

## Substance Use/Misuse Policy for students

### 1. Rationale:

1.1 This policy is formulated in the context of:

- a) The Education Act 1998 which requires schools to promote the social and personal development of students and to provide health education for them,
- b) The National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 'Building on Experience'.
- c) Report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs (November 2001).
- d) The 1999 Schools Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) Report.
- e) CL 18/02 and Guidelines for Developing a School Substance Use Policy (DES 2002).
- f) Misuse of Drugs Act 1977 and 1984
- g) The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- h) Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 1999.
- i) The Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002.

1.2 Glenart College recognises that, as in other areas of the country, drugs/alcohol are available in all areas of the county, and it must be assumed, therefore, that they are available to members of the school going community to which Glenart College provides a service.

1.3 Glenart College realises that it is one of its responsibilities to reduce the threat that the availability of drugs/alcohol poses to the academic, social and emotional welfare of the school community and especially its students through.

1.3.1 the establishment of a clear, comprehensive, prevention-based substance use/abuse programme in all its schools;

1.3.2 the provision of a well-articulated set of guidelines, applied uniformly, to address incidents of substance misuse that affect the school environment;

1.3.3 Having a low tolerance threshold in terms of substance misuse and related activity;

1.3.4 Having staff educated in the causes, risk factors, signs and progressive nature of substance misuse so that they can detect problems, counsel, **give advice** and act as role models for their students.

1.4 Glenart College believes that this policy can only be effective with the understanding and cooperation of all relevant parties. Thus, this policy will be available to all students, parents, teachers and ancillary staff in Glenart College, and this will be made known to them by the school authority. Glenart College sincerely believes that a sense of cooperation based upon this knowledge will help prevent or intervene in potential drug/alcohol problems and will enable those involved to handle difficulties as they occur.

## **2. Scope of the Policy:**

2.1 This policy refers to all students who attend Glenart College. All staff, parents and users of the Committee's facilities **must** comply with the terms of relevant legislation and policy in this area.

2.2 Glenart College affirms that students who are over the age of 18 years must comply with this policy and that they shall have the same rights and responsibilities as are given to other students and their parents in this policy.

## **3. Aims and Objectives:**

3.1 Glenart College endeavours to respond to the educational needs of the community. It aims to create and sustain a caring, flexible, supportive and safe environment in which staff and students feel valued, motivated and stimulated in their efforts to grow as human beings and to realise their full potential. Glenart College believes that its objectives are best achieved in a safe and secure environment, which, while recognising individual rights and responsibilities, encourages commitment, and shared responsibility for the achievement of excellence and for the common good.

3.2 Glenart College is concerned with the welfare, care and protection of its community and in particular with its students in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and other relevant legislation.

3.3 This policy contributes to the furtherance of the above aims and includes the following more specific objectives:

3.3.1 to promote in Glenart College, a greater awareness, understanding and clarity on the dangers of substance misuse;

3.3.2 to strengthen existing partnerships in and with communities and build new partnerships to tackle the problems of substance misuse;

3.3.3 to enable students and others to make healthy and informed choices;

3.3.4 to provide a clear framework for all staff in dealing with incidents of substance misuse.

## **4. Aims (Curriculum):**

4.1 To get students to understand the importance of feeling positive about themselves and others, and to be able to express feelings confidently.

4.2 To inculcate in students a responsible attitude towards a range of issues, including the use of drugs/alcohol.

4.3 To develop, in students, decision-making skills and knowledge of factors, which influence the process of making decisions, including choosing between alternatives and considering long and short-term consequences of decisions for themselves and others.

4.4 To help students appreciate ways in which they can control aspects of their own behaviour and resist negative peer pressure.

- 4.5 To provide opportunities for students in Glenart College to acquire knowledge and understanding about the dangers of drug/alcohol misuse and the effects of solvents, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs on body and mind functions.
- 4.6 To increase students' understanding of situations in which substances may be offered, both legally and illegally and to develop skills for remaining in control in such situations.
- 4.7 To make students aware of the law relating to the misuse of drugs/alcohol and tobacco.
- 4.8 To provide knowledge about how to access agencies external to Glenart College e.g. counselling services, clinics, hospitals etc.

## **5. Aims (Procedural)**

- 5.1 To set out clear procedures to be followed by staff in Glenart College that suspect that substance misuse is taking place or that substances are being brought onto school premises or on school related activities.
- 5.2 To ensure that all members of the school community are aware of agreed procedures.
- 5.3 To ensure that all members of the school community understand the very serious view which Glenart College takes of all instances of possession, use/misuse or supply of illegal drugs and the misuse of alcohol, tobacco, other substances and legal drugs.
- 5.4 To provide a framework for liaison with outside agencies including the Gardaí and the Press.
- 5.5 To set out a clear statement of the disciplinary measures, which will be applied in relation substance misuse related incidents.
- 5.6 To set out support and counselling structures that will be part of the response to substance misuse related offences in school and on school related activities.
- 5.7 To ensure that all staff involved in specific substance misuse education have adequate training and/or support as follows:
  - 5.7.1 That there is a shared understanding among the staff of the value of SPHE re: prevention of substance misuse.
  - 5.7.2 That all staff members are aware of the contribution they can make to the prevention of substance misuse within their own subject area.
  - 5.7.3 That all staff members are familiar with the signs of substance misuse.
  - 5.7.4 That all members of staff are aware of the laws relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use as they relate to themselves, to the school and to students.

## **6 Glenart College's position on substance misuse**

- 6.1 Glenart College is committed to the health and safety of all staff, students and users of Committee facilities.
- 6.2 Glenart College does not condone the misuse of drugs or alcohol by students, staff or users of its facilities, nor the illegal supply of such substances.
- 6.3 Glenart College seeks to educate students about the dangers of substance misuse.
- 6.4 Glenart College recognises that, it has a duty to inform and educate its students of the consequences of substance misuse and takes a proactive stance on the matter believing that Health Education is a vital element in the personal and social development of every student.

- 6.5 Fundamental to Glenart College's values is the principle of sharing the responsibility for the education of students with parents.
- 6.6 Glenart College affirms that individual parents should be kept informed of any known involvement by their child with substance misuse.
- 6.7 Cooperation and communication between parents, students and Glenart College is essential for the effective implementation of this policy.
- 6.8 Glenart College affirms that in exceptional circumstances the management of each Glenart College, in consultation with the parents of a particular student/s and with the Chief Executive Officer of Kildare Wicklow ETB, may require a medical certificate indicating that said student/s is/are drug/alcohol free.

## **7 Roles**

### **7.1 The Role of the Principal:**

On behalf of Glenart College, Kildare Wicklow ETB and the Board of Management, the Principal shall

- a. have overall responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the policy.
- b. consult with the parents and appropriate outside agencies
- c. appoint a Social, Personal and Health Education Coordinator within the school, who will have oversight of the curricular aspects of the policy
- d. ensure that all staff dealing with substance misuse issues are adequately trained and supported, subject to the availability of necessary resources.
- e. under the overall direction of the Chief Executive Officer, make all decisions regarding investigation of an incident, communication with, liaison with and reporting to relevant parties and disclosure of information regarding an incident/investigation.
- f. be responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed regarding investigations and their development.
- g. be responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any documentation and records associated with an incident.

### **7.2 The Role of the Board of Management**

- a. It shall be the policy of each Board of Management that the name of Glenart College is not used for or associated with any event or function at which underage drinking and/or other illegal activities may take place.
- b. The Board of Management shall ensure that this policy is adopted, circulated and implemented and that it is reviewed, at school level, on a regular basis. Proposals for amendment should be forwarded to the Head office of Kildare Wicklow ETB before June 30<sup>th</sup> each year.
- c. The Board of Management shall ensure that its Secretary (Principal) shall put in place policies in relation to tobacco, drug and alcohol use/abuse based on current legislation, Department of Education and Science Guidelines and the core principles of the Committee's Policy and that such policies are given to all students, parents and are available to users of school facilities.

- d. The Board of Management shall ensure that structured training in this area is provided for all staff, subject to the availability of necessary resources.
- e. The Board of Management shall ensure that the standards and procedures contained in this policy and in its school policy are strictly adhered to.
- f. The Board of Management shall ensure that all information is collected and issued in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1988) and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003.

### **7.3 The Role of School Staff**

- a. Staff to whom students confide may need to warn said students that certain information cannot be dealt with in total confidence.
- b. Notwithstanding 7.3.1 above, staff must 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/alcohol involvement and this may require referral to the Principal depending on the seriousness of the involvement and its location.
- c. In all cases where substance misuse is known to have occurred on the school premises or on school related activity the facts must be reported to the Principal. Detailed procedures are set out below.
- d. Glenart College expects that all staff will act as positive role models for students generally, and especially in relation to drug/alcohol use.

### **7.4 The Role of Parents**

Glenart College is dedicated to the development of a committed and educated parent body in all its schools, and especially with regard to substance misuse and their awareness of the school's position and procedures regarding identification, intervention, referral and follow-up as well as sanctions to be imposed.

#### **7.5 Parents are expected to:**

- a. Acknowledge the importance of education programmes and policies as they relate to issues of substance misuse.
- b. Recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance misuse.
- c. Assist and cooperate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

#### **7.6 Glenart College affirms that it shall:**

- a. Provide parents with information on what is happening in the school regarding substance misuse educational programmes
- b. Encourage and welcome consultation with parents on the best use of available resources in the community to support the school in its programmes and policy implementation.
- c. Encourage parents to support the school in the overall implementation of its substance misuse policies.

## 8 Drugs Education Programme

- 8.1 Glenart College should have a substance misuse awareness programme based on the Social, Personal and Health Education Syllabus and/or other relevant programmes as outlined in ***“Guidelines for Developing a School Substance Use Policy”***, issued by the Department of Education and Science 2002. The aims of this programme shall include:
  - 8.2 To create a climate where students and those who work with them feel free to talk openly and honestly.
  - 8.3 To foster the self-esteem of each student.
  - 8.4 To involve active learning, using a variety of approaches and methodologies.
  - 8.5 To prepare students for present and future experiences and to enable them to make their own informed decisions, thereby minimizing the damage caused by substance misuse to themselves, their families and their communities.

## 9. Glenart College’s Response to Substance Misuse Related Incidents.

- 9.1 Glenart College considers that substance misuse or supply on school premises or on school related activities are very serious infringements of the school’s regulations as set out in its Behaviour Policy.
- 9.2 If a report is made to the school by a member of the community about alleged ***use/supply of illegal substances***, he/she should be advised to bring the complaint to the Gardaí.
- 9.3 Students will be made aware that the use of illegal drugs/alcohol on the premises, on school related activities or when identifiable with the school may lead to immediate suspension pending a full investigation, and in accordance with the procedures of the Committee as set out in the Code of Behaviour.
- 9.4 In all cases of misuse and/or supply of drugs/alcohol, the Principal or other designated person shall collect all information relevant to the incident and accurate records of all stages of the investigation shall be kept, including:
  - 9.4.1 statements made
  - 9.4.2 communication with other agencies
  - 9.4.3 the investigation outcome
  - 9.4.4 decisions taken and the rationale for such decisions
  - 9.4.5 any penalties or disciplinary measures imposed following investigation
  - 9.4.6 the management and outcome of any appeal that may arise out of the investigation.
- 9.5 Where it is apparent that there is immediate danger to students or the school community, school management shall reserve the right to suspend from the school any student involved in a suspected substance misuse incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident.
- 9.6 The support systems available within Glenart College may be used as an initial response to any incident.
- 9.7 In the case of any involvement in the misuse of drugs/alcohol, the parent shall be informed in a confidential manner. This shall be done in the interest of the health and safety of the student and the school shall share any available information that may help parents in attending to their child’s health and well-being. The student should be kept informed of such developments. Such actions shall be without

- prejudice to the school's separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage any misuse incident.
- 9.8 Health Board Specialists or other agencies may be contacted for advice and assistance.
- 9.9 The school recommends that the number of people involved in investigating and managing a misuse incident should be kept to a minimum, and that confidentiality is ensured.
- 9.10 Where the evidence confirms illicit or illegal drug/alcohol use and/or possession for either personal use or for supply of illegal substances by a student/s in the school or on school related activity, the student/s may be suspended pending a decision of the Board of Management and in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.
- 9.11 The Board of Management must seek to balance the interests of the student/s involved with those of other students and staff and the local community. Therefore, its response to substance misuse related activity must strike a balance between pastoral and disciplinary measures.
- 9.12 Following suspension and prior to readmission to the school the student may be required
- 9.12.1 to attend drugs/alcohol counselling;
  - 9.12.2 at the request of the principal, to provide a medical certificate indicating that he/she is drug/alcohol free;
  - 9.12.3 to give a commitment in writing to abide by the school's Code of Behaviour. This undertaking to be supported by a declaration signed by the student's parent/s, as appropriate.
  - 9.12.4 to give an absolute commitment, in writing, to remain free of involvement with illegal substances and/or substance misuse while a student in the school. This undertaking to be supported by a declaration signed by the student's parent/s, as appropriate.
- 9.13 The Board of Management of Glenart College shall reserve the right to proceed to expulsion procedures without rehabilitation where re-admission is considered hazardous to others in the school.
- 9.14 Students who fail to make any of the commitments listed at 9.12 above or are subsequently found to be in breach of rules regarding substance misuse may be subject to expulsion procedures.
- 9.15 Where the misuse of Drugs Act 1977 and 1984 and any other relevant acts have been infringed, the Principal must inform the Gardaí and the student's parents, as appropriate.
- 9.16 Glenart College affirms that it will that the rules of natural justice apply in the context of dealing with issues of substance misuse and that the procedures outlined in its Behaviour Policy are followed.

## **10 Response to Specific Incidents**

- 10.1 In each of the following cases the incident should be reported to the Principal who will take the required action:

- 10.1.1 Any student found drunk or under the influence of mind or body altering substances on the school premises or on school related activity may be suspended pending a decision of The Board of Management. The student's parents shall be informed and requested to take him/her home and/or for medical attention. If the parent is unable or unwilling to be of assistance, the school authority must exercise its duty of care to the student and ensure his/her well-being. Disciplinary procedures outlined in Section 9 above and in the school's Behaviour Policy will apply, as appropriate.
- 10.1.2 If any student is found intoxicated through drug, alcohol or solvent abuse on the school premises or on any school related activity medical attention should be sought from the nearest medical centre, doctor's surgery or hospital, as appropriate.
- 10.1.3 Alcohol, cigarettes or tobacco found on school premises or on school related activities shall be confiscated. Careful records shall be kept of such items and when investigations are complete the parents may be informed and given the opportunity to redeem such items, where relevant or appropriate.
- 10.1.4 Illegal/controlled drugs/paraphernalia found on the school premises or on any school related activity shall be confiscated immediately. All such items should be carefully recorded and retained pending completion of the investigation, unless otherwise instructed by the Gardaí or other appropriate agency.
- 10.1.5 A member of staff, having good reason for believing that a student may be in possession of an illegal or dangerous substance, may, in the presence of another teacher or responsible adult, ask that student to empty his/her pockets or bag. If the student refuses, the matter should be referred immediately to a senior member of staff who will repeat the request. In the event of another refusal, the parents shall be contacted to obtain their permission. Where there is good reason for doing so, the Gardaí may be called.
- 10.1.6 If a student or any other person is supplying or offering to supply a controlled or dangerous substance on the school premises or on school related activities the Principal should be informed immediately and he/she shall inform, as appropriate, the Chief Executive Officer, the Chairperson of the Board of Management, the Gardaí, and the parents. A full investigation shall ensue and the said student may be suspended pending a decision of the Board Management and in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.
- 10.1.7 Glenart College affirms that through its Boards of Management school authorities shall have the right to search lockers allocated to students and that this shall be done in the presence of another teacher and/or the student.
- 10.1.8 Any material/equipment involved in substance misuse found on school premises shall be notified to the Gardaí or other relevant authority. Disposal of such items shall be a matter for the appropriate authorities, as advised by the Gardaí. The relevant Garda, medical or local authority must dispose of needles and syringes, which present a considerable health hazard. Careful records shall be kept of such items for investigation purposes. The transfer of such items shall be recorded and receipted by the relevant personnel involved in the transfer.

- 10.1.9 Glenart College shall permit the use of prescription medications by students, if the aforementioned are prescribed by a licensed physician with written instructions for a given student. Such medications and their administration shall be the responsibility of the parent/s, in consultation with the school authority.
- 10.2 Glenart College shall allow the use of nonprescription medications (paracetamol, cough syrup etc) by students when such use is authorised by the student's parent/s.
- 10.3 School staff should not administer any form of medication to a student without the express permission of the student's parents, and/or without written instructions, as appropriate.
- 10.4 Students may not smoke on school premises or on any school related activities.

## 11 **Liaison with the Media**

- 11.1 In the interest of confidentiality, no statements should be made to the media in relation to any issue of substance misuse related incidents in the school or on school related activities. The Principal shall be the designated person for dealing with the media.

## 12 **Training and Development:**

- 12.1 Glenart College affirms that, subject to the availability of necessary resources, training will be provided through its schools, Health Boards, the Department of Education and Skills and other relevant agencies for Staff, Boards of Management, Parents and Students.
- 12.2 **Staff** will be trained in:
- A the delivery of educational programmes in relation to drugs, alcohol and tobacco
  - B the role of staff in relation to the management and investigation of a substance misuse incident
- 12.3 **Parents:**
- A will be provided with opportunities to attend information sessions and workshops in relation substance misuse
  - B the school will set up training and educational programmes for parents, as may be necessary and/or appropriate and subject to the availability of resources.
- 12.4 **Board of Management members will:**  
be provided with information, guidance and support regarding issues relating to investigation of and adjudication on incident investigations.
- 12.5 **Students** will:  
be offered programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco and drugs education within the context of each school's programmes.

## 13 Implementation of Policy

13.1 Glenart College's policy on Substance Use/Misuse will be implemented in accordance with the Substance Use/Misuse Policy of Kildare Wicklow ETB.

13.1.1 Glenart College, through its Boards of Management shall ensure that staff training is available in conjunction with the Health Boards, the Department of Education and Skills and other relevant agencies.

13.1.2 Glenart College will have in place a 'Care Team' to monitor inter alia 'at-risk' students and the implementation and evaluation of substance misuse policy and procedure.

13.1.3 Glenart College will ensure that timetabling provision for the Curricular Programme is provided within the framework of the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme.

13.2 The following teaching/intervention methodologies may be used in an age-appropriate programme of education:

13.2.1 Group work/discussion based work.

13.2.2 Peer education.

13.2.3 Drama/role play.

13.2.4 One-to-one support, advice, counselling.

13.2.5 Guest speakers – for students, staff and parents. Guest speakers should be carefully vetted, monitored and evaluated.

13.2.6 The use of localized media campaigns – guided projects, school advertising campaigns etc.

13.2 The following subject areas are identified as being central to the implementation of this policy:

13.2.1 Social, Personal and Health Education.

13.2.2 Civic, Social and Political Education.

13.2.3 English and other languages.

13.2.4 The Sciences.

13.2.5 Home Economics.

13.2.6 Religious Education

13.2.7 Physical Education

13.2.8 Other

## Appendix 1

### Definitions:

1. **The School:** The “school” includes school buildings, grounds, play areas, public areas where students congregate coming to and going from school, and any other specific area that may apply.
2. **School Property:** All buildings and grounds owned or leased by Co Wicklow Vocational Education Committee, on any school-related activity or on school busses bringing or taking students to and from school.
3. **Identifiable with the school:** This refers to times when the student is in school; going to and from school; on school busses; on school tours/trips; in school uniform or at locations associated with the school.
4. **Parent/s:** As defined in the Education Act 1998.
5. **The Principal:** Reference to the Principal should be taken to mean the Principal for the time being as appointed by the Committee and defined in the Education Act 1998 or the Deputy Principal where the Principal is either unavailable or has delegated to the Deputy Principal. The term “Centre Director” may be substituted for “Principal” and the term “designated resource person” may be substituted for “Deputy Principal” in the case of Youthreach Centres.
6. **Substance Misuse:** This can be defined in a number of ways. One commonly used definition describes it as the use of any drug, legal or illegal, which damages some aspect of the user’s life i.e. their physical or mental health, their relationships, or their working effectiveness. It can further be defined as the inappropriate use, furnishing, or possession of any illegal or non-prescribed narcotic drug, hallucinogen, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, solvent or intoxicant of any kind.
7. **Use:** Ingestion, injection or inhalation of the above substances.
8. **Possession:** The presence of alcohol, tobacco, unauthorised solvents or an illicit drug on the person of a student or other member of the school community, in any amount; in or on any item or belonging under the general control or responsibility of the student or other member of the school community (including school lockers); or owned by the student or other member of the school community when such presence of the substance was observed, discovered or otherwise determined.
9. **Supply:** The sale, transfer, trade or exchange in any manner of substances listed at 6 above by a student or other member of the school community or person external to the school.
10. **Prescription medication:** Medicines officially prescribed by a licensed physician with clear instructions for a given person.

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12. The Social Services section of the relevant Health Board should be informed, through the Chief Executive Officer, as outlined in The Kildare Wicklow ETB’s Guidelines on Child Abuse, if the child is considered to be at serious risk.

#### 4. Dissemination and Review of the Policy

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the 30th August 2022

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Chairperson

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Principal