

Coláiste Cois Siúire



Substance Misuse Policy

Policy Review History

Date	Comment
April 2007	Published
March 2019	Reviewed

Introduction

This policy is informed and formulated in the context of the following governing legislation:

- The Education Act 1998 which requires schools to promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- The National Drugs Strategy, 'Building on Experience' is now Government policy
- and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place
- Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2004
- Report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs (November 2001)
- The 1999 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) Report
- Health Act (1947)
- Poisons Act (1961)
- Medical Preparations Regulations (1970)
- Misuse of Drugs Act (1977, 1984)
- EU and other international regulations
- Criminal Justice Act (1994)
- Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010

Definition of School

For the purpose of this policy the 'school' is defined the area within the school boundary, the curtilage and environs of the school, school-related activities and events, break times, lunch times, extracurricular activities, tours, and, times where students are deemed to be associated with or representative of the school for any reason.

Scope

This document is drawn up to inform students, teachers, other employees, parents and users of school premises/facilities of the school's substance use policy

The policy applies

- During normal school opening hours, including scheduled breaks.

- On occasions when the school is open outside of these times, e.g. open night, events outside of school times, etc.
- To students, staff and supervisors involved in school related activities, including trips outside of the school, for the duration of the time these activities are taking place

A substance in this policy is defined as any chemical, substance or matter which alters

- How the body works or
- How a person, having taken the substance, behaves or feels

Rationale

Coláiste Cois Siúire, in recognising its duty of care to the whole school community, has drafted this policy. The policy covers the use by anybody within the school grounds or it's environs or on school related events, of both legal and illegal substances such as:

- Legal regulated substances, e.g. tobacco, alcohol, solvents, prescription and over the counter drugs/medicines or other physical/psychological altering substances.
- Illegal substances including, but not restricted to, marijuana, cocaine, L.S.D., methadone, heroin, ecstasy, narcotics, hallucinogens, amphetamines, or other physical/psychological altering substances or products.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the school's substance misuse policy include:

- (i) To create a community which promotes good relationships and mutual respect and which encourages personal development
- (ii) To develop the school's role within the wider community and to prepare young people for a constructive role in society

This policy contributes to the furtherance of these aims and includes the following, more specific aims and objectives:

- (i) To enable students to make healthy and informed choices
- (ii) To provide a clear framework for all staff for dealing with incidents of substance misuse in school

Curriculum Objectives

- To provide opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and understanding about drug use and misuse and the effects of solvents, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs on body functions
- To understand the importance of feeling positive about oneself and others, and of being able to express feelings confidently

- To develop responsible attitudes towards the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs
- To develop decision-making skills and knowledge about factors which influence the process of making decisions, including choosing between alternatives and considering long and short-term consequences of decisions for oneself and others
- To increase students' understanding of situations in which drugs may be used, both legally and illegally, and to develop skills for remaining in control in such situations
- To help students appreciate ways in which they can control aspects of their behaviour and resist peer pressure
- To make students aware of the law relating to the use of drugs and the serious consequences which may follow the use of illegal drugs
- To provide knowledge about how to use the support agencies

Procedural Objectives

- To set out clear procedures to be followed by staff who suspect that drug use is taking place or that substances are being brought onto school premises
- To provide an agreed framework for liaison with outside agencies including the Gardaí and Press if required
- To set out a clear statement of the disciplinary measures which will be applied to drug related incidents
- To set out the support and counselling which will be part of the response to drugs related offences in school
- To ensure that all members of the school community understand the very serious view which the school takes on all instances of possession, use or supply of illegal drugs
- To ensure that all staff are aware of the agreed procedures
- To ensure that all staff involved in specific drugs education have appropriate training

This policy has the theme that individuals who have a high level of self-esteem and who possess the necessary knowledge and skills to make thoughtful decisions about their behaviour will be best equipped to take their place in the adult world.

Coláiste Cois Siúire's Stance on Substance Misuse

- The school does not condone the misuse of drugs, solvents or alcohol by members of the school community, or the supply of these substances
- The school is committed to the health and safety of all its members
- The school will seek to educate students about the dangers connected with the misuse of substances through relevant curricular programmes e.g. SPHE
- The school recognises that it has a duty to inform and educate young people on the consequences of drug use and will take a proactive stance on the matter, believing that such Health Education is a vital element of the Personal and Social Education of every student.
- Fundamental to our school's values and practice is the principle of sharing the responsibility for education of young people with parents, by keeping them informed of known involvement by a student with illegal substances. Co-operation and communication between parents, students and school is essential for the effective implementation of this policy

The Roles of the Principal and Board of Management

The Principal takes overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, for liaison with the Board of Management, parents, Kilkenny and Carlow ETB and appropriate outside agencies.

The Role of School Staff

Staff in whom students confide need to consider their responsibilities carefully. They may need to warn students that certain information cannot be kept secret by a teacher (e.g. details of a student who may be supplying drugs to other students). However, staff will want to be sensitive to the needs of individuals to speak and gain advice from adults they trust. In so doing, students may confess to some drugs involvement. It is necessary to inform management of all incidents. In all cases where drug misuse is known to have occurred on the school premises, its environs, whilst travelling to or from school or at a school-related, event the facts must be reported to the Principal. Detailed procedures are set out below.

If a student is involved in the use of drugs it will be detailed on their school record. The school's duty of care to its students is paramount.

The School's Response to Substance Misuse Related Incidents

Cases involving substance misuse or supply on the premises are considered to be very serious infringements of school regulations. In all such cases the Principal will discuss the matter with the Chair of the Board of Management. The Board of Management will have a range of sanctions available to it, which could include permanent exclusion from the school. Unless there are exceptional circumstances parents will be informed in all cases where their child is involved in an incident of substance misuse. Students will be made aware that the use of drugs other illicit substances on the premises will lead to an immediate suspension and could lead to permanent exclusion.

The decision surrounding what substance(s) constitute ‘illicit substances’ rests with the Board of Management.

Each case will be considered on an individual basis. Where a student has been involved in a drugs incident, the parent, in a spirit of co-operation and rehabilitation, may be asked to agree to furnish medical evidence that their child is drugs free and has had access to the relevant agency for help.

Students involved in substance misuse-related incidents may, following a period of suspension, be readmitted to the school subject to the following provision:

That they agree to meet with appropriate person(s) from a specialist agency(s) to discuss the support available to persons involved with drug misuse. That they furnish immediately upon request medical evidence to show that they are free from any illicit substances.

Although each incident will be considered individually, and it is recognised that a variety of responses will be required to deal with different incidents, there are certain minimum requirements related to specific situations, which may occur. If a student is found in the possession of an illegal substance, the school will have no alternative but to contact the Gardaí and report the incident to them. The school will also keep a record of the incident on the student’s file. Contact details of the student and the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) may be given to the Gardaí if required.

Prescribed Medication

Students who are taking prescribed medication must inform the school authorities if they need to take this medication during school hours, travelling to/from school, on school grounds or the school environs, or, on/at school-related activities or events. It is the default stance of school authorities to not administer prescribed and/or un-prescribed medication to students. A student who has to use any form of prescribed medication whilst at school should ensure that this medication is clearly labelled with the prescriptive product(‘s) name(s), it’s defined purpose(s), the student’s full name. Parent’s should ensure that any medication is kept up-to-date e.g. inhaler, epi-pen, etc.

Response to Specific Incidents

No student may smoke on school premises or its environs, on journeys to and from school or on school trips. This includes at break and lunch times inside and outside school grounds. This includes any form of cigarettes, cigars, pipes or electronic devices that may be commonly categorised as 'smoking'. If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe a student has been smoking, this should be reported to the class tutor who will inform the parents and place a note on the student's record. In each of the following cases the incident is to be reported in the first instance to the Principal or his/her representative, who will take the required action.

If any student is found drunk on the school premises, the parents will be informed immediately and asked to remove the student, having firstly ensured the safety of the student.

Alcohol and cigarettes found on school premises will be confiscated. The parents will be informed.

If any student is found intoxicated through solvent use, urgent medical attention should be given (via contact with emergency services) and the solvent will be confiscated.

Illegal drugs found on school premises will be confiscated and immediately handed over to Gardaí.

A member of staff, who suspects in his/her best judgement that a student may be in possession of an illegal substance, may ask the student to empty his/her pockets, bag, lockers or other storage place/item. If the student refuses the matter should immediately be referred to a senior member of staff who will repeat the request. In the event of another refusal, the parents should be contacted to obtain their permission. Where there is good reason for pursuing this course of action, the Gardaí may be called.

If any student or any other person is found supplying or offering to supply drugs, tobacco, alcohol, or any other illicit substance or material as may be defined by the Board of Management, the Principal must be informed immediately. He/She will inform the Gardaí, KCETB, the Chair of the Board of Management and if relevant, the parents.

Any equipment involved in drug use found on the school premises will be disposed of with due regard to Health & Safety regulations. Needles and syringes or any other paraphernalia associated with illicit substances or materials, which present a considerable health hazard, must be handled with extreme care and stored in a suitable container until disposed of. Any member of staff involved in dealing with drugs related incidents must keep detailed written records.

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Misuse

It is recognised that the signs and symptoms of substance misuse are difficult to categorise and define. The effects on an individual may differ. The following are some commonly accepted indicators of substance misuse¹:

General signs of drug use

There are some general signs to watch out for which may be linked to drug use. Bear in mind that all of the signs listed below could be caused by many reasons other than drug use such as puberty, social changes or medical conditions. Try not to jump to conclusions about drug use, as you may be wrong and isolate your teenager even more.

- Secrecy about activities, slyness, caginess
- Staying out unusually late
- A lot of new friends, perhaps an older crowd
- Lack of interest in old hobbies and activities
- Memory loss
- Mood swings – quite suddenly, may have fits of temper
- Short attention span
- Not taking care of their appearance
- Wearing sunglasses to hide the effects of drugs on the eyes
- Using deodorant or incense to hide the smell of drugs
- Always being broke and trying to borrow money
- Stealing from home or outside – money and stuff they can sell
- Using slang terms for drugs
- Social, personal and family relationships suffer
- Poor work or school performance, may be skipping days
- Losing appetite and weight
- Becoming withdrawn and not wanting to talk

Amphetamines

You may notice some of the following but not everyone who uses this drug shows all these symptoms:

- Hyperactivity
- Unusual confidence
- Jerky movements
- Can't sleep
- Very talkative
- Grinding of teeth
- Very large pupils
- Sweating
- Thirsty
- No appetite
- Staring

¹ http://www.drugs.ie/drugs_info/for_parents_carers/signs_symptoms/, accessed March 2019.

Comedown:

May cause depression, fear, listlessness, apathy, muscle aches, cramps, mood swings.

Benzodiazepines (sleeping tablets and tranquillisers)

- Slurred speech
- Gentle, monotone voice
- Distracted
- Calm
- Agoraphobia – not wanting to leave the house
- Reclusive – avoiding other people
- Fear of people and going outside
- Aggressive (when used with alcohol)
- Passive (when used with opiates such as morphine and heroin)

Comedown (after long time use):

May become even more reclusive, agoraphobic and scared of people, may behave more strangely, twitching eyes, tense neck.

Hash

- Bloodshot eyes
- Giggling (especially in when they first start using)
- Distracted
- Introverted
- Short attention span
- Going off on tangents, hard to follow their train of thought
- Loss of short term memory – this will come back when they stop
- 'Bomb' burn on clothes – small burn marks caused by falling bits of ash
- Torn off bits of cardboard from cigarette packets or other cardboard objects to make a roach' (a sort of filter)
- Bits of loose cigarette tobacco around their room or in pockets
- Butts of cigarettes with no stains on the filter
- Cigarette papers such as Rizla and cigarettes together
- Knives with burn marks from heating and inhaling hash smoke – 'hot knives'

Comedown:

May cause anxiety, restlessness.

Cocaine

Similar to amphetamines (above) but also look out for:

- Runny, itchy nose – due to snorting
- Extremely rapid heartbeat
- Comedown:
Unlike ecstasy and other amphetamines, in which the effects can last up to six hours, the rush of cocaine only lasts 2-3 minutes and the effects wear off in 12 - 13 minutes.

The comedown effects are similar to amphetamines [listed above] but are far more intense.

Ecstasy

You may notice some of the following but not everyone who uses this drug shows all these symptoms:

- Hyperactivity
- Unusual confidence
- Jerky movements
- Can't sleep
- Very talkative
- Grinding teeth
- Very large pupils
- Sweating
- Thirsty
- No appetite
- Staring
- 'Spittin' cotton' – spit is like a cotton ball
- Small folded square of paper in an envelope shape

Comedown:

May cause depression, fear, listlessness, apathy, muscle aches, cramps, mood swings.

Heroin:

After a fix or after smoking heroin the person will be 'stoned'. Look out for:

- Very small pupils
- Light coloured eyes turn bright blue
- Eyes look glassy
- 'Goofing off' – looks like they are nodding off, hard to keep their eyes open
- Unable to finish sentences
- Slurred speech
- Shallow breathing
- Scratching
- Excessive smoking
- Loose facial muscles
- Blood stains on clothes from using needles
- Bloody tissues
- 'Track marks' – marks left by needles, especially on hands, arms and legs although any vein can be used
- Burnt holes in furniture, bed linen or clothes caused by 'goofing' when smoking a cigarette
- Burnt tin foil from smoking heroin – 'chasing the dragon'
- Spoons going missing from the house, spoons with a blackened underside from 'cooking' heroin
- Cut filters from cigarettes
- Ties or laces in pockets – used as tourniquets to prepare the vein for injecting
- Long sleeves in warm weather to hide track marks

Comedown: Runny nose and eyes, excessive yawning, very large pupils, agitated, can't sleep, lack of energy, cranky, depressed, cold sweats or hot flushes, gooseflesh skin, overeating or under-eating, severe diarrhoea after constipation, nausea, dry retching which produces bile, constant knot in stomach, severe cramps in stomach and back of legs, 'the shakes' – spasms in arms and legs, violent spasms in the small of the back cause back to arch, panting, spontaneous orgasms in men and women

Drugs Education Programme

The programme for drugs related education is cross-curricular but is drawn together by work in a multitude of classes. The following subject areas are identified as being central to implementation of this policy

- Social, Personal and Health Education
- Civic, Social and Political Education
- English and other languages
- The Sciences
- Home Economics
- Religious Education

Links with the parents and the wider community

- Coláiste Cois Siúire will work in partnership with students, parents, community groups, the HSE, Gardaí and other agencies in dealing with the potential issue of substance misuse
- Coláiste Cois Siúire expects that parents will co-operate fully with the school in any instances where such co-operation is required
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of the helping agencies are available in the school. These are brought to the students' attention at appropriate times during the Health Education programme.

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

The relevant staff were consulted, and, their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan, before Board of Management ratification was sought.

Parental consultation has been sought via parental representation on the Board of Management, and, through the Parents' Association.

Student consultation was carried out with the Student Council who represented a cross section of the student populous.

Signed:

Chairperson (BOM)

Date

Principal

Date

Ratified by the Board of Management on 2nd April 2019