



# Substance Use Policy

## Substance Use Policy of Tramore Educate Together National School

### Aims of Policy:

The aim of the substance use policy of Tramore ETNS is primary prevention. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs. We aim to develop in our pupils' better self-esteem, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils age appropriate information from educational programmes.

### Relationship to School's Mission, Vision and Aims:

The characteristic spirit of Tramore ETNS has been developed and agreed with our partners in education. Tramore ETNS seeks to promote healthy lifestyles for all in a safe, supportive and non-threatening environment. This vision of a Health Promoting School is promoted and enhanced by the implementation of an agreed policy governing substance use.

### Rationale

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 National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 sets out a detailed programme of action to be implemented by Government Departments and Agencies to combat the very serious problem of drug misuse in our society. The strategy highlights the important contribution that schools can make in the area of education and prevention, and requires them to have substance use policies in place.

The National Drugs Strategy, 'Building on Experience', is now Government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place. The school authority in Tramore ETNS has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and the criminal law.

### Scope of the Policy:

**Definition of substance:** For the purpose of this policy the term "substance" should be interpreted in the widest possible sense to include alcohol, tobacco, legal/illegal drugs and over the counter/prescribed medication and other dangerous substances.

**To whom does the policy apply?** While this policy addresses substance use issues in respect of students, the policy applies also to teaching and other school staff, parents/guardians, users of the school building during school time and during all school related activities and others insofar as measures under the policy relate to them.

**When will the policy apply?** During school time (including break times) and to all school related activities.

**Where does the policy apply?** This policy applies to all school activities both on and off the school grounds (tours, excursion, etc.).

## **Policy Content:**

### **Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents**

Education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs is most effective if provided in the broader context of a Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme which is developmental and delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment. More specifically the mandatory programmes Walk Tall/Stay Safe/RSE will further aid the transfer of information in a positive and health promoting context and promote self-esteem. The content of the SPHE curriculum and its structured implementation can be viewed in the relevant section of the school plan.

The school is a no smoking area. Students are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on the school premises or in any other place. Pupils found smoking on school premises will be reported to the Principal and parents will be informed. Parents/guardians and other adults will comply with the no smoking policy.

Incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use are addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour and the Admissions and Participation Policy and pupils may be suspended or expelled if involved in any drug related incident.

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use may include:

- Use or suspected use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco on the school premises or during a 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

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 the assistance of a support agency/legal advice. Due care will be important in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. The decision of the Board of Management will be final in this matter.

In the event of a report to the school concerning use and/or supply of illegal drugs off the school premises appropriate guidance may be sought from supporting agencies.

The school policy hereby informs school staff about the need for confidentiality and appropriate reporting procedures.

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

**Step 1:** Witness to drug related incident informs teacher/staff member/Principal

**Step 2:** The Principal must be informed of any incident/disclosure and the incident documented in the incident book.

**Step 3:** Principal inform parents/guardians

**Step 4:** Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management

**Step 5:** Gardaí informed depending on seriousness of incident

**Step 6:** Area Health Board may be informed if necessary for disposal of items

Parents/ legal guardians are recognised as Primary caregivers and are as such instrumental in the formation and promotion of positive health behaviours. Parental support is therefore imperative in the transmission of the positive and health promoting messages of the SPHE curriculum and especially in the mandatory programmes of Walk Tall/Stay Safe/RSE. Parents will be involved by accepting the school's Code of Behaviour and Admissions and Participation Policies and this Substance Use Policy.

Parents 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 will be involved in incidents involving another child only if deemed necessary by the school authorities; if parents are aware that another child is involved in drug-related incidents under the scope of this policy they should inform the teacher, Principal or a Board member.

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Ratify this policy
- Implement this policy
- Monitor and evaluate it
- To sponsor/provide training for staff members
- Make decisions involving critical incidents
- To deal with the media in the event of a critical incident.

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

- In the event of administration of medicines please refer to The Administration of Medicines Policy and the individual case files contained therein.
- In the event of the administration of First Aid the Health and Safety Policy Guidelines for the administration of First Aid will apply.
- In the event of a Critical Incident where medical intervention is required the Ambulance will be contacted through the emergency services.
- Copies of all relevant phone numbers are attached (see Appendix 1).
- The Board of Management is currently devising a Critical Incident Policy.

The school will establish an excellent rapport with the local Garda station and will invite representatives from the local Garda station to speak with senior pupils.

At local level the following support agencies are available to which students involved in substance misuse might be referred:

- N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous)
- Child Care & Family Support Services
- Drug Education Officer
- Drug Helpline
- Juvenile Liaison Officer
- Community Garda

In the event of media interest in relation to a 'drug related incident', the matter will be referred to the Board of Management and the agent of the Board designated as Media liaison officer as outlined in the Critical Incident Policy will issue a prepared statement to the media in accordance with the terms outlined in the Critical Incident Policy.

**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. An intoxicant as defined in the Health, Safety and Welfare Act includes “alcohol and drugs and any combination of drugs or of drugs and alcohol.” 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, 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.

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, 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 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 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, as per the school’s Child Protection Policy.

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.

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: [eam@vhics.ie](mailto:eam@vhics.ie)) is available to teaching 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 the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

In the event of a function/event taking place on the school premises outside of school hours where alcohol were to be present the Board of Management must be notified in advance of the event/function and the approval of the Board sought.

**Review/Ratification/Communication:**

This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years and amended as necessary.