



Substance Use Policy

Reviewed June 2026

Introduction

Substance use poses risks to health, wellbeing, safety and learning. For the purposes of this policy, a substance refers to any chemical that alters the functioning of the body physically, mentally or emotionally. This includes alcohol, tobacco products, vaping devices, illegal drugs, solvents and the misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medication.

The school recognises that exposure to substances exists within the wider community and has a responsibility to provide preventative education, support and appropriate responses to incidents. This policy does not replace the school's Administration of Medication Policy, which governs the safe use of prescribed medication for pupils.

Summary

p.2 Applies to:	to all pupils, staff, parents, visitors, contractors and volunteers.
p.2 When:	It applies during school hours, on school premises, during school transport, tours, extracurricular activities and any event representing the school, whether on or off site.
p.3-4 Prevention & Education	Delivered through the Wellbeing/SPHE Curriculum from the Department of Education. Lesson content is primarily found in government-approved programmes such as 'Walk Tall'. When necessary, the school will supplement these with age-appropriate lessons <u>Lessons outside of government publications must be approved by school management first</u> Parents/guardians will be informed of lesson content annually prior to commencement.
p.5-6 Management of Incidents	Procedure on page 5 should be followed in relation to any Substance-Related Incident including the use of the Incident Report Form in Appendix 2. <u>School staff will not conduct invasive searches of pupils or their belongings</u> Gardaí may be contacted and Safeguarding Procedures may be followed if appropriate. All incidents will be treated with the strictest confidentiality, but cannot be guaranteed where there are concerns relating to child protection, criminal activity or safety.
p.5-6 Incidents involving students	Following the initial management of the incident, consequences will be applied in accordance with the nature and seriousness of the offence. These responses will be fair, humane, and aligned with the school's code of positive behaviour. This may include in-house support and/or referral to outside agencies
p.5-6 Incidents involving others	Staff: may be directed to leave the workplace where they are considered unfit for duty. Disciplinary procedures may apply. Employee Assistance Service may be recommended. All incidents are recorded and reported to DDLETB. Parent/guardian or other adult: may be directed to leave the premises. Any necessary actions to safeguard and protect the pupil will be taken. Contractor/employee: may be asked to leave the premises.

Rationale

The Board of Management recognises its statutory duty to provide a safe, healthy and supportive learning environment for all pupils, staff and visitors.

Schools are required under the Education Act 1998 to promote pupils' social and personal development and provide health education. Substance use prevention is delivered through the SPHE curriculum and the Wellbeing Specification of the Primary Curriculum Framework (2025), which includes 'Substances' as a strand unit within Health Education. This policy is informed by Department guidelines on school substance use policies and by the national drugs strategy, which recognises schools as key settings for prevention and early intervention.

The Board also has obligations under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and the Children First Act 2015 to ensure the safety of all persons on the premises and to respond appropriately where substance misuse may pose a safeguarding concern.

The Board acknowledges that exposure to substances is a reality in contemporary society and that primary schools play a vital role in developing protective factors such as resilience, decision-making skills and help-seeking behaviours. While primary pupils are rarely directly involved in substance misuse, early preventative education reduces future risk, particularly given increasing exposure to vaping products and alcohol marketing.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide preventative education through the Wellbeing curriculum
- Promote healthy choices and protective factors
- Ensure clear procedures for responding to incidents
- Safeguard the welfare of pupils and staff
- Support parents as partners in promoting wellbeing
- Ensure compliance with legislation and Department guidance

The policy adopts a whole school approach that is preventative, educational, supportive and proportionate, recognising that primary aged children require protection, guidance and care rather than punitive responses.

Scope & Definitions

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, parents, visitors, contractors and volunteers. It applies during school hours, on school premises, during school transport, tours, extracurricular activities and any event representing the school, whether on or off site.

A substance (drug) is any chemical that alters physical, mental or emotional functioning, including, but not limited to:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| • Alcohol | • Illegal drugs |
| • Tobacco/nicotine products | • New psychoactive substances |
| • E-cigarettes / vapes | • Misuse of prescription medication |
| • Cannabis | • Over-the-counter misuse |
| • Solvents (substances that give off fumes/vapours that can be inhaled including aerosols, glue, paints, butane gas, etc) | • Drug paraphernalia |

Nothing in this policy prevents the legitimate administration or possession of prescribed medication authorised under the school's Administration of Medication Policy

Links to Other Policies

This policy operates in conjunction with:

- Code of Positive Behaviour
- Bí Cineálta (Anti-Bullying) Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Administration of Medication Policy
- Safety Statement
- Critical Incidents Policy

Prevention & Education

Substance use education is delivered annually through a developmentally appropriate, spiral programme across all class levels in line with the Primary Curriculum Framework, with a focus on building protective factors, resilience and decision-making skills.

In line with government guidelines, the school's approach emphasises developmentally appropriate, skills-based, teacher-led prevention education. Programmes are delivered by class teachers as part of the SPHE/Wellbeing curriculum and a whole-school wellbeing approach, rather than through isolated or once-off interventions (Morgan, 2001; DES Circular 0022/2010). Adequate time allocation is protected where possible. All students must be present for the associated lessons. Fear-based or sensationalist approaches are avoided, as they are considered ineffective and potentially counterproductive.

Lesson content is primarily found in government-approved programmes such as 'Walk Tall'. When necessary, the school will supplement these with age-appropriate lessons addressing emerging issues such as vaping, energy drinks, medicines misuse, online influences and community exposure to substances, using a skills-based and wellbeing-focused approach. Lessons outside of government publications must be approved by school management first.

Our educational objectives are to:

- Enhance students' self-esteem and confidence.
- Equip students with essential personal and social skills.
- Empower students to make informed, healthy, and responsible choices.
- Provide accurate, age-appropriate information about tobacco, vaping, alcohol, and drugs.

These objectives will be achieved through:

1. Appointing an SPHE Co-ordinator to oversee the delivery of age-appropriate programmes such as *Walk Tall* and *Stay Safe*.
2. Offering relevant SPHE and substance awareness training to teaching staff.
3. External speakers, such as An Garda Síochána, may complement the curriculum but will not replace teacher-led SPHE instruction.
4. Consulting with parents/guardians on substance use education and keeping them informed about school initiatives.
5. Parents/guardians will be informed of lesson content annually prior to commencement.
6. Drug awareness sessions for parents may be organised periodically.
7. A range of Wellbeing initiatives are implemented
8. Positive Behaviour/restorative approaches are used
9. Integrating substance use education across multiple platforms, including:
 - The Wellbeing Specification
 - The Science Curriculum
 - Contributions from external speakers, where appropriate.
10. Teaching may also address online safety issues related to substances, including social media influence, online marketing, online challenges and the potential risks associated with purchasing substances online.

External Speakers

The use of external speakers:

- Must align with Wellbeing/SPHE objectives
- Must be pre-approved by the principal
- Must occur in the presence of a teacher
- No standalone drug talks will be used

Whole-School Approach

Substance prevention is delivered through:

Tier 1 — Universal

- SPHE / Wellbeing lessons
- Positive school climate
- Safety education

Tier 2 — Targeted

- Additional support for vulnerable pupils
- Small group work
- Parental engagement

Tier 3 — Intensive

- Safeguarding procedures
- External agency involvement

Trauma-Informed Approach

Staff recognise that some pupils may have personal experiences related to substance misuse. Teaching will therefore use neutral language, focus on safety, respect students' privacy and personal boundaries, and emphasise help-seeking, emotional safety and access to trusted supports.

Progression Summary

Year Band	Core Prevention Focus	Key Outcomes Emphasised
Infants	Safety, Body Awareness & Trusted Adults	Recognising danger, help-seeking
1–2	Healthy choices, Influences	Decision-making, safety rules
3–4	Peer Pressure, Media Influence	Assertiveness, media literacy
5–6	Pressures & Risk Awareness	Independent judgement, support awareness, help-seeking

Detailed learning outcomes, teaching content and lesson outlines will be developed and included in the school's SPHE/Wellbeing Curriculum Plan as part of its upcoming review. A brief overview of the relevant learning outlined in the Department of Education's Primary Wellbeing Curriculum Specifications is included in Appendix 1.

Guidance for pupils with additional needs

Content will be differentiated to meet the needs of pupils with additional educational needs. Support teachers may provide additional support in the teaching of learning outcomes during withdrawal lessons.

Management of Incidents

School Expectations Regarding Substance Use

In relation to substances, the following are prohibited:

- Possession
- Use
- Supply or attempted supply
- Being under the influence
- Possession of any paraphernalia

Smoking and vaping are prohibited anywhere on school grounds in accordance with national legislation.

Response to Substance-Related Incidents

Principles

- Safety is prioritised
- Responses are proportionate and supportive
- Safeguarding considerations take precedence and the school's Child Safeguarding Statement will be followed
- All incidents are documented

Procedure

1. Ensure immediate safety and medical attention if required. Where there is immediate concern regarding overdose, ingestion, unconsciousness or medical distress, emergency services will be contacted without delay. A First Aid Responder should provide appropriate assistance and monitoring until emergency personnel arrive.
2. Inform the Principal
3. Inform parents/guardians or next of kin/emergency contact.
4. Unknown substances will not be tested or handled unnecessarily and will be secured safely pending appropriate advice or collection.
5. Record incident on incident report sheet, Appendix 2.
6. Notify Chairperson of BOM and DDLETB if appropriate.
7. The principal will determine, based on the nature of the incident and Department guidance, whether Garda involvement is required.

School staff will not conduct invasive searches of pupils or their belongings. Where concerns arise regarding the presence of a suspected substance, pupils may be asked to voluntarily open bags or hand over items in the presence of two adults where possible. Parents/guardians will be informed or consulted, as appropriate. The school will act in accordance with Department of Education guidance and, where appropriate, seek advice or assistance from An Garda Síochána.

Disciplinary Procedures

Incidents involving breaches of school rules related to drugs, tobacco, vaping, or alcohol are often complex. Consequences will be applied in accordance with the nature and seriousness of the offence. These responses will be fair, humane, and aligned with the school's code of positive behaviour.

Support & Referral

The school will provide appropriate pastoral support to pupils affected by substance-related incidents.

Where appropriate, families may be referred to relevant services.

- HSE services
- Tusla
- Community Garda
- Counselling supports

Confidentiality & Safeguarding

Only a limited number of individuals will be involved in managing any suspected or confirmed incident, and information will be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis. All written records will be securely held by the principal. Parents/guardians will be informed sensitively and offered support.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where there are concerns relating to child protection, criminal activity or safety. In such circumstances, Child Safeguarding Procedures will be followed, and information will be shared on a need-to-know basis. The Designated Liaison Person will oversee safeguarding responses.

All media enquiries will be handled by the Principal. They will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school's established policies and procedures for managing such incidents.

School Employees, Parents & Visitors and Substance Misuse

In accordance with Section 13, Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005:

- Staff must not be under the influence at work.
- The principal may direct a staff member to leave the workplace where they are considered unfit for duty.
- Disciplinary procedures may apply.
- Employee Assistance Service may be recommended.

All incidents are recorded and reported to DDLETB.

Similarly, if the Principal has reason to believe that an employee of a contractor is under the influence of an intoxicant and unfit for work, they will request that the contractor remove the individual from the school premises. If any other school employee believes that a contractor's employee is unfit for work for the same reason, they should report their concerns to the Principal. If, following an investigation, the concerns are substantiated, the principal will take appropriate action, including requesting that the individual or the contractor remove the person from the premises.

If a staff member has reasonable grounds to believe that a parent or other adult on school grounds—whether collecting a child or visiting for another reason—is unfit to be on the premises or to take care of a pupil due to suspected intoxication, they must report their concerns to the Principal. The primary duty of care is to the child, and any necessary actions to safeguard and protect the pupil will be taken.

If any person asked to leave the school premises refuses to do so, the Principal may contact the Gardaí for assistance.

Garda Involvement

The school maintains a proactive relationship with the local Community Garda.

Gardaí will be contacted where:

- Illegal substances are involved
- Supply/distribution suspected
- There is a serious risk to safety
- A criminal offence may have occurred

Disposal of Substances

- Illegal substances are handed over to Gardaí
- Any incidents involving sharps will be reported and managed in line with the school's health and safety and infection control procedures.
- HSE are contacted if necessary

Record-Keeping

All records will be stored securely by the principal in accordance with GDPR and school data protection procedures.

Responsibilities

Pupils

- Follow school rules regarding substance use
- Participate in educational programmes
- Seek help from trusted adults where concerned

Parents/Guardians

- Support the school's preventative approach
- Communicate concerns regarding their child
- Ensure children do not bring prohibited substances to school
- Cooperate with the school in managing incidents

Staff

- Implement the curriculum and this policy
- Remain vigilant to concerns
- Follow reporting procedures
- Maintain confidentiality appropriately

Health & Safety Co-ordinator / Committee

- Support monitoring of safety risks
- Assist in policy review

SPHE Co-ordinator

- Support curriculum planning and implementation
- Provide guidance to staff

Principal

- Oversee implementation of the policy
- Manage incidents
- Liaise with parents, agencies and Board of Management
- Ensure records are maintained
- Support staff CPD in SPHE and wellbeing
- Co-ordinate policy briefing for new staff
- Review training needs periodically

Consultation, Ratification and Review

Parental Consultation and Support

The school consulted with parents/guardians through a whole-school email conducted in June 2026 which provided parents/guardians with a draft version for review. All suggestions and concerns were reviewed by in-school management and the Board of Management. The draft policy was updated accordingly.

Ratification and Implementation

This plan was formally ratified by the Board of management in _____ and implemented immediately.

Implementation will include:

- Communication of policy through school email to all parents.
- Publication of policy on school website.
- All pupils will be informed through age-appropriate discussion
- All staff will be informed through a staff meeting
- Staff will receive periodic briefing or awareness updates relevant to emerging substance-related issues, including vaping trends and safeguarding considerations.

The implementation of this policy will respect the dignity, privacy and rights of all pupils and families and will avoid stigma or discriminatory responses.

Timetable for Review

The Health and Safety Coordinator and SPHE Co-ordinator will monitor the implementation of the policy and review it:

- following a serious incident
- in light of legislative change
- in the year 2029-30 or sooner if required

This policy was ratified by the school's Board of Management	
Signed:  Chairperson	Signed:  Principal
Date: 18/6/26	Date: 18/6/26

Appendix 1

Substance Use Education

Parents/guardians will be informed in advance of substance use education and provided with guidance on supporting children's learning at home.

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	First Class	Second Class
Focus: Safety, Body Awareness & Trusted Adults		Focus: Healthy Choices & Influences	
Relevant Curriculum Outcomes (Wellbeing Curriculum) Children should be enabled to: • recognise when medicines may be needed • identify dangerous or potentially dangerous substances in their environment • understand the importance of following safety rules.		Relevant Curriculum Outcomes (Wellbeing Curriculum) Children should be enabled to: • distinguish between substances and medicines that are useful, safe, dangerous or potentially dangerous depending on their purpose and use • understand the importance of adhering to safety rules.	
Key Learning Intentions Children learn: • To protect their bodies • To recognise danger • To seek help • That unknown substances can harm • That medicines are only taken with adults • Recognise situations that are safe/unsafe • Identify trusted adults who can help them • Follow safety rules at home and school • Express feelings and seek help when worried		Key Learning Intentions Children learn: • How choices affect health • That some substances are harmful • Basic peer influence awareness • Personal responsibility • Demonstrate simple decision-making skills • Identify rules that protect safety	

Third Class	Fourth Class	Fifth Class	Sixth Class
Focus: Peer Pressure & Media Influence		Focus: Pressures & Risk Awareness	
Relevant Curriculum Outcomes (Wellbeing) Children should be able to: • distinguish between substances that are helpful, harmful, legal and/or illegal, such as vapes, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs/medicines • identify some of their effects on the body. • discuss reasons people might use vapes, tobacco, alcohol or other drugs/medicines • propose/practise strategies to handle pressures to misuse substances		Relevant Curriculum Outcomes (Wellbeing) Children should be able to: • understand some of the potential impacts and risks associated with using or misusing substances, such as vapes, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs/medicines. • recognise a range of reasons people may use or misuse substances, such as vapes, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs/medicines • propose/ practise strategies to handle pressures to misuse substances.	
Key Learning Intentions Children learn: • Why people may use substances • Effects on health • To recognise peer pressure and ways to respond • To evaluate messages from media and advertising • To describe how personal choices affect health and wellbeing • To demonstrate assertiveness skills • To identify coping strategies for difficult situations		Key Learning Intentions Children learn: • Legal and social consequences • Help-seeking pathways: Knowing how to say no, how to leave unsafe situations, who to contact for help • Analyse how choices impact personal and others' wellbeing • Demonstrate strategies to manage peer pressure • Assess risks in everyday situations • Explain short & long-term health consequences of behaviours • Identify supports & services that help keep people safe • Develop personal values and responsibility	

Appendix 2

Substance Use Incident Report Form

This form must be completed for all substance-related incidents and stored securely by the principal in accordance with GDPR and Child Safeguarding procedures.

1. Basic Details

- **Date of Incident:** _____
- **Time:** _____
- **Location:** _____
- **Reported by:** _____
- **Role of Reporter:** _____

2. Pupil(s)/Person(s) Involved

Name	Class / n/a	DOB / n/a	Parent/Guardian Contacted (Y/N/n/a)

3. Nature of Incident

(Please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Possession of alcohol
- ☐ Possession of illegal drugs
- ☐ Possession of tobacco
- ☐ Possession of vape/e-cigarette
- ☐ Suspected use
- ☐ Intoxication / unusual behaviour

- ☐ Supply / suspected supply
- ☐ Disclosure of use
- ☐ Discovery of substance on premises
- ☐ Smoking / vaping on school grounds
- ☐ Other (specify): _____

4. Description of Incident

(Provide factual, objective account only. Avoid opinion.)

5. Substance Details (if applicable)

Type of substance (if known): _____

Quantity: _____

Where found: _____

- ☐ Substance handed to Gardaí
- ☐ Substance stored securely pending Garda collection
- ☐ Sharps handled under universal precautions

Secured by (name): _____

Witness present (if applicable): _____

Garda Station contacted: _____

Garda member name (if applicable): _____

Substance Chain of Custody Record

If illegal substance is seized:

Time secured: _____

Location stored: _____

Access restricted to: _____

Transferred to Gardaí on (date/time): _____

Garda signature (if obtained): _____

6. Immediate Actions Taken

☐ Principal informed

☐ Parents/guardians contacted

Date/time of parent contact: _____

Method: ☐ Phone ☐ In person ☐ Email

☐ Chairperson of BOM informed

☐ Child Protection concern identified

☐ DLP consulted

☐ Tusla referral made

☐ Medical attention required: Details: _____

7. Pastoral & Behavioural Response

☐ Meeting held with pupil

☐ Restorative conversation

☐ Sanction applied (as per Code of Positive Behaviour). Details: _____

☐ Referral to support service recommended. Service: _____

☐ Follow-up plan agreed

8. Safeguarding Considerations

Is there reason to believe this incident relates to:

☐ Neglect

☐ Parental substance misuse

☐ Risk of harm

☐ Coercion by others

☐ None identified

Details (if applicable): _____

9. Follow-Up Plan

☐ Follow-up meeting scheduled

Date: _____

☐ Monitoring arrangement agreed

☐ Referral to external support

☐ No further action required

Details: _____

10. Record & Confidentiality

This record will be:

☐ Stored in Substance Use File in
Principal's office

☐ Logged as protected incident
on Aladdin

☐ Cross-referenced in
safeguarding file (if applicable)

Completed by: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Principal Signature: _____

Date: _____

Good Practice Notes for Staff

- Always have a second adult present when examining bags or belongings.
- Do not taste, test, or attempt to identify substances.
- Avoid conducting invasive searches.
- Record facts only.
- Safeguarding overrides confidentiality

Appendix 2

Junior Classes Substance Use Education

Parents/guardians will be informed in advance of substance use education and provided with guidance on supporting children's learning at home.

Junior Infants		Senior Infants		First Class		Second Class	
Focus: Safety, Body Awareness & Trusted Adults				Focus: Healthy Choices & Influences			
Relevant Curriculum Outcomes (Wellbeing Curriculum) Children should be enabled to: - recognise when medicines may be needed - identify dangerous or potentially dangerous substances in their environment - understand the importance of following safety rules.				Relevant Curriculum Outcomes (Wellbeing Curriculum) Children should be enabled to: - distinguish between substances and medicines that are useful, safe, dangerous or potentially dangerous depending on their purpose and use - understand the importance of adhering to safety rules.			
Key Learning Intentions Children learn: - To protect their bodies - To recognise danger - To seek help - That unknown substances can harm - That medicines are only taken with adults - Recognise situations that are safe/unsafe - Identify trusted adults who can help them - Follow safety rules at home and school - Express feelings and seek help when worried				Key Learning Intentions Children learn: - How choices affect health - That some substances are harmful - Basic peer influence awareness - Personal responsibility - Demonstrate simple decision-making skills - Identify rules that protect safety			
Substance Prevention Link							
- Household substances (cleaners, alcohol) “Never taste unknown items” - Safe vs unsafe choices - Medicines only with adult supervision - Not touching unknown substances - Identifying trusted adults - Personal safety rules		- Body care - Safety rules - Appropriate use of medicines - Foundation for healthy choices		- Understanding harmful substances - Safety awareness - Decision-making skills		- Tobacco/vaping awareness (basic) - Alcohol as adult substance - Safe medicine use - Emergency help - Personal responsibility	
Skills Developed							
- Rule-following - Risk awareness - Health behaviours - Decision-making				- Rule-following - Risk awareness - Health behaviours - Decision-making			
Walk Tall Lessons v2016							
Unit 1 L5 Unit 2 L1, L5 Unit 4 L1 L2 L3 Unit 5 L3		Unit 2 L2, L3, L4 L5 L6 Unit 4 L1 L3 Unit 5 L3		Unit 3 L6 Unit 4 L1 L2 L3 Unit 6 L3		Unit 1 L2, L3 Unit 2 L6 L7 Unit 3 L6 Unit 4 L5 Unit 5 L1	

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	First Class	Second Class
Additional Issues not addressed in Walk Tall to Address			
- Accidental ingestion - Medicine safety - Finding ‘sweets/jellies’ - Household substances - Finding unknown items - Seeing adults vape/smoke		- Curiosity about vaping - Seeing smoking in public - Energy drinks - Medicines at home - What to do if a trusted adult gives you something unsafe: tell another trusted adult.	
Sample Lesson Ideas for Additional Issues			
“Safe or Not Safe?” Sorting Game Activity Children sort picture cards: - Medicine bottle - Cleaning spray - Sweets - Jellies (multi-vitamins) - Mints - Detergent tablets - Juice carton - Glue Into: Safe with adult OR Not safe to touch Key Message: Only adults decide what goes in our bodies.		“What Gives Us Real Energy?” Compare: ✓ Sleep ✓ Healthy food ✓ Water ✗ Energy drinks Create a class chart.	
		“Medicine or Sweet?” Use empty packaging images. Discuss: - Why medicines are not sweets - Only for the person they are prescribed to	
“Who Helps Me Stay Safe?” Draw trusted adults. Include: - Parent/guardian - Teacher - Garda - Other helpers		“My Body, My Rules” Discuss: - Adults have rules for safety - We don’t take things offered by others Use scenarios: “A child offers you a tablet they say is a sweet.”	
“If You Find Something...” Teach a simple rule: STOP — DON’T TOUCH — TELL AN ADULT Role-play scenarios.		Suggested Resources: HSE healthy eating materials Visual posters Scenario cards	
Suggested Resources: Picture books about body safety Visual safety posters Real-life object photos (not real items)			

- Any disclosures or concerns arising during lessons will be managed in accordance with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and Children First procedures.
- External speakers may supplement but will not replace teacher-led instruction and will follow school procedures for visiting speakers.
- Content will be differentiated to meet the needs of pupils with additional educational needs. Support teachers may provide additional support in the teaching of learning outcomes during withdrawal lessons.
- Teachers will assess learning through discussion, observation, scenario responses and pupil reflection.

Senior Classes Substance Use Education

Parents/guardians will be informed in advance of substance use education and provided with guidance on supporting children's learning at home.

Third Class		Fourth Class		Fifth Class		Sixth Class	
Focus: Peer Pressure & Media Influence				Focus: Transition to Post-Primary & Risk Awareness			
Relevant Curriculum Outcomes (Wellbeing) Children should be able to: - distinguish between substances that are helpful, harmful, legal and/or illegal, such as vapes, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs/medicines - identify some of their effects on the body. - discuss reasons people might use vapes, tobacco, alcohol or other drugs/medicines - propose/practise strategies to handle pressures to misuse substances				Relevant Curriculum Outcomes (Wellbeing) Children should be able to: - understand some of the potential impacts and risks associated with using or misusing substances, such as vapes, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs/medicines. - recognise a range of reasons people may use or misuse substances, such as vapes, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs/medicines - propose/ practise strategies to handle pressures to misuse substances.			
Key Learning Intentions Children learn: - Why people may use substances - Effects on health - To recognise peer pressure and ways to respond - To evaluate messages from media and advertising - To describe how personal choices affect health and wellbeing - To demonstrate assertiveness skills - To identify coping strategies for difficult situations				Key Learning Intentions Children learn: - Legal and social consequences - Help-seeking pathways: Knowing how to say no, how to leave unsafe situations, who to contact for help - Analyse how choices impact personal and others' wellbeing - Demonstrate strategies to manage peer pressure - Assess risks in everyday situations - Explain short & long-term health consequences of behaviours - Identify supports & services that help keep people safe - Develop personal values and responsibility			
Substance Prevention Link							
- Smoking harms - Alcohol effects - Advertising influences - Assertiveness training - Health effects - Reasons people use substances - Early refusal skills - Social influences		- Introduction to illegal drugs (general/age-appropriate) - Vaping harms - Strengthening refusal skills - Understanding pressure - Developing assertiveness		- Alcohol misuse risks - Nicotine use & vaping - Online influences - Bystander responsibility - Short- and long-term consequences - Legal awareness - Personal responsibility - Coping strategies		- Independent decision-making - Managing pressure - Risk assessment - Help-seeking - Party safety - Cannabis awareness (factual)	
Skills Developed							
- Refusal skills - Critical thinking - Emotional regulation				- Risk assessment - Assertiveness - Planning ahead - Help-seeking			
Walk Tall Lessons v2016							
Unit 1 L2 Unit 5 L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6 Unit 6 L3		Unit 6 L3 L5					

Third Class	Fourth Class	Fifth Class	Sixth Class
Additional Issues not addressed in Walk Tall to Address			
- Vaping marketing - Social media trends - Normalisation of alcohol		- Vaping epidemic among teens - Curiosity about drugs - Cannabis normalisation - Alcohol at parties - Online drug content - Pressure in secondary school - Bystander safety skills: what to do if a friend is at risk - Emergency response knowledge: calling for help - Legal consequences clarified: age-appropriately	
Sample Lesson Ideas for Additional Issues			
“What Is a Vape?” Fact-based discussion: - What it is - Why it’s not harmless - Nicotine addiction - Designed for adults Avoid fear-based messaging		“Myths vs Facts” Discussion Statements such as: “Vaping is just water vapour.” “Everyone drinks in secondary school.” “Cannabis is harmless.” Students decide TRUE / FALSE and discuss.	
“Advertising Detectives” Show examples of: - Sports sponsorship - Influencer marketing - Attractive packaging Ask: “What message is this trying to send?”		“Future Me” Activity Explore consequences of choices: - Health - Sports - School goals - Friendships Write a letter to future self.	
Peer Pressure Role-Play Scenarios: “Try this — everyone else is.” “Don’t be boring.” Practice responses: ✓ Refusal ✓ Changing subject ✓ Walking away		“What Would You Do?” Scenarios Examples: - Someone brings alcohol to a gathering - A friend offers a vape - You find a syringe in a park Discuss safe responses.	
“Why Do People Use Substances?” Explore underlying reasons: - Stress - Curiosity - Wanting to fit in Build empathy without normalising use.		“Protective Strategies Toolkit” Teach practical skills: ✓ Staying with trusted friends ✓ Having an exit plan ✓ Calling home ✓ Saying no confidently ✓ Helping a friend safely	
Suggested Resources: Age-appropriate videos from health agencies Media literacy worksheets Scenario cards		Suggested Resources: HSE materials Garda school liaison resources Youth wellbeing programmes	

- Any disclosures or concerns arising during lessons will be managed in accordance with the school’s Child Safeguarding Statement and Children First procedures.
- External speakers supplement but don’t replace teacher-led instruction & will follow school procedures for visiting speakers.
- Content will be differentiated to meet the needs of pupils with additional educational needs. Support teachers may provide additional support in the teaching of learning outcomes during withdrawal lessons.

- Teachers will assess learning through discussion, observation, scenario responses and pupil reflection.