

Talbot Senior National School



Substance Misuse Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy deals with the potential misuse of illegal or inappropriate substances within our school community. It applies to pupils, parents/guardians, all staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the school premises. 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 Tour.

Mission Statement

Our School aims to provide a happy, secure, friendly, learning environment, where children, parents, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and Board of Management work in partnership. Each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive atmosphere.

Rationale

The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of pupils 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' (November 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies. This policy was formulated to conform with these guidelines and is deemed to be a mandatory school policy by the Department of Education.

Aims and Objectives

Through the implementation of this policy we are endeavouring to:

- To provide a comprehensive programme of education for all pupils in substance use issues through the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Curriculum
- To provide a safe and healthy Primary School environment.
- 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 manage incidents of substance misuse in a clear and consistent manner
- 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 support all stakeholders in understanding and addressing substance misuse.
- To involve members of the wider community – e.g. Community Garda, School Nurse in the education process.

Scope of the Policy

Definition of a Substance

The term "substance" will be interpreted in the widest possible sense to include the following: (This list is not exhaustive)

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- E-cigarettes
- Vapes
- Legal and/or illegal drugs (including over-the-counter/prescribed medication)
- Other dangerous substances
- Other substances that are deemed not appropriate for school-going children

Definition of Substance Use

Incidents involving substance use might include: (This list is not exhaustive)

- Use or suspected use of substances on the school premises or during a school-related activity
- Intoxication or any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs
- Disclosure about use of substances
- Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia
- The possession, sale or supply of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs on school grounds or at school related activities
- Disposal of drugs or related items (e.g. syringes) on school property.

Smoking/Vaping, Alcohol and Illicit Drugs and Solvents Use in the School

i. Smoking/Vaping

The smoking of tobacco, e-cigarettes, vapes, illegal substances is prohibited by law in a school building or its premises. The use of and possession of tobacco, e-cigarettes, vapes, illegal substances, controlled substances etc. is strictly prohibited for all pupils.

ii. Alcohol

The school is an alcohol free area. The use of and possession of alcohol is strictly prohibited for all pupils.

iii. Illicit Drugs and Solvents

Pupils, parents/guardians, staff and visitors are forbidden from being in possession of or using illegal drugs or solvents in the school premises. Illegal drugs found on school premises will be locked away and the Gardaí contacted to dispose of them. Staff are strongly advised not to transport illicit substances at any time.

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

The school will respond to incidents involving substance use in a planned and considered way. See Appendix 1. 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. Incidents involving pupils relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use are addressed in the school's Code of Behaviour and pupils may be suspended or expelled if involved in any such incidents.

- The use of and possession of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vapes, illegal substances, controlled substances etc. is strictly prohibited for all pupils.
- If a staff member is of the opinion that a pupil is under the influence or finds a pupil in possession of alcohol, illicit drugs or solvents, s/he will immediately inform the principal and consult on what action should be taken. Parents/Guardians will be notified. The Gardaí and Tusla will be contacted. The Chairperson of the BOM will be notified. An Incident Report should be kept on the pupil's file on Aladdin.
- If a staff member appears to be under the influence of a substance or in possession of illicit drugs or solvents, it will be reported to the Principal who will act in accordance with mandatory DES and school procedures. The Chairperson of the BOM will be notified. An Incident Report will be kept in the staff member's HR file on Aladdin/filing cabinet in the principal's office.
- If an adult appears to be under the influence of a substance when coming to collect a pupil, it must be reported to the principal. The pupil's safety is paramount and they should not be allowed to leave the school with the adult. The principal will telephone the pupil's alternative contacts on Aladdin to arrange for another adult to come to collect the pupil. If there is nobody available to collect the pupil the principal will contact Tusla/Gardaí.
- 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 and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

Other courses of action that will be considered may include

- Seeking advice from outside agencies i.e. Drugs Task Forces such as Local Drugs and Alcohol Task Force
- Seeking advice from outside agencies i.e. TUSLA/Duty Social Worker
- Convening an emergency Board of Management meeting if the drug related issue
- Providing an appropriate medical or first aid response if required. There are trained First Aid Responders (FAR) within the school. Outside medical assistance may be required and the emergency services will be contacted if this is the case.

Responsibilities of Stakeholders

This policy addresses substance use issues in respect of pupils, school staff, parents/guardians, BOM and others involved in the school.

Pupils

- To comply with the school's Code of Behaviour and this policy.

Parents/Guardians

- The school wishes to make clear that the primary role of substance misuse prevention rests with the parents/guardians.
- As a courtesy to our pupils, the school asks that parents/guardians do not smoke or vape outside of the school walls at drop-off and collection time.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed of an incident involving their own child and will be asked to accept responsibility, co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardaí if necessary.
- Parents/Guardians will be involved in incidents involving another child only if deemed necessary by the school authorities.
- If parents/guardians are aware that another child is involved in drug-related incidents under the scope of this policy they should inform their child's class teacher or the Principal.

- Parent-teacher meetings may not proceed if a party is clearly under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In this event, the relevant staff will conclude the meeting immediately and consult with the principal for further action.

Staff

- School staff should be role models for pupils through their professional conduct and by being positive influences.
- Particular sensitivity is required when teaching about substance abuse, as some children may be living in situations where there is a dependency on some substance or behaviour
- 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.
- Staff should fully recognise and acknowledge that education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs is most effective if provided in the broader context of the SPHE programme which is developmental and delivered in the context of a safe and supportive whole-school environment. In this regard, substance misuse prevention will be taught through the medium of the "Walk Tall" programme. Staff should refer to our school's SPHE policy for information regarding the delivery and implementation of the "Walk Tall" programme.
- Staff should avail of in-service and should keep up to date with current information and programme manuals.
- Should the 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 shall ask that person to remove them self from the workplace, 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.
- If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe any person is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report their belief promptly to the Principal who shall ask that person to remove them self from the workplace.
- 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 said pupil, the Principal should be informed promptly.

Board of Management (BOM)

- 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.
- The BOM should be informed of storage of solvents, prescribed medicines in accordance with Health & Safety Statements.
- This policy will be supported by an ongoing commitment from the Board of Management to training and staff development
- The Board should implement, ratify, monitor and evaluate this policy.
- The BOM should make decisions involving critical incidents, in accordance with the critical incident policy.

- The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers. An Employee Assistance Service (telephone: 1800 411 057 or e-mail: <https://wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life/login?org=yVIIU17>) is available to school staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the teaching 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 appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

External Workers

- In the event that there are external maintenance contractors or similar doing work in the school who require a smoking break etc, they will be asked to take their break outside of the school premises and out of sight from the pupils
- Should the 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 shall ask the contractor to remove their employee from the workplace.

Outside Agencies

- The school has established a good rapport with the local Gardaí and will invite representatives from the local Gardaí to speak with senior pupils.
- Gardaí will be informed about any serious substance abuse incidents.
- When available, external guest speakers may be sourced to talk to classes about substance misuse.

Medical Interventions

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

- There may be some instances where pupils require medication for health reasons. In this situation, the Administration of Medicine Policy should be consulted.
- '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.
- First Aid training has been given staff members to assist with medical emergencies.
- Copies of all relevant phone numbers are provided in Appendix 2.

Training and Staff Development

Advice may be sought from Oide advisers in the Health and Wellbeing Team regarding the delivery of the SPHE curriculum within the school or similar external resources to assist in staff professional development in this area.

Links to Other School Policies

School policies need to be consistent with one another, within the framework of the overall School Plan. The following policies may be relevant in the context of substance use:

- Code of Behaviour
- Administration of Medicine
- Health and Safety Statement
- Critical Incident Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- SPHE

Success Criteria

- Successful implementation of this policy.
- Awareness of all stakeholders increased throughout school community around substance use and misuse.
- Coherence throughout school community by procedures being implemented in case of substance use and misuse.

Implementation and Review

Implementation

This plan will be implemented in June 2026.

Review

The plan will be monitored and evaluated at regular Staff meetings. It will be reviewed in 2029/2030 School Year unless an earlier review is warranted.

Communication and Ratification

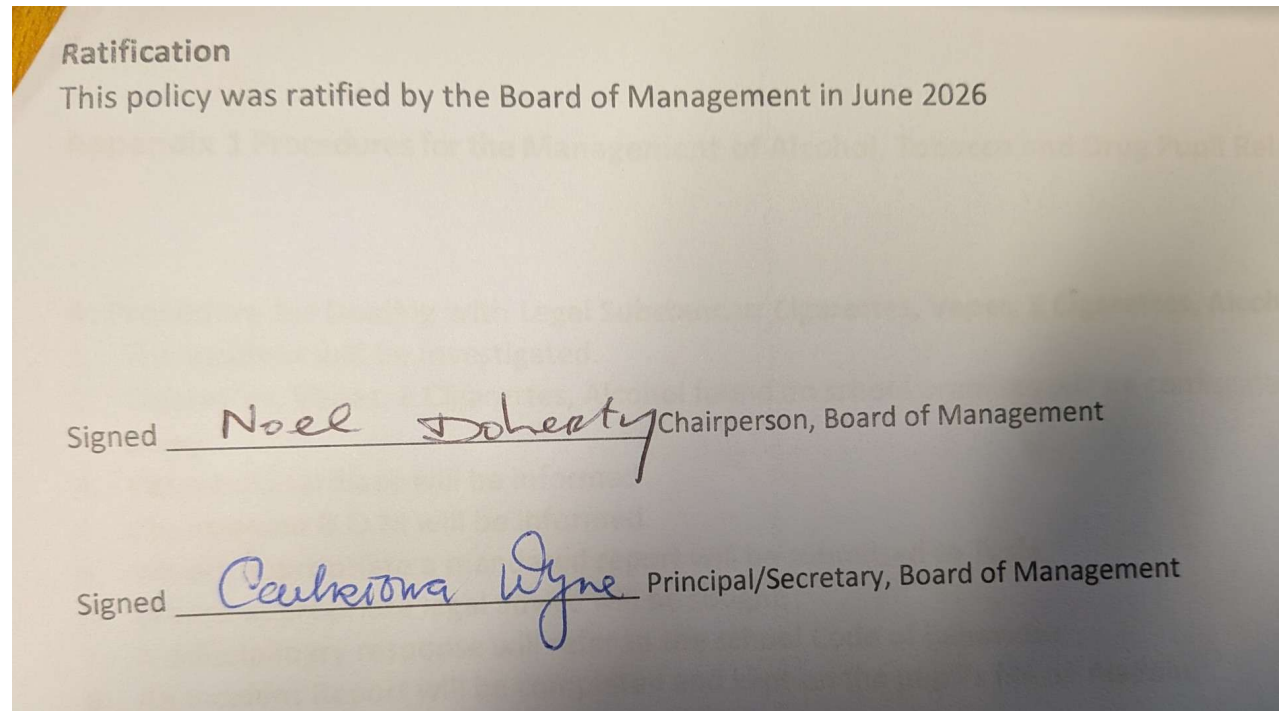
Communication

This policy is made available as part of the whole school plan. The whole plan is also available in the school office for viewing. This policy will be communicated to the school community by the following means:

- Board of Management/Other Staff members via hardcopy in office, email and Shared Drive
- Parents/Guardians via hardcopy in School Development Plan in the Office and also via School Website

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in June 2026



Appendix 1 Procedures for the Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Pupil Related Incidents

A: Procedure for Dealing with Legal Substances: Cigarettes, Vapes, E Cigarettes, Alcohol

1. The incident will be Investigated.
2. Cigarettes, Vapes, E Cigarettes, Alcohol found on school premises will be confiscated and locked away.
3. Parents/Guardians will be informed
4. Chairperson B.O.M will be informed.
5. Where appropriate a mandated report will be submitted to Tusla.
6. Where appropriate legal advice will be sought.
7. A disciplinary response will refer to the school Code of Behaviour.
8. An Incident Report will be completed and kept on the pupil's file on Aladdin.

B: Procedure for Dealing with Illegal Substances: Illegal drugs and Substances

1. The incident will be Investigated.
2. Illegal drugs found on school premises will be confiscated and locked away.
3. Parents/Guardians will be informed
4. Chairperson B.O.M will be informed.
5. Garda will be informed.
6. A mandated report will be submitted to Tusla.
7. Where appropriate legal advice will be sought.
8. A disciplinary response will refer to the school Code of Behaviour.
9. An Incident Report will be completed and kept on the pupil's file on Aladdin.

Legal Substances: Cigarettes, Vapes, E Cigarettes, Alcohol	Illegal Substances: Illegal drugs and Solvents
1. The incident will be Investigated	1. The incident will be Investigated.
2. Items confiscated and locked away.	2. Items confiscated and locked away.
3. Inform Parents/Guardians	3. Inform Parents/Guardians.
4. Inform Chairperson B.O.M	4. Inform Chairperson B.O.M
5. Inform Tusla and/or seek legal advice where appropriate	5. Inform Gardaí
6. Follow the procedures in the Code of Behaviour	6. Mandated report will be submitted to Tusla

7. An Incident Report should be kept on the pupil's file on Aladdin.	7. Seek legal advice where appropriate
	8. Follow the procedures in the Code of Behaviour
	9. An Incident Report should be kept on the pupil's file on Aladdin.

Appendix 2 Useful Contact Numbers

N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous)	01 6728000
Tusla	016400665
Gardaí (Clondalkin)	016667600
Employee Assistance Scheme	1800 411 057
HSE	1800700700
Clondalkin Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force.	01457 9445
Deansrath Family Centre	01-4574069
A.A. Alcoholics Anonymous	01842 0700