any time.
- If a member of staff is of the opinion that a pupil or adult is under the influence of illicit drugs or solvents, s/he will immediately inform the Principal and consult on what action should be taken. (see School Accident/Injury Policy)

- Where the school suspects trafficking of illicit drugs, an investigation will be carried out where warranted. Parents of any students involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer or local Gardaí will be sought.
- The Board of Management expects parents to inform the Principal or Class teacher if they suspect their child of drug taking. It is felt that in this school, the response to incidents involving substance misuse would be largely of a pastoral, rather than a disciplinary nature. It may be considered necessary in certain circumstances to seek legal advice.
- A written account of all incidents will be kept by the school

Prescribed Drugs/Administration Of Medications

- If administration of medicine is necessary for a child during the school day parents/guardians will write a letter to the Principal requesting administration of medication where a Letter of Indemnity and an Administration of Medicines Form will be completed and signed by the parents/guardians.
- Medication will be kept in the child's classroom stored in a green first aid box (Glucagon is stored in the fridge in the school staffroom)
- Medication will be administered in the classroom where applicable. In some cases medication may need to be administered in an emergency situation which could occur outside the classroom (e.g. Buccal Midazolam/ Glucagon) (see School Accident/Injury Policy)
- Where there are changes in dosage or time of administration, parent/guardian should write a letter requesting these changes
- Request for administration should be renewed at the beginning of each school year, by completion of Indemnity Form and Information on Medical Condition Form
- A record of administration will be kept in the office
- Children must not bring over the counter medication to school or on school related activities

When Medical Intervention Is Necessary The Following Will Apply:

This policy puts the following procedures in place to deal with an incident requiring medical Intervention:

- 'Universal Precautions' will be applied; e.g. wearing of proper protective gloves etc., washing and making safe an area after an incident; provision of a yellow bin to dispose of needles or other unsuitable appliances
- There are designated staff members trained in First Aid whom will be called on in emergency situations
- Copies of all relevant phone numbers are contained in Appendix 1.
- In the event of a medical emergency either an ambulance will be called to the school or the person in need of emergency medical attention will be transported to the Accident and Emergency Department of the nearest hospital that caters for the age of the person concerned.
- The school has established an excellent rapport with the community Gardaí. Whether or not to inform the Gardai of minor incidents will be at the discretion of the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management, but they will be involved in any serious substance abuse incidents.

At local level the following support agencies are available to which students involved in substance misuse might be referred (see Appendix 2 for phone numbers):

- N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous)
- Child Care & Family Support Services
- Drug Education Officer
- HSE Drugs and Alcohol Helpline (1800 459 459)
- Juvenile Liaison Officer
- Community Garda

iv. Provision for training and staff development

- As far as possible staff will avail of training and information evenings provided.
- Teachers will be asked to become familiar with the contents of the NDP 'Handbook For Teachers' Understanding Substances and Substance Use.
- There is a shared understanding of the contribution that an SPHE programme can make to the prevention of drug misuse.
- All staff are aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of drug misuse within their own classrooms (e.g. by developing a supportive class/school environment).
- It is the responsibility of all staff to make themselves aware of all policies including the substance abuse prevention policy of the school.

MANAGEMENT OF PERSONS IN THE WORKPLACE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS AND/OR ALCOHOL

- The Board of Management shall ensure, in 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 and special needs assistant with the Board’s approval, and both within and away from the school premises. These include school tours, school outings, nature walks, science talks, sporting activities, school trips to museums, libraries, etc.
- 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 and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, whether that be on or off school grounds, in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and others. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented. These disciplinary procedures are to be agreed upon by the Board of Management.
- Should the Principal and/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 an intoxicant, 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 in contact with any staff, children or visitors to the school, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the school premises.
- If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a parent, guardian 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 aforementioned said pupil, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal will be informed and the duty of care 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, or the presence of staff or children, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.
- The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers and special needs assistants. An Employee Assistance Service is available to teachers and special needs assistants. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the school staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the [Employee Assistance Service](#).
- The Board of Management also acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all other staff members. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the non-teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to seek counselling or other professional intervention.
- All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, 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.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role Of The Board Of Management

The Role of the Board of Management is to:

- Ensure that an up to date, relevant policy is in place
- Ratify and implement the policy
- Support staff in the implementation of the policy
- Monitor, evaluate and review the policy regularly
- Sponsor/provide training for some staff members in regards to substance abuse
- Make decisions involving critical incidents (see School Accident/Injury Policy)
- Deal with the media in the event of a critical incident, including radio, print, television, online, social media

- Devise and implement disciplinary actions and/ or sanctions

Role Of Principal/Deputy Principal

The role of the Principal/ Deputy Principal is to:

- Formulate draft policy in consultation with the teaching staff, parents and Board of Management
- Monitor its implementation and to ensure that it is reviewed by the review date
- Investigate all referrals in accordance with this policy
- Liaise with parents and other outside agencies including the Gardai/ Health Board
- Implement this policy and to support other teaching staff in its implementation
- Arrange appropriate staff training and development
- Appraise this policy with regard to its suitability (see above under B.O.M.)

Role Of Teaching Staff In The School:

The role of teaching staff in the school is to:

- Advocate and promote a positive healthy lifestyle and decisions with their pupils through age appropriate classroom programmes
- Treat the threat of possible drug use as a serious threat to the welfare of pupils and the school community
- Inform themselves regarding the signs and symptoms of drug use and about drugs and their effects
- Be alert to any disclosure by pupils regarding their own or others involvement in drug taking activity
- Bring any such information or suspicion to the attention of the Principal
- Implement this policy
- Appraise this policy (see above as in role of Principal)

Role Of Parents/Guardians:

The role of parents/guardians is:

- To educate their children about substance abuse in an age appropriate way
- To support this policy and to cooperate fully with the school in its implementation or any investigations that may occur
- To attend a meeting with the Principal/ Deputy Principal and the student if their child has been involved in substance misuse.
- To bring to the attention of the school authorities any conditions their child/children may suffer from which specific medication be required
- To advise the school if they suspect that their own child/ another child may be involved in substance misuse under the scope of this policy
- To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability (see above roles)

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Indicators of the success of the policy will be as follows;

APPENDIX 1: IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

Title	Phone number	Other
Diarmaid Moore Principal/Safety Officer:	061 – 333123	n/a
Gardaí:	061- 212400	061 - 212411
Ambulance	112	112 mobile
Fire Brigade	112	112 Mobile
Dr R Magnier	061 – 331917	n/a
Dr M Griffin	061 – 331313	n/a
Limerick Regional Hospital	061-301111	061-482120
Health & Safety Authority	061-419900	01-6147000
N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous)	01 6728000	
Child Care & Family Support Services	061 -314 111	
Drug Education Officer	01-6663831/32	
Drug Helpline	(1800 459 459)	
Juvenile Liaison Officer	01-6663831/32	

APPENDIX 2: SIGNS OF DRUG USE

Very often there are no clear signs attached to irregular experimental drug use. It is usually when drug use becomes problematic for the young person that some of the symptoms may manifest themselves. The signs and symptoms must not replace careful observation, listening to and talking with the young person. Many of the signs and symptoms listed are normal aspects of growing up.

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR THAT MAY INDICATE DRUG USE

- Erratic mood swings
- Lying and secretive behaviour
- Changes in appearance and, in serious cases, the person may begin to look unwell, mixed with periods of more energetic behaviour
- Changes in eating habits
- Regular use of some drugs can lead to a loss of appetite
- Gradual loss of interest in school, hobbies and friends
- Changes in friendship patterns, e.g. If a young child is misusing drugs, s/he will tend to mix with older children and drop former friends
- Involvement in stealing and 'bartering' personal and family possessions for money

- Possessing unusual items and apparatus; Apart from tablets, powders, aerosols etc. which may be found, some forms of drug taking require equipment, e.g. pieces of foil, syringes, straws, plastic bags, cigarette papers, “wraps” square folds of paper
- Unusual smells around the child, or on his clothing e.g. smells of solvents and glues, the characteristic smell of cannabis.

APPENDIX 3: LETTER OF INDEMNITY & ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION FORM:

LETTER OF INDEMNITY

DATE: _____

To: Milford National School, Castletroy, in the County of Limerick, (hereinafter called "the School"), Board of Management of Milford National School, Principal of Milford National School, all teachers and other staff members, employees, agents and contractors of the School (hereinafter collectively called "the Parties")

I/We am/are the parent/s and guardian/s of () being a pupil of Milford National School, Milford, Castletroy, in the County of Limerick, the said child having a () condition. I/We have requested the School to store emergency medication for the treatment of my/our child's condition, at the School and/ or have requested and authorised the School to provide for the application of the medication by a nominated member of staff of the School, as circumstances require.

I/We irrevocably authorise and request the School to give the following assistance to our/my child without any prior notice to me/ us:

(Insert details)

I/We acknowledge that the above facility provided by the School is on a purely voluntary basis and without any obligation whatsoever on the part of the School. In consideration of the School facilitating me/us as stipulated in paragraph 1 above, I/we hereby indemnify all of the above Parties, their respective executors, administrators and/or assigns as the case may be, in respect of all losses, claims, demands, actions or proceedings whatsoever arising under any statute or common law in respect of personal injury or injury of any nature whatsoever arising out of or in the course of or caused directly or indirectly by the storage of the said medication by or at the School and /or application of the said medication to my/our child. We will ensure that the medication is within the expiry date.

Dated this day of 200

Signed by

(NAME)

in the presence of:-