**Rahealty National School – Substance Abuse Policy**

Introduction

As stated in the school ethos, we at Rahealty NS strive to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. We are committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs and substance abuse.

This policy has been drawn up by the staff and it is imperative that the principal, teachers, parents/guardians, Board of Management and other relevant personal work together to implement this policy.

In this policy the term ‘drug’ refers ‘any chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels ‘. It 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.

This policy applies to parents, pupils, Board of Management and to all staff in Rahealty National School as well as persons involved in school related activates both during school and at extracurricular activities taking place on the premises.

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 and drugs is unfortunately a reality. Schools need to ensure that their pupils are educated in this area and that the school is equipped to respond appropriately to sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.
* The Education Act 1998 provides that the 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’ underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies.
* The 1999 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) Report3 highlighted the seriousness of the problem among sixteen year olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 29 ESPAD countries surveyed.
* Alcohol was identified as being the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland whilst the use of tobacco and other drugs was above the ESPAD average.

Objective

The objective of this policy is to provide the school with a framework for dealing with substance abuse and to educate the pupils in the dangers of substance abuse.

1. **Education**

Pupils will be educated during their weekly SPHE lessons. During these lessons children will have the opportunity to make informed responsible choices, to provide appropriate information on substances and how people can abuse them, to become aware of peer pressure and to practise decision making.

Where possible we would welcome outside speakers into the school to talk to the children on relevant topics in this area.

Parents will be made aware and informed of what is happening in the school with drug education.

1. **Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents**

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use might 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
* Other

The **procedure** for such incidents is:

* All confirmed or suspected incidents must be reported to the principal. If the principal if absent it will be reported to the deputy principal.
* Parents/guardians will be informed immediately and support will be offered.
* The Gardaí/health services will be contacted if deemed necessary.
* The Board of Management will be informed.
* All reports and written documentation will be completed and will be held by the principal.

**Confidentiality**

It is vital that confidentiality is adhered to at all time to protect the parties involved. The well being of those involved is the main concern of the school. People will be informed on a need to know basis.

**The Use of Drugs in School**

**Alcohol** may not be consumed or stored in the school or grounds except in the following circumstances:

* School functions and other functions approved by the BOM
* As presentations/gifts

**Tobacco**is not permitted in the school buildings or grounds

**Administration of medicine:**

The Board of Management of Rahealty National School states that no teacher can be required to administer medicine or drugs to a pupil. Any teacher who is willing to administer medicines should do so under strictly controlled guidelines, confident that the administration will be safe. This will be limited to emergency situations only. A teacher who does take responsibility for administrating medicines takes on a heavy legal duty of care to discharge the responsibility correctly.

Parent(s) of the pupil concerned should write to the Board of Management requesting the Board to authorise a member of staff to administer medication. The request should also contain written instructions of the procedure to be followed. A teacher should not administer medication without the specific authorisation from the Board.

In emergencies teachers should do no more than is obviously necessary to relieve distress or prevent further harm. Qualified medical treatment should be secured at the earliest opportunity.

1. **Provision for Training and Staff Development**

The principal will make the staff aware of any training that is available to help them deliver the SPHE programme to children.

First Aid training will take place for on the 27th February 2016 for all staff members, members of the BOM and parents association.

The school will provide information regarding information evenings or workshops relating to drugs to parents.

**Timeframe**

This policy was revised in January 2016. The completed policy will be circulated to staff member in the school and to the Board of Management at their next meeting.

The policy will be implemented from March 2016.

It will be reviewed in March 2018 or before that if deemed necessary.

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Mrs Mae Quinn (Chairperson of BOM) (Principal) Mrs. Edel Kelly**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**