



SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

Our school community provides a caring, happy and safe environment, which strives to foster a love of life-long learning.

We endeavour to develop each person's academic, physical, moral, cultural and spiritual potential based on mutual respect, fairness and honesty.

We want our students to emerge as confident, adaptable, independent, responsible and caring citizens.

School Mission Statement

This policy applies to the entire school community, including teachers, administration staff, caretaking staff, students, parents/guardians and users of the school building.

Objectives

- The school policy aims to co-operate fully with the strategic plan adopted by the government under the National Drugs Strategy 2001 –2008 and made mandatory for schools in circular 18/02
- The policy aims to promote the social and personal education of students and provide health education for them. (in line with Education Act '98)
- The policy aims to provide the protection necessary to all members of the school community
- The policy aims to outline the procedures to be followed in the event of a drug-related incident in the school

The Policy is part of a general pastoral approach being adopted by the school to ensure a healthy, caring and supportive learning environment. The Substance Misuse Policy is one among many that serve to incarnate the school's ethos.

St. Colmcille's Community School aims to encourage a healthy lifestyle for every member of the school community. The School's Code of Behaviour specifies that:

- Students are not allowed to smoke on the premises, in the grounds or in the vicinity of the school. The lunch break is part of the school day and this rule applies to students whether they remain in school or go out at lunchtime
- The school does not accept or tolerate the possession, consumption or supply of alcohol by any student in the school, on school trips and outings, or during any school-related activity
- The school does not accept or tolerate the possession, use, or supply of banned or prohibited and/or drug paraphernalia by any student in the school, on school trips and outings, or during any school-related activity.

The school acknowledges that students may need to take prescribed or over the counter medicine during the school day. In these instances parents are asked to inform the school in writing of that fact.

St. Colmcille's School, within the resources available to it, aims to provide an appropriate drug education programme for all students.

This programme is age appropriate and seeks to build on and complement existing programmes already being taught in the school. These include:

- SPHE
- RE
- Science
- PE
- CSPE

The school runs a 'Healthy Living Awareness Week' and at Senior Cycle there is a dedicated specialist team who deliver some aspects of the SPHE curriculum, including the areas relating to Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education.

Every effort is made to support teachers in the delivery of any programme relating to Health Education by:

- Assessing training needs and providing, within available time and resources, training opportunities
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the programmes on a regular basis.

The Role of Parents

The school sees the home school partnership as being a very important one in the education of the students. Parents are asked to support the school by:

- Acknowledging the importance of the above mentioned programmes
- Recognising that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse
- Assisting and co-operating fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents which may arise.

Where the school has a concern regarding the health and welfare of a student the parent will be informed immediately. The school will share any available information that may help parents in attending to their son/daughter's well-being.

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug related or Substance Abuse Incidents

In the event of an abuse incident, the school will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student or students involved and the welfare of the school community as a whole and the reputation of the school.

In the event that any student is found to be:

- In possession of prohibited substances or of drug related paraphernalia in the school, in the vicinity of the school, whilst in school uniform, on school trips and outings, or during any school-related activity.
- Under the influence of prohibited substances in the school, on school trips and outings, or during any school-related activity.
- Using prohibited substances in the school, in the vicinity of the school, whilst in school uniform, on school trips and outings, or during any school-related activity.
- Supplying prohibited substances in the school, in the vicinity of the school, whilst in school uniform, on school trips and outings, or during any school-related activity.

The School will respond as follows:

(a) Immediate Response

- The first priority will be to address the immediate health issue. In case of an emergency the Principal or Deputy Principal will be informed immediately. Parents will be contacted and a doctor/ambulance will be called if this is deemed necessary.
- Where it is apparent that there is immediate danger to students or the school community, the school reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school any students involved in a suspected abuse incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident.
- In instances where there are grounds for suspecting possession or use of substances that are forbidden in school, and out of a concern for the safety of all, the school reserve the right to conduct a search of students' bags or lockers. Parents will be informed as soon as possible should such a course of action prove necessary.
- The school will take possession of any banned or prohibited substance and drug paraphernalia associated with an abuse incident, carefully recording all such items and retaining them pending completion of the investigation , unless otherwise instructed by appropriate outside agencies e.g. Gardai

(b) Investigating the Incident

- An Incident Report Form will be completed.
- The school* will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any substance abuse incident, this may include breathalysing the student. The investigation will be carried out as speedily as possible.
- In the event of an incident the school will seek statements from all persons involved in, concerned with or having knowledge of the incident and will record these statements
- The school will maintain a written record of all the stages of the investigation of an incident, including communications with other people or agencies involved or concerned with the matter under investigation, the investigation outcome, decisions taken and the rationale for these decisions, any disciplinary measures imposed and the management and outcome of any appeal that may arise following an investigation.
- The school at its own discretion will liaise with any appropriate outside authority and seek advice or assistance as it deems appropriate in relation to its investigation of an incident.
- The school at its own discretion, will make available to the Gardai copies of all records deemed relevant
- Where an investigation is ongoing , the school will put the full particulars of the incident to the students concerned and their parents in the following manner:
 - (a) At the discretion of the school, copies of all records deemed relevant will be made available to the student and his/her parents.
 - (b) The school will allow the student concerned and his/her parents reasonable time to respond to the matter being investigated
 - (c) The school shall inform the student and his parents of the school’s findings and their reasons for these. Where a student is found to be guilty of or involved or implicated in an incident, the sanctions that it intends to impose will be communicated to the parents at this stage.
- Sanctions which may be implemented by the Board of Management include but are not limited to oral warning, written warning, suspension, expulsion.
- The school can, at its discretion postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstances that it considers should be taken into account.
- The school recognises that incidents of substance abuse can be sometimes traumatic for students, parents and/or others involved. The pastoral supports available in the school may not always suffice and the school reserves the right to ask that a student be referred to an appropriate outside agency for more intensive support.

* For the purpose of this document ‘the school’ is the Principal or any person he may nominate to support in the investigation of a substance misuse incident.

The Role of the Principal

The Principal is responsible for all matters relating to substance misuse. It may be appropriate that the Principal nominate the Deputy Principal or Year Head to support in the investigation of a substance misuse incident.

All reports of substance abuse incidents or suspected incidents must be reported to the Principal

It is the responsibility of the Principal to take possession of any banned or prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia and decide what should be done with them having sought appropriate advice.

Confidentiality

The school recognises the importance of limiting the number of people involved in investigating and managing an abuse incident. It is the aim of St. Colmcille's only to involve those properly concerned with an incident. Students and Parents are however made aware of the following:

- The duty of the teachers and staff of the school community preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any student when they come into contact with an abuse incident or suspected abuse incident.
- The school may be required to contact, as appropriate such authorities as the Gardai and Health Boards.
- The school may be duty bound to notify certain persons about the incident and/or the outcomes of the incident investigation under statute, regulations or DES guidelines.

Ongoing Support / Intervention

- In the case of a student attending the school following a drug or alcohol related incident, the School reserves the right to stipulate conditions and interventions which it deems necessary to assist the student in question and/or other students, the school community and the needs of the school . These conditions may include external counseling, ongoing testing for drug abuse and ongoing consultation with external agencies.

As part of its Development Planning St. Colmcille's Community School will monitor, review and evaluate this Policy and all related work and procedure on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices