

Substance Use Policy

Coláiste Muire, Cobh

SCOPE OF POLICY:

This policy applies to the misuse of substances in the school buildings, school grounds, on school trips and outings.

RATIONALE :

The welfare, care and protection of students, teachers, staff and visitors in compliance with the code of behaviour, the Department of Education & Skills guidelines and policies and the relevant legislation.

RELATIONSHIP TO MISSION:

The Trustees of Coláiste Muire are the Presentation Brothers Schools Trust.

Four core elements guide us:

- A genuine and tangible spirit of respect and caring for each member of the school community
- A comprehensive and holistic education
- A vibrant experience of community and partnership
- A deep commitment to gospel values as lived in the Edmund Rice tradition

GOALS:

- The provision of education to young people in the area of substance use and abuse
- The welfare, care and protection of students, teachers, staff and visitors
- The encouragement of self respect, self esteem and good decision making.

DEFINITION OF A DRUG OR SUBSTANCE:

A drug is any chemical which alters how the body works or how the person behaves or feels. This includes tobacco, alcohol, legal and illegal substances.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE:

Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous **use** of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and drugs. Substance abuse occurs where the user consumes a substance in amounts or with methods not condoned by medical professionals, where such abuse may lead to long term personal and social issues.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND DRUG USE

The policy is focused in four key areas:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.
2. Managing Drug Related Incidents.
3. Training and Staff Development.
4. Monitoring and Review.

- The School strictly forbids the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the school, on outside activities and in non-school time by any member of the school community.
- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco in the school or on school activities by any student.
- The School does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances.
- Students may have prescription or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only.
- A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine.
- Hazardous chemicals in school laboratories will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher's supervision.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.

The School is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programme for all students. Our educational aims are:

- To increase the self esteem and confidence of our students.
- To equip the students with personal and social skills.
- To enable the students to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions.
- To provide clear and age appropriate information on drugs
- To minimise the harm caused by drug abuse by offering supportive interventions

Students:

The school highlights awareness of alcohol, tobacco and drug use and misuse to the students both through the formal curriculum and also informally.

- SPHE Programme
- Religion
- Science
- Home Economics
- P.E.
- Visiting speakers where appropriate.

All **Junior Cycle** students gain access to drug education through the S.P.H.E curriculum. There is a module on the topic in each of the three years.

The aims of these module are:

- To enable students to make informed choices about protecting their health,
- To explore student attitudes,
- To promote awareness and resistance to peer group pressure,
- To develop ideas to help friends and family who may need help with drug related issues.
- To provide students with accurate information about substances.
- To enable to identify sources of appropriate support.

Transition Year students receive drug education through Personal Development module, RE, PE and Science.

Senior Cycle students explore the issue in the following subject areas:

- Religious Education- where students learn about the pastoral care issues surrounding addiction and living with addiction,
- P.E- where taking care of your body and healthy living is emphasised.
- Science
- Home Economics-where it is examined through looking at social problems attached to drug addiction.
- English

Colaiste Muire plays a proactive role in drug education. At various stages throughout the school year Colaiste Muire facilitates talks from organisations to support drug education. Groups such as Humour Fit, AA, Health Promotion Unit and the J.L.O. have addressed students. If there is sufficient interest Colaiste Muire may also facilitate a family communication course with a view to preventing drug and alcohol use. This course is run in conjunction with SPHE and the Parents Council.

Teachers:

- Teachers are offered Drug Awareness training as part of SPHE training or any relevant in-service training.
- Visiting speakers may be used where appropriate and where vetting has taken place to reinforce the work done in class. Teacher/s will always be present.

Parents/Guardians:

Parents/guardians will be informed of the drug education provided in the School.

2. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Related Incidents

In all situations involving drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the student, the needs of the school community, the reputation of the school and legal considerations.

Assessing a drug incident: If there is no injury to the student/s, it is important to:

- Take time to listen and assess before responding.
- Separate fact from rumour.
- In situations of confirmed use or possession or supply all details must be recorded and acted upon.
- It is important that the limits of confidentiality are discussed with students before any disclosure is made.
- A drug incident report should be completed.

A limited number of people will be informed of the suspected or confirmed drug incident. People will be informed on a "need to know" basis. All written records will be held by the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Parents/Guardians will be informed. In the case of illegal drugs the Principal or Deputy Principal will contact Gardaí - Juvenile Liaison Officer. Any drugs will be handed over to the Gardaí. The well-being and welfare of the student is important. The school will recommend that the student engages with services to deal with the issue.

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

Disciplinary Procedures:

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the Code of Behaviour regarding drugs are broken, sanctions will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. **Sanctions** will be consistent with the Code of Behaviour, the Suspension Policy, the Expulsion Policy and the Substance Use Policy.

The welfare, care and protection of students, teachers, staff and visitors and the upholding of the law of the land are the primary aims of the Board of Management. This sometimes involves taking the serious step of suspending or expelling a student.

Sanctions:

The public ban on smoking was introduced by the Tobacco Smoking (Prohibition) Regulations 2003. This legislation bans “smoking tobacco”.

A one day **suspension** will be imposed for a first incident in a school year of smoking tobacco in the school building, school grounds, school trips and outings. A two day suspension will be imposed for a second incident of tobacco smoking and a three day suspension for any further incident in the same school year.

E cigarettes produce vapour as opposed to smoke and therefore are not included in the prohibition. However, their use is prohibited in the school building, school grounds, school trips and outings. Use of an E Cigarette on school grounds by a student will result in the same sanction as a tobacco cigarette.

The Principal or the Acting Principal in the absence of the Principal, makes a decision to initiate procedures for suspension. The student will be informed of the precise grounds for the initiation of these procedures and will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision to suspend is formalised. A **suspension** will be imposed for the possession, use or supply of alcohol or drugs. The length of **suspension will be from five and twenty days** depending on the severity of the incident.

A suspension of 5 days will be sanctioned by the Principal and a period of suspension from between 6 days to 20 days is sanctioned by the Board of Management.

Parents may be requested to attend with the student on the day of his/her return to school. Written undertakings of good behaviour will be requested of the student. Agreed conditions (counselling, referral to National Educational Psychologic Service, other pastoral supports) may be put in place.

The Principal will refer serious ongoing disciplinary problems or an incident of gross misconduct involving the possession, use or supply of drugs or alcohol, to the Board of

Management. Following an investigation, the Board may **expel** the student. The Board of Management may decide that the student should be suspended until the expulsion procedures are complete in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

Please also refer to the Code of Behaviour, Suspension and Expulsion Policies.

Appeals Procedure:

The principles of natural justice demand that there should be an appeal to a higher authority. A suspension of longer than 6 days duration may be appealed to the Board of Management.

Suspensions of longer than 20 days may be appealed to the Board of Management. If the appeal is not successful, an appeal may be made by parents/guardians/students over 18 to the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. All appeals must be made within 42 calendar days of the date on which the Board of Management decision was notified to the parent/guardian/student over 18.

3. Training & Development

Staff:

- The school will provide training to staff through the SPHE training programmes.
- Staff will be offered drug information and awareness training.

Parents/Guardians:

Parents/guardians will be informed of the drug education provided in the School.

Students:

The School provides drug education programmes to junior students within the context of SPHE class. Drug education will be provided to senior students during Personal Development and Religious Education classes.

4. Monitoring and Review:

The Drug Policy will be monitored by the Principal, Deputy Principal, SPHE Co-ordinator and Guidance Counsellors.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 19th May 2015.

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Review Date: February 2017