



## ST BRIGID'S GNS KILLESTER

### Substance Use Policy

#### THE SCHOOL POSITION

St. Brigid's GNS is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and vapes. The policy has been drawn up and accepted by the Principal, Teachers, Parents/Guardians, Board of Management and Students. It is necessary that all involved work together to implement this policy. It is vital that parents/guardians actively work with the school to implement this policy to ensure their children's health and safety. In this policy "Drug" means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The school recognises that tobacco, vapes, alcohol and drugs, both legal and illegal are available in the local community and that the school, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support as well as the handling of any incidents pertaining to the use of tobacco, vapes, alcohol and drugs.

#### THE SCHOOL ETHOS

St. Brigid's GNS is committed to enabling students to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, cultural and physical potential. It is also committed to fostering the development of personal responsibility. This is the ethos which guides the School Substance Abuse Policy.

The policy is focused in four key areas:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco, Vape and Drug Education Programmes.
2. Managing tobacco, vape, alcohol and drug related incidents should they arise.
3. Training and Staff Development.
4. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation.

#### **1. Alcohol, Tobacco, Vape and Drug Education Programmes.**

The School is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco, Vape and Drug Education Programme for all students.

Our educational aims are:

- To increase the self-esteem and confidence of our students.
- 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 tobacco, vape, alcohol and drugs.

These aims will be achieved by:

1. There being an S.P.H.E. Co-ordinator to oversee the delivery of age appropriate programmes of education such as Walk Tall and Stay Safe.
2. Teachers being offered SPHE training or any relevant training which becomes available
3. Outside speakers and agencies, such as An Garda Síochana, are used where appropriate to reinforce the work done in class.
4. Parents/Guardians being consulted on the need for education around substance use and being informed of what is happening in the School.
5. Student Drug Education will be achieved through:
  - SPHE Programme
  - Science
  - Outside speakers where appropriate.

### **School rules governing substance use**

- The use of alcohol by any person on any part of school property or during school related activities off campus, is forbidden.
- The use of tobacco by any person in any part of the school building or grounds is forbidden in compliance with statutory law.
- The use of vapes or any nicotine substances by any person in any part of the school building or grounds is forbidden in compliance with statutory law.
- The misuse of solvents is forbidden.
- The use of illegal drugs by any person in any part of the school property or during school related activities off campus is strictly forbidden.

## **2. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, Vape & Drug Related Incidents**

We acknowledge that in all situations involving tobacco, vape, alcohol or drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the student, the needs of the school community, the feelings of the parent(s) the reputation of the school and any legal considerations.

In assessing and responding to an incident of tobacco, vaping, alcohol or drug use school personnel will:

- Act promptly discreetly and calmly
- Take time to listen and investigate before responding.

- Separate fact from rumour.
- Immediately confiscate any items or paraphernalia
- Complete an incident report.
- Contact the child's parents/guardians
- Where any illegal substances are involved, contact the Gardaí for advice and/or action
- Refer a child and or family to a support agency if and/or where appropriate
- Inform the board of management who may opt to seek legal advice or action

A limited number of people are involved in all suspected or confirmed incidents. People will be informed on a "need to know" basis. All written records will be held confidentially by the Principal or Deputy Principal. Parents/Guardians will be involved. They will be informed sensitively and support offered to them.

Confidentiality is a complex issue. It is important that the limits of confidentiality are discussed with students before any disclosure is made. The well-being and welfare of students and teachers must be a primary focus.

The Principal or Deputy Principal will handle any media enquiries. They will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and procedures in place to manage any incident.

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

Incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. These will be fair, humane and consistent with school rules.

### **3. Training and Staff Development**

All school personnel will be offered any in-service training as it becomes available.

All staff members will have access to a copy of this policy document.

### **4. Monitoring the Policy, Review and Evaluation**

The SPHE Co-Ordinator will monitor the policy regularly to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the School. The result will be recorded and made available to the Principal.

#### **Evaluation**

Teachers, Parents/Guardians, Students and the Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for one year.

#### **Dissemination of Policy**

Copies of this policy are available to all members of the school community on request.

### **School Employees and Substance Misuse**

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/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/deputy principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the work place. Disciplinary procedures may ensue.

Should the principal/deputy principal have reason to believe an employee of a contractor is unfit for work due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the principal/ deputy principal shall ask the contractor to remove the employee from the work-place. Any other school employee who believes an employee of a contractor in unfit for work due being under the influence of an intoxicant, he/she should report concerns to the principal or deputy principal and if upon the investigation this proves correct, the principal will ask the person to remove themselves from the work place or require the contractor to remove the person from the work place.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a parent or adult collecting a child from school or presenting themselves on the school premises for any other reason is unfit to be on the premises or to take care of said pupil, the principal or deputy principal will be informed. The duty of care is to the child and any necessary steps to safeguard and protect the pupil will be taken.

In the event that any person asked to remove themselves from the school premises refuses to do so, the principal or deputy principal may call the Gardaí to assist.

The board of management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all staff members. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and /or attendance of any member of staff, the board may request that person to seek counselling or other professional help.

All incidents relating to the presence of persons at school under the influence of an intoxicant shall be recorded and reported as soon as is reasonable to the board of management. The board will then consider all such reports and decide on the most appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

Ratified by the Board of Management of St.Brigid's GNS on 3rd October 2023

Signature of Chairperson: *Carmel Reid*