



Edmund Rice College
Generosity Compassion Faith Courage

Substance Use Policy of Edmund Rice College Phoenix Park

School Details

Address: Phoenix Park Racecourse,
Navan Road,
Castleknock,
Dublin 15.

Roll Number: 68306h

School Patron: The Edmund Rice Colleges Trust

Ratification and Review

Date of ratification: 22/04/26

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Principal

Signed:

Date of next review: April 2028

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Iontaobhas Scoileanna Éamainn Rís
Edmund Rice Schools Trust

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Mission statement

Our mission at Edmund Rice College is to foster a culture of **generosity** and acceptance where each person has both the **faith** and **courage** to speak and act with **compassion**. We are committed to the holistic development of each child and will support them through their spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, emotional and physical development, while honouring their diverse learning styles. To recognise and develop each person's sense of self worth which, will foster a genuine interest and concern for others in the wider community and in the world in which we live. We recognise and respect the role of parents as primary care givers and in our capacity as educational professionals, we will work together to guide and support students to become responsible, accountable and caring citizens.

Vision statement

At Edmund Rice College we strive to further develop a community that welcomes and nourishes our gospel-based values, that prepares our children for lifelong learning and is a place where friendships are formed.

To achieve our vision at Edmund Rice College we aim:

- o To nourish Christian values as a Catholic Community. To plan, organise and celebrate as a Eucharistic community.
- o To challenge and encourage our students to achieve their personal best in all endeavours.
- o To provide a stimulating, happy and secure environment where each child, teacher and adult is valued.
- o To welcome, respect and value people in all faiths and cultures.
- o To provide a caring community where little things matter.

Rationale

This policy has been formulated to protect all the pupils and staff in Edmund Rice College. Issues outside the school impact on the school Community -one of these is the use/abuse of substances. The management recognises that the issue of substance use/abuse is very serious with the potential to affect students and staff. In relation to the Substance Abuse Policy, Edmund Rice College is conscious that each situation is unique and thus, a flexible response is required. By substances the school means legal drugs, (analgesics e.g. Panadol / Aspirin etc.,) illegal drugs and misuse of prescribed drugs, solvents, vapes etc. The Substance Abuse Policy is one among many that serve to endorse the school's ethos. Edmund Rice College asserts its right to protect and promote its ethos by requiring certain standards of behaviour and prohibiting certain practices. The school's 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 Education Act (1998) provides that schools promote the social and personal education of students and provide health education for them.

Edmund Rice College's Position on Substance Use/Abuse

It has been agreed that a Drug is defined as a substance, which changes the way the body functions mentally, physically and emotionally. Alcohol, tobacco and nicotine products are included in this definition. Edmund Rice College is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school community in relation to drugs. We believe that teachers, parents, Board of Management, students and other relevant personnel need to work together, and that co-operation is essential to the acceptance and implementation of the policy. The possession, use or supply of drugs in the school, or on school trips or in non-school time by any student of the school is not acceptable. The only exception is for legitimate medicinal use of which Edmund Rice College must have prior knowledge.

Prescribed Medication

Parents of students taking prescribed medication should inform school in writing of that fact. Teachers are not obliged to personally undertake the administration of medicines. For school

trips/matches etc, the teacher will be aware of individual student needs regarding medication. However, the student is responsible for ensuring this medication is packed. It is recognised that children with long-term recurring health problems, such as Asthma, Diabetes, Epilepsy etc. be accommodated within the school. However, proper procedures for the administration of medicines must be made. Parents should be encouraged to provide maximum support and assistance in helping the school accommodate the student. This would include such measures such as self-administration (where necessary and only after approval from a G.P.) or under parental supervision. In the case where a student is suffering from a life-threatening illness as set out above, parents should consult with the Principal or Deputy Principal and Year-Head and should also outline clearly in writing, what can and cannot be done in a particular emergency situation with particular reference to what may put the student at risk. In the case of medical emergencies, where teachers have been given medication to administer, only the smallest dose possible should be administered to ensure recovery, until a medical expert can take over. Confirmation of this should be obtained from the G.P. responsible for the child, before the School would agree to administer such lifesaving medication in its care.

No member of staff has the authority to administer or provide any medication to a student, should that student feel unwell while at school e.g. complaining of a headache or toothache.

Further details can be found in the Administration of Medication Policy.

Drug Education and Information Programmes

The Board of Management is responsible for providing a comprehensive programme on alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs in so far as these topics are part of the curriculum in such subjects as SPHE, CSPE, RE, Science, and Home Economics, whose teachers will assist in the delivery of the programme. The Principal in conjunction with the Parents Association is responsible for providing programmes and or information for parents as identified needs arise. The Principal, in consultation with the wider community such as An Garda Síochana, may set up a drug policy working group to monitor and review all issues relating to the school's drug policy.

Our educational aims in relation to drug education are:

- To increase the self-esteem and confidence of young people.
- To equip young people with personal and social skills.
- To enable young people to make informed, healthy and responsible choices.
- To provide honest and age-appropriate information on drugs.
- To minimise the harm caused by drug use by offering supportive interventions.

Role of Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Acknowledge the importance of these programmes.
- Recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse.
- Assist and co-operate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

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.

Concern re: students and illegal substance use outside school

When the School authorities are made aware that a real concern exists (P/A – what constitutes a real concern?) where a student may be involved in illegal substance use outside school, the following procedure is followed:

- The parents/guardians of the student will be informed either in writing or by phone by the Principal about the concern.
- It will be pointed out that the School is not accusing the student of using illegal substances but has a concern that this might be the case.
- The parents/guardians will be invited into the School to meet and discuss the concern with the Principal if they so wish.
- In addition, the Principal will provide the parents/guardians with the phone number and a contact name for a Local Drug Awareness Support Service

Managing Drugs/Substance Use Related Incidents

In School Investigation

All incidents involving the use of drugs will be investigated immediately.

Where the School forms a strong suspicion of drug use, possession or dealing, the school reserves the right to follow the following steps.

- A) Complete an Incident Report. 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.
- B) Investigate thoroughly, in so far as it is possible with regard to the resource available, all aspects of the incident that the School deems relevant to the incident.
- C) Inform the parents/guardians by phone or writing. In the case of a suspected abuse incident the School will immediately inform parents/guardians. This will be done without prejudice to the School's separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage any abuse incident.

- D) In all cases where there is no immediate danger to the young person/s, time will be taken to assess the situation before responding. A written report will be completed on all incidents involving alcohol, tobacco, vaping and drugs.
- E) 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 student involved in a suspected abuse incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident.
- F) As part of the investigation, the school will instruct the student to make available his/her belongings for investigation or to require that pockets, bags and lockers be emptied in such a case (more than one staff member should be present where possible and parents will be informed beforehand), and to question the student pending a meeting with parents.
- G) The School will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances 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.
- H) The School will maintain a written record as part of the file of all stages of the investigation of an incident, including records referred to in the above steps, communication with other people or agencies involved or concerned with the matters under investigation, the investigation outcome, decisions taken and the rationale for these decisions, any penalties or disciplinary measures imposed following an investigation, and the management and outcome of any appeal that may arise following an investigation.
- I) 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.
- J) Information obtained by the Principal and person/s directly involved in the case and all written documentation will be held confidentially by the Principal.
- K) Parents will be informed, and the School will offer support and information as required.

- L) Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the School rules regarding drugs are broken, the sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature and severity of the offence. These will be consistent with School rules regarding other breaches of conduct.

Presenting Findings

If circumstances merit an investigation is continuing, the School will put the full particulars of the incident to the student(s) concerned and their parent(s) in the following manner:

- A) Copies of all records deemed relevant to the position of the student concerned and to the nature of the complaints or allegations that a student is facing will be made available to the student and his parents—at the discretion of the School (P/A – clarification) —in time to permit the student a reasonable opportunity to make their own reply to the matters at issue and any representations that they would wish to make or have made on their behalf.
- B) The School will allow the student concerned and their parent’s reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. The School will take into account any response so made and any other relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.
- C) The School shall shortly thereafter inform the student and their parents of the school’s findings and their reasons for these. If the school finds that the student has been guilty of or involved in / or implicated in an incident, it shall indicate the penalty or sanctions that it intends to impose in the circumstances.

Potential Actions

In relation to a verified and investigated incident, the School and / or the Board of Management may follow the following actions:

- Disciplinary procedures will be followed, as per Code of Behaviour, if school rules are broken and suspension, and or, expulsion may be an option.
- Implement disciplinary actions or sanctions, including but not limited to an oral warning, a written warning, a suspension of three days duration, a suspension of more than three days duration, other sanctions short of expulsion, and expulsion.
- Parents/legal guardians, or students of 18 or over, may appeal any decision to expel, or to suspend for 20 school days or more, to the Board of Management, ERST and to the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998, Section 29).
- If the person has a drug problem, then referral to an appropriate service will be recommended.
- Tusla and The Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) of the Gardaí will be contacted by the Principal or a designated person in the event of a confirmed illegal drug incident and any illegal drugs found on the premises will be dealt with by the JLO.
- The School can, at its sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstances or representations that it considers should be taken into account.
- The School should also ensure that pastoral supports are offered to the student / students and parents affected by an incident of substance abuse. These incidents can be sometimes traumatic for those involved and the services of a tutor, counsel or etc. will be made available as appropriate.

Duty of Staff

Teachers in their pastoral role may encounter changes in a student's behaviour and attitude on occasion, or over a period of time.

The duty of teachers and staff to the School Community prevent them from offering total confidentiality to any students when they come in contact with an abuse incident or suspected abuse incident.

The Board of Management requires all staff to report immediately, any incidents where pupils/employees/visitors encounter the use/suspected use of alcohol/drugs on the School premises or during a school related activity (e.g. outing or tour) such as;

- Individuals who exhibit symptoms/behaviour that may suggest the use of drugs/alcohol.
- Individuals who are involved in the distribution, purchase or use of drugs/alcohol.
- The discovery of suspect substances/ paraphernalia in the school.

The School 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.

The student should not be confronted openly before their peers. There should be no assumption of guilt regarding substance misuse, as there are a variety of conditions, which might mimic the suspected misuse of substances.

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 student or their possessions. Where there is a refusal to co-operate, the student should be brought to the Principal/Deputy Principal whose responsibility it is to proceed with the matter.

The Principal/Deputy Principal will recognise that the health/safety and the wellbeing of the student/ students are 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: Year-Head, Tutor, Guidance Counsellors, S.P.H.E. Coordinators, Class Teacher etc.

Where considered necessary, legal advice will be sought. If illegal drugs/ paraphernalia are found on School premises the School will contact the Gardaí about its safe disposal. It is the responsibility of the Principal/ Deputy Principals 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.

Issue of Confidentiality

The Principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any written documentation and records associated with an incident.

The School recognises the importance in limiting, as far as practicable, the number of people involved in investigating and managing a substance use incident and that it is the aim of the school only to involve those properly concerned with an incident. However, it should ensure that students and their parents accept that:

- The duty of teachers and staff to the school community precludes them from offering total confidentiality to any students when they come in contact with an abuse incident or suspected abuse incident.
- The school may be required in a given situation to contact, as appropriate, such authorities as the Medical Services, Tusla, Gardaí, Health Board, Probation Service or Officers of the Court.

- The school may need to engage the expert assistance of an appropriate third party to properly investigate an incident.
- The School may be duty bound to notify certain persons about an incident and/ or the outcome of an incident investigation under statute, regulations or DES guidelines.

Media

The Principal or a nominated spokesperson will handle all media queries. The School will not comment on individual cases but may refer to the School policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug-related incident

Training and Staff Development

Provision will be made as follows for:

- The School will facilitate training for staff involved in delivering Social, Personal and Health Education Programmes.
- Staff will be offered appropriate information and awareness training.
- First-aid training will be made available to key staff.

Parents and Board of Management

The School will provide opportunities to attend information evenings and workshops in relation to drugs and the School policy.

Students

Edmund Rice College will offer all its students drug education programmes within the context of their SPHE, CSPE, RE, Science, and Home Economics, whose teachers will assist in the delivery of the programme.

Self-Referral: When a student (or their parents or legal guardians) confides that they have a problem with intoxicants, the matter will be treated in confidence and with understanding. Parents or legal guardians of students will be informed and the School will co-operate with and

facilitate medical or other professionals involved, insofar as reasonably possible, having regard to the welfare of the student and of others.

Monitoring of the Policy

The Principal will regularly monitor and update aspects of the policy on the three areas of:

- Drug Education Programmes.
- Managing Drug Related Incidents.
- Parent, Staffing and Management Training.

Review of the Policy

The policy will be reviewed regularly or in the light of changing information.

Evaluation

As part of a policy review, teachers, parents, students, Board of Management and other relevant groups will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for one year and any amendments will be incorporated into the policy. Three main areas of the policy to be evaluated are:

- Drug Education Programmes.
- Managing Drug Related Incidents.
- Parents, Staff and Management Training and courses offered to the school community.

Dissemination of the Policy

The policy will be made publicly available on the school website.

Glossary

Banned or Prohibited Substances. All substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non-validated prescription medication, all alcohol and tobaccos used contrary to the law of the land.

The School reserves the right to determine that a substance found at the School qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance.

Drug Paraphernalia. Any banned or prohibited substance as defined above, any items that may be deemed to be used in the taking of illicit substances, and any written or printed material promoting the use of illicit substances.

Incident. Any incident relating to banned or prohibited substances that occurs in the School or during School functions or outings, field-trips, tours, etc. or any such incident that may be deemed damaging to the health or welfare of the student concerned, to other students or to the policy or reputation of the School. The School reserves the right to determine whether a specific incident constitutes an abuse incident to be addressed under the terms of the policy.

Parents. For the purpose of the policy, parents should be defined to include natural parents, foster parents, or guardians of the student concerned as applicable, or any person acting in loco parentis, either on a temporary or permanent basis, on the date of an abuse incident.

The Principal. In the policy the reference to the Principal should be taken to mean the Principal for the time being appointed by the School and defined in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 or the Deputy Principal where the Principal is either unavailable or has delegated to the Deputy Principal.

Signs and Symptoms of Teen Substance Use

What parents should look for:

- Changes in friends.
- Subtle changes in conversations with friends, e.g. being more secretive, using 'coded' language.
- Changes in motivation, alertness, concentration, perception, coordination and reaction time.
- Being agitated or drowsy and with pupils of the eye dilated
- Increased secrecy about activities and possessions.

- Change in clothing choices.
- Increased need for money.
- Use of perfume, deodorants and incense to mask smoke or chemical odours.
- New or increased use of mouthwash and breath mints to hide the smell of alcohol.
- Possession of drug paraphernalia e.g. pipes, rolling paper etc and inhalant products
- Missing prescriptions drugs.

The following are possible examples of drug incidents:

- Emergencies when the person may be unconscious.
- Intoxication/uncharacteristic behaviour.
- Suspicion of drug use, possession or dealing.
- Disclosure by another person.
- Possession of a legal/illegal drug on the school premises or on a school related activity.
- Selling/supplying legal/illegal drugs.
- Person seeking help from another member of staff.
- School grounds being used for drug activity.
- Drug paraphernalia found on school property.

This list is not exhaustive