

Coláiste Muire



Substance Use Policy

Daingnithe ag an mBord Bainistíochta: 21ú Samhain 2016

In conjunction with the Education Act, Child Protection Act and any other relevant policies

INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Muire is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to substance use. The policy has been drawn up and accepted by the Principal, Teachers, Parents/Guardians, Board of Management and Students. It is necessary that all involved work together to implement this policy. It is vital that parents/guardians actively work with the school to implement this policy to ensure their children's health and safety.

In this policy, "Drug" means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The School recognises that substances, both legal and illegal, are available in the local community and that the School, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents.

THE SCHOOL ETHOS

Cuireann Coláiste Muire oideachas d'ardchaigdeán ar fáil trí mheán na Gaeilge, ag cur cultúr na hÉireann chun cinn. Is í an aidhm atá againn i gColáiste Muire ná pearsantacht iomlán an duine a fhorbairt, go spioradalta, go hintleachtúil, go fisiciúil agus go mothúnánach. "Treat others as you yourself would like to be treated"

SCOPE OF POLICY

The policy is focused on four key areas:

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

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GENERAL

- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply, of legal or illegal substances in the school on outside activities arranged by the school.
- The School does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances.
- Students may have prescribed or "over-the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only. The school authorities must be made aware of this.
- The School must be informed if a student has **any** medical condition and all teachers must also be informed.
- A student or any member of staff may not give another student any prescribed or "over-the counter" medicine.
- Chemicals in school laboratories are held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher's supervision.

SCOPE OF POLICY

1. 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 our students with personal and social skills.
- To enable our students to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions.
- To provide clear and age appropriate information on substances.
- To minimise the harm caused by drug Misuse by offering supportive interventions.

These aims will be achieved by:

- Pastoral Care and Critical Incident Team.
- Qualified, outside speakers are used.
- Parents/Guardians will be consulted on the need for drug education and will be informed of what is happening in the School through the Parent's Association.
- Student Drug Education will be achieved primarily through the SPHE Programme supported by other disciplines where relevant.



2. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Related Incidents

We acknowledge that in all situations involving substances, 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 Substance Related Incident:

If there is a report of substance mis-use the school will, where appropriate:

- Seek medical advice
- Take time to listen and assess before responding.
- Separate fact from rumour.
- In situations of confirmed use, possession or supply all details must be recorded and acted upon.

Managing a Substance Misuse Incident:

The well-being and welfare of the student and teacher must be a primary focus. The Principal or Deputy Principal will handle all 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.

A limited number of people are involved in all suspected or confirmed substance misuse incident. Staff will be informed on a "need to know" basis. All written records will be held confidentially by the Principal or Deputy Principal. Parents/Guardians will be involved. They will be informed sensitively and support offered to them. In the case of illegal substances, the Principal or Deputy Principal will contact An Garda and any substances will be dealt with by An Garda.

In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered. If a student has an ongoing issue with substance misuse, then a referral to the appropriate authority (HSE/TUSLA) will be recommended. Parents/Guardians, staff and other students involved in the incident will be offered support.

Disciplinary Procedures:

Substance misuse incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding same, are broken, sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. These will be consistent with school rules ([link to appropriate school rules](#)).



3. Training & Development

Staff

- The School will facilitate training for staff involved in the SPHE programmes.
- First Aid training is made available to all staff.

Parents/Guardians

- The school will inform the Parents Association of opportunities to attend drug awareness evenings and sessions

Students

- The School will offer all its students drug education programmes within the context of their SPHE classes.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

- To contribute to the formulation of the policy
- To finally approve the policy
- To ensure that the policy is implemented in its entirety.
- To provide the resources necessary for the implementation of the policy.
- To take a proactive approach to reviewing the policy on a bi-annual basis.
- To consider each case referred to it by the Principal and to take appropriate action.

Principal/Deputy Principal:

- To Work with the Board of Management, teachers, parents and students in the school in the preparation of a draft of Substance Use Policy.
- To investigate all incidents of reported substance misuse in the school and to take appropriate action in accordance with the school's Substance Use Policy and the school's Code of Behaviour.
- To liaise with parents/guardians and outside agencies.
- To act as a resource to the teaching staff.
- To provide whatever support, including training is required to make the policy effective.
- To closely monitor the effectiveness of the policy and to note the recommendations of teachers, students and parents. These observations form the basis of the bi-annual review.

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Role of the Teaching Staff:

- To implement the policy in its entirety.
- To report to management any incident of substance misuse or any behaviour this gives rise to a reasonable suspicion of same.
- To encourage students to adopt healthy lifestyles.
- To be aware of the signs and symptoms of Substance Misuse. See Appendix 1

Role of the Pastoral Care Team:

- To identify and respond sensitively and supportively to students who have misused substances.
- To offer advice and assistance to parents.
- To co-operate with the Parents' Association in organising Drug Awareness talks for parents.
- To liaise with outside agencies such as the H.S.E. and An Garda.

Role of the Student Population:

- To abide by the terms and conditions of the Substance Use Policy.
- To report to the Principal/Deputy Principal any information of substance misuse or any suspicion of same.

Role of Parents/Guardians:

- To inform themselves of the school's Substance Use Policy.
- To support the school's Substance Use Policy.
- To monitor the effectiveness of the policy and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- To report to the Principal/Deputy Principal any information of substance misuse or any suspicion of same.

5. Monitoring the Policy, Review and Evaluation

Teachers, Parents/Guardians, Students and the Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of this policy. Copies of this policy will be distributed to all the school community via the school website. It will also be available from the Principal's Office. Copies will be given to all new staff and parents of new pupils as part of their induction to the School. Students will be made aware of the policy within the context of the SPHE programme.

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APPENDIX 1

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR **WHICH MAY** INDICATE DRUG TAKING

PHYSICAL

- Fatigue
- Repeated health complaints
- Red and glazed eyes
- Lasting cough
- Unexplained feeling of being generally “under the weather”
- Rashes around the mouth
- Slurred speech
- Loss of appetite

EMOTIONAL

- Personality changes
- Sudden mood changes
- Irritability
- Irresponsible behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Poor judgement
- Depression
- General lack of interest

FAMILY

- Starting arguments
- Negative attitude
- Breaking rules
- Withdrawing from family
- Secretiveness

SCHOOL

- Decreased interest
- Negative attitude
- Drop in grades
- Absenteeism
- Truancy
- Discipline problems

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

- New friends who have anti-social tendencies
- Problems with the Law
- Changes to new and different styles in dress and music