



Ennis Community College

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

RATIONALE

This policy has been formulated to protect all the pupils and staff in this college. Issues outside the school encroach on the college community - one of these is the use of substances. It is likely that members of the school community have encountered substance use outside the college. The management of Ennis Community College recognise that the area of substance use is a very sensitive area with the potential to affect pupils and staff. The college in arriving at a policy to deal with the possession of, distribution of, and use of substances is conscious that each situation is unique and thus, a flexible response is required. By substances the college means legal drugs, illegal drugs and misuse of prescribed drugs, solvents etc.

The college aspires to create the best environment in which to teach, learn and work. It promotes the growth and development of the whole person. The school has structures, which support the needs and welfare of pupils and staff.

This policy applies to pupils and all staff – including teachers, clerical and ancillary- and to all those persons using the premises during the operation of the college including breaks and all involved and participating in school promoted and school related activities including school trips/outings.

Policy Content/ Objectives

- Education concerning substance use
- Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related instances
- Provision for training and staff development
- Provision for informing Parents/Guardians

Education concerning substance use: for students

Education about the use of drugs and the consequences of the misuse of substances will be provided as part of a broad, developmental S.P.H.E. programme.

This education will be provided through specific modules as part of existing school subjects S.P.H.E./R.E. and through special seminars/ workshops.

The programme will be provided as far as possible, by teachers with appropriate training in Drugs education and using pupil centred methodologies. School personnel will accompany outside speakers.

Management of Alcohol and Drug Related Incidents

The management of the school will respond to substance related incidents with discretion and consideration of the particular situation in the interest of the welfare of the individual and the general school population. The school will seek to balance its response between the pastoral and the disciplinary.

Duty of Staff

- A. The board of management requires all staff to report immediately, via the incident report sheet, any incidents where pupils/employees/visitors
1. Encounter the use/suspected use of alcohol/drugs on the school premises or during a school related activity (e.g. outing or tour).
 2. Exhibit symptoms/behaviour that may suggest the use of drugs/alcohol
 3. Are involved in the distribution, purchase or use of drugs/alcohol
 4. Discover suspect substances/ paraphernalia on the campus
- B. The college personnel will seek to establish the facts and to be clear about the nature of the incident before deciding on a course of action. There will be no assumption of guilt. Opinions will be stated as opinions, not facts.
- C. The pupil should not be confronted openly before his/her peers. There should be no assumption of guilt regarding substance misuse, as there is a variety of conditions, which might mimic the suspected misuse of substances. The possession of tablets may be for medicinal use.
- D. The teacher is entitled to request the surrender of a suspicious substance. This should be done with minimal fuss. The teacher should not seek to search the pupil or his/her possessions. Where there is a refusal to co-operate the pupil should be brought to the Principal/Deputy Principal whose responsibility it is to proceed with the matter.
- E. The Principal/Deputy Principal will recognise that the health/safety and the well being of the student/ students is paramount and will seek medical aid if deemed necessary. The student will be provided with the appropriate guidance and support they need.

Pastoral Care Team

The relevant support systems of the school will be mobilised: chaplain, guidance counsellors, S.P.H.E. co-ordinators, year head, class teacher etc. Where deemed necessary, legal advice will be sought. If illegal drugs/ paraphernalia is found on school premises the college will/may contact the gardaí about its safe disposal. It is the responsibility of the Principal/ Deputy Principal to summon such persons as may be helpful to the issue. Teachers in their pastoral role may encounter changes in a student's behaviour and attitude on occasion, or over a period of time. This may be for a variety of reasons and may not necessarily be indicative of substance misuse. The role of the teacher carries a duty of care towards the pupil, which involves a degree of confidentiality. However, this does not preclude reporting a genuine suspicion or fear. The quality of the relationship between teacher and pupil is central to noticing a change in behaviour. Teachers should always discuss with colleagues and Year Head any significant altered behaviour or performance of a pupil.

The Principal may decide in particular circumstances to opt for a counselling solution or he may involve the Board of Management in suspension (short term, long term). Return to school may depend on participation in an appropriate counselling/ addiction-counselling programme. Parental involvement and guarantees may also be required. The **Principal** will deal with any/all queries from the **media**.

PROVISION FOR TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

The Board of Management of Ennis Community College is committed to training and staff development in the area of substance use.