



# SCOIL BHRÍDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## Substance Use Policy

*Updated May 2025*

### Introductory Statement

This policy deals with the potential misuse of illegal or inappropriate substances within the school community. The policy was reviewed in April 2025.

### Scope of Policy

This policy applies to students, teachers, auxiliary staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e., every person entering 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 Tour.

### Parents/guardians, staff, external workers

- The use of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vapes, illegal substances is prohibited by law in a school building or its premises.
- In the event that there are external maintenance contractors or similar doing work in the school who require a cigarette break etc., they will be asked to take their break outside of the school premises and out of sight from the pupils
- 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
- 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.

### Pupils

- The use of and possession of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vapes, illegal substances, controlled substances etc. is strictly prohibited for all pupils. See below for school procedures in relation to this event taking place.
- In line with the Scope of this policy, pupils are reminded that this policy will apply to pupils during school time (including break times) and to all school related activities to include sporting activities, school tours, fieldtrips etc.
- There may be some instances where pupils require medication, natural herb remedies or other substances for health reasons. In this situation, the Administration of Medicine policy

should be consulted. As part of this policy, staff will ensure that any arrangement is safe for all involved.

- In line with the Scope of this policy, pupils are reminded that
- Note: non-alcoholic beer or wine, malt drinks, spirits, fake cigarettes are not permitted at school

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 substances that are deemed not appropriate for school-going children

### **Aims of Policy**

The aim of the Substance Use policy of Scoil Bhríde 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, E-cigarettes, vapes, 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.

### **Rationale**

It is necessary to formulate a policy on substance use because:

- The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges that affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco, drugs and other substances 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 issues that can be both sensitive and emotive.
- 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, which is Government policy, 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 (Action 43).

Full details of the updated National Drugs Strategy can be found below:

[gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) - Reducing Harm. Supporting Recovery 2017-2025 ([www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie))

The school authority in Scoil Bhríde has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with the criminal law.

## **Monitoring and Review Procedures**

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated if necessary.

## **Education Concerning substance use**

In Scoil Bhríde, we fully recognise and acknowledge that 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 safe and supportive whole-school environment. In this regard, substance misuse prevention will be covered/taught through the medium of the revised "Walk Tall" programme launched during the school year 2016-2017 <http://pdst.ie/walktall>. (Please also refer to our school's SPHE policy for information regarding the delivery and implementation of the "Walk Tall" programme). Class teachers will teach the Walk Tall Programme within the school. When available, external guest speakers may be sourced to talk to classes about substance misuse.

## **Policy Content**

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

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/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 substance use in a planned and considered way.

The following reporting procedure will be followed within the school:

Step 1: The witness to substance related incident informs teacher or staff member who in turn informs the principal.

Step 2: The principal inform parents/guardians (if concerning a student in the school) and will liaise with relevant parties on an appropriate response

Step 3: The local Gardaí may be informed depending on seriousness of the incident

Step 4: The HSE will be contacted to remove any substance related paraphernalia (if applicable/relevant).

Other courses of action that will be considered may include

- Seeking advice from outside agencies i.e. Drugs Task Forces such as Midland Regional.
- HSE Drugs and Alcohol Helpline 1800 459 459

- Seeking advice from outside agencies i.e TUSLA/Duty Social Worker
- Convening an emergency Board of Management meeting if the drug related issue is concerning a staff member.
- Providing an appropriate medical or first aid response if required. There are trained first aiders within the school. Outside medical assistance may be required and the emergency services will be contacted if this is the case.
- Liaising with the media. The school Critical Incident policy may be consulted in this situation

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

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

**Step 2:** Principal inform parents/guardians

**Step 3:** Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management

**Step 4:** Gardaí informed depending on seriousness of incident

**Step 5:** Area Health Board informed for disposal of items

Parents will be involved by accepting the school's Code of Behaviour and Enrolment Policies. They 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:

- '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.
- The school also has a Critical Incident Policy.

Whether or not to inform the Gardaí 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:

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

1800 459 459

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 Chairperson will issue a prepared statement to the media.

### **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.

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.

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: [eas@vhics.ie](mailto:eas@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 counseling 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.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Important Contact Numbers**

CADS Treatment Centre Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore 057 93 15801.

Drugs Advisory and Treatment Centre 01 677 1122  
Trinity Court, 30/31 Pearse Street, Dublin 2

#### **Drugs/AIDS Services:**

South Western Area Health Board, 01 620 6400  
Bridge House, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10

East Coast Area Health Board, 01 280 3335  
Centenary House, Dun Laoghaire

Northern Area Health Board, 01 882 0300  
Phisboro Tower, Dublin 7

Alcohol Services 01 660 7838  
East Coast Area Health Board:  
Baggot Street Community Alcohol Treatment Unit

**Board of Management Ratification**

This policy is hereby ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde Primary School.

Signed: *Níchoíá Hogan*

Date: *6<sup>th</sup> May 2025*

(Nichola Hogan Chairperson of BOM)