

Coláiste Pobail Bhaile na gCros
Castlepollard Community College

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CASTLEPOLLARD COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

Substance Use & Abuse Policy
20206-27

Proposed by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Date: _____

Mission Statement:

In Castlepollard Community College our Mission is to provide a school environment which facilitates excellent teaching and learning. We strive to continuously improve our school. Our values include a high expectation of personal achievement and success; commitment to good order and discipline; mutual respect for our students and staff and a high level of safety and support for our students.

We endeavour to have our parents, teachers, and community members actively involved in our students' learning.

Our ethos is distinct and as a result, our core values of Care, Community, Respect, Equality and Excellence in education permeate through everything we do.

Rationale:

The National Drugs Strategy 2017-2025, "Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery", sets out a detailed programme of action to be implemented by Government departments and agencies to tackle substance abuse, based on the four separate pillars of:

1. Supply Reduction
2. Education and Prevention
3. Treatment
4. Research

The second of these pillars relates specifically to the role to be played by the educational sector. One objective in this area is to create greater societal awareness regarding the dangers and prevalence of drug misuse. Another objective is to equip young people and other vulnerable groups with the skills and supports necessary to make informed choices about their health, personal lives and social development. The new strategy identifies two key strategies that are very relevant to schools.

Castlepollard Community College also acknowledges that it has an important role to play in drugs education, both in terms of prevention and offering support to those who use drugs. Copies of this policy will always be available from the school office.

Scope of this Policy:

This policy applies to:

- ☐ to the whole school community during school time
- ☐ During school related activities
- ☐ to school users during school time
- ☐ To anybody using the school grounds or partaking in a school related activity

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) Position:

As part of its role as a government agency committed to implementing the National Drugs Strategy 2017-2025, "Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery", the Department of Education and Science now requires that all schools have a Substance Use policy in place.

Research has shown that schools that have a developed strategy for responding to the issue of drug misuse, in all its forms, are best equipped to respond to drug-related incidents as they arise and are most successful in terms of drug prevention and education.

Given this fact, the best approach to developing such a strategy is through a formal policy formulated within the context of the school ethos and the framework of the school plan and centered on the wellbeing of the young person and the school community. The National Drugs Strategy (2017-2015) recognises the importance of school-based interventions. (See Appendix 1)

Circular 18/02:

Circular 18/02 and the Guidelines (October 2002) set down the rationale, objectives and the process to be observed regarding formulating a policy on Substance Use.

'The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of this reality. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their student cohort and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues' (Guidelines, P1).

Objectives:

The DES recommends that the main objectives of a school policy should be:

- ☐ The welfare, care and protection of every young person in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- ☐ To address education relating to tobacco, alcohol and drug use
- ☐ The procedures for managing incidents relating to these substances

In turn, Castlepollard Community College aims to:

- ☐ To raise awareness of the issue of substance use among the community.
- ☐ To provide a whole school education programme for pupils through the integration of various subject areas which deal with substance use e.g. SPHE, CSPE, P.E., R.E, Wellbeing, Social Education in L.C.A and guest speakers.
- ☐ To provide educational and preventative programmes on substance use.
- ☐ To prevent substance use by our students through education.
- ☐ To provide information for parents with regard to substance use. e.g. information talks/leaflets on substance use and abuse
- ☐ To provide ongoing staff training. Staff will be offered substance use information and awareness training. The school will support the delivery of substance use education by providing relevant and up to date resource materials for the SPHE programme.

Education Concerning Substance Use and Abuse:

Castlepollard Community College, will ensure education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs is provided in the Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) programme. Time for this will also be provided in the school's Wellbeing programme. Time is allocated to substance use education at Junior Cycle as outlined in the SPHE plan. Every effort will be made to facilitate parents/guardians concerns about substance use and education will be referred to outside agencies where appropriate. The school will provide for appropriate health education modules at Senior Cycle also. Outside speakers with sufficient knowledge and experience in their area

will be invited to address groups of students from time to time. This is normally in the presence of their teachers.

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.

To assist the parents in their role Castlepollard CC will:

- ☐ Provide them with information on what is happening in the school regarding education programmes (ex. Wellbeing Programme, SPHE etc)
- ☐ Encourage and welcome consultation with parents on the best use of available resources in the community to support the school in its programme and policy implementation.

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug-Related Incidents:

Substance use incidents include:

- ☐ Intoxication/ unusual behaviour
- ☐ Use or suspected use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco on the school premises or during a school related activity. This includes the misuse of hand sanitising gel.
- ☐ Selling/ supplying legal or illegal substances
- ☐ Drug paraphernalia found on school property
- ☐ Possession of substances on the school premises or on a school related activity

In the event of a substance 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. The College in managing and investigating a substance abuse will take the following steps incident. These steps will include the following:

1. 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 substance abuse incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident.
2. The completion of an Incident Report. This can be completed on an Incident Report Form or on VSWare. The Drug Incident Report Form (Appendix 1) can be used or similar which provides the same information. The completion of an incident report on VSWare must be done in consultation with the relevant Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal to ensure the confidential collection and storage of this information so as to ensure access is restricted to those on a 'need to know' basis.
3. The school will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any substance abuse incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this. Furthermore, the school may liaise with appropriate outside agencies to assist with the investigation.
4. The school will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances and drug paraphernalia associated with a substance abuse incident, carefully recording all such items and retaining them pending completion of the investigation, unless otherwise instructed by appropriate outside agencies. The disposal of drug paraphernalia will be conducted in consultation with the Gardai or other relevant agencies.

5. 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.
6. The school will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of an incident, including records referred to in the above steps, communications 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.
7. 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.
8. If the circumstances merit and the investigation is continuing, the school will put the full particulars of the incident to the students concerned and their parents 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—in time to permit the student a reasonable opportunity to make his own reply to the matters at issue and any representations that he would wish to make or have made on his behalf.
 - b. The school will allow the student concerned and her/his parents reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. The school will take in to 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 his parents of the school's findings and their reasons for these. If the school finds that the students has been guilty of or involved or implicated in an incident, it shall indicate the penalty or sanctions that it intends to impose in the circumstances.
9. In relation to a verified and investigated incident, the Board of Management may 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.
10. 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 asserts the right to exercise an appropriate show of mercy.
11. The school will endeavour to provide pastoral supports to the student / students and parents affected by an incident of substance misuse. These incidents can be sometimes traumatic for those involved and the services of a tutor, counsellor, etc would demonstrate the school's commitment to caring for all students at a time of personal crisis.
12. Where a staff member suspects that a student may be under the influence of an illegal substance &/or that there is an odour from the student or their belongings, the staff member shall duly inform another member of school management and in the event that there is a consensus from both then the student shall be withdrawn from class and contact be made with parent/guardian and the student will be asked to leave the premises.

The Involvement and Roles of Various Parties in an Incident/Investigation:

The Principal or his delegate is the person responsible for all matters relating to this area. He or she may nominate the Deputy Principal or Year Head or other nominated staff to act on his or her behalf in the investigation of a substance abuse incident. The duties and responsibilities of the Principal (hereafter to be understood as meaning the Principal or his/her nominee) in this regard include the following:

- a) The Principal is responsible for dealing with substance abuse incidents arising at the school.
- b) All reports of substance abuse incidents or suspected incidents must be reported to the Principal.
- c) The Principal makes all decisions regarding investigation of an incident; communication with, liaison with, and reporting to relevant parties; and disclosure of information regarding an investigation.
- d) The Principal is responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed regarding investigation developments.
- e) The Principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any written documentation and records associated with an incident.
- f) The Principal is responsible for taking possession of any banned or prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia and deciding what should be done with same upon appropriate advice.
- g) The Principal may seek the assistance of the Deputy Principal, Year Head, and/or other relevant personnel in conducting an incident investigation

The previous section has dealt with the procedure for communicating with parents and students in the event that a substance abuse incident continues to be investigated, and the school is required to put the particulars of the matter to the student or students concerned.

However, independent of such a development, the school may wish to contact the parents of a student for a variety of reasons regarding a suspected substance abuse incident.

In such an event, the school will immediately inform parents - particularly where there is a concern regarding the health and welfare of a student - and share any available information that may help parents in attending to their child's health and wellbeing and will keep parents and students, where appropriate, informed about what is happening and why. It is important to clarify that such actions will be undertaken without prejudice to the school's separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage any substance abuse incident.

The school recognises the importance in limiting, as far as is practicable, the number of people involved in investigating and managing a substance abuse 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 preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any students when they come in contact with a substance abuse incident or suspected substance abuse incident.
- ☐ The school may be required in a given situation to contact, as appropriate, such authorities as the Gardai, Probation Service, or Officers of the Courts, etc,
- ☐ 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.

The College will handle media inquiries involving a substance abuse incident in the following way:

- ☐ The Principal, or her/his representative will be the point of contact in relation to all media inquiries.
- ☐ The College will not comment on any individual matter when an investigation is in progress other than to outline its policy and procedures for managing incidents. ☐ In the interests of the school's reputation, LWETB / Board of Management may clarify the

school's position regarding an incident after the investigation has been completely concluded.

The Administration of Medicines:

The school is developing an "Administration of Medicines Policy" to ensure adequate understanding of the position of Castlepollard Community College in relation to the administration of medicine.

In the first instance; the Board of Management requests that parents are to ensure that Principal/ Deputy Principal/relevant Year Head is made aware of any medical condition suffered by any student. Details are required from the parent/ guardian giving the name of the child, name and dose of medication and if/when parents are to be notified and how they can be contacted.

While the Board of Management has a duty to safeguard the health and safety of students when they are engaged in authorised school activities, parents/guardians are responsible to ensure that their son/daughter bring appropriate medication for their condition and that the tour leader is informed of same.

Confidentiality:

While every effort will be made to respect confidentiality, it is not possible to guarantee confidentiality to individuals in relation to substance use incidents. Information may need to be shared with certain members of staff, the Parents/Guardians of those involved or with an appropriate external agency. The limits of confidentiality will be explained to the individual prior to disclosure where possible.

Informing Parents:

It is standard practice to inform parents/guardians if their child is involved in a substance use incident. Their involvement and support are essential in the resolution of these difficulties. Parents/guardians will be invited to the school to discuss what has happened and the student will be informed that their parents/guardians are being notified. Parents/ guardians may ask the school principal or member of staff to refer them to an appropriate agency should they wish to seek further support and information about external services.

Informing Gardaí:

Garda advice may be sought about incidents that are illegal and constitute a breach of this policy. This decision will rest with the Principal and other key staff.

Searches:

This school retains the right to search any part of school property if there is reasonable cause to believe a substance in breach of this policy may be contained therein. Two members of staff must be present during any form of search. Students will be given the option to handover any substance prior to a search. If a student refuses to co-operate, their parent/guardian will be called in and a Garda may be called to conduct a search of any school member should illegal activity be suspected. A teacher cannot carry out a personal physical search.

Disposal:

If substances in contravention of this policy are found on the school premises, they will be locked away by two members of staff and the Gardaí may be contacted to dispose of them. In the case of school tours / school trips off site, the teachers in charge is responsible for the implementation of this policy and the Principal/ Deputy Principal should be informed as soon as possible.

Links to other Policies and to Curriculum Delivery:

The Substance Use Policy is linked with other school policies within the framework of the overall School Plan, in particular the Health and Safety Policy, the Code of Behaviour; the Critical Incident Management Plan and the Administration of Medicines Policy. As part of Social Political and Health Education (SPHE) students are provided with the opportunity to develop the skills and competencies to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development. This includes providing education on substance use issues.

Provision for training and staff development:

In supporting this policy, the school is committed to providing ongoing training and staff development. The school's Senior Management Team, in consultation with the Board of Management, will regularly review the training needs of the school to ensure they are adequately catering to the needs of the school community.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Role of Board of Management:

- a) To ensure that the policy is in place and, is implemented and that it is reviewed.
- b) To provide for appropriate staff development.
- c) To support staff in the implementation of this policy.
- d) To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- e) To decide on appeals by parents and or pupils with respect to decisions made by the Principal.

Role of Principal/Deputy Principal:

- a) To monitor the implementation of this policy and to ensure it is reviewed by the review date.
- b) To investigate all referrals or cause to have them investigated in accordance with this policy and the school's disciplinary policy.
- c) To liaise with parents and all outside agencies including the Gardaí.
- d) To implement the policy and to support other teaching staff in their implementation of this policy.
- e) To arrange appropriate staff development.
- f) To ensure that appropriate education programmes for students are in place.
- g) To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Role of the teaching staff:

- a) To advocate positive and healthy lifestyle and decisions.
- b) To treat the threat of possible drug use as a serious threat to the welfare of pupils and the school community.
- c) To inform themselves regarding the signs and symptoms of drug use and about drugs and their effects.
- d) To be alert to disclosure by pupils regarding their own or others' involvement in drug taking activity.
- e) To bring any such information or suspicion to the attention of senior management in a timely manner.
- f) To implement this policy.
- g) To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Role of Guidance Counsellor:

- a) To offer advice and support to any student who may be involved in drugs misuse.
- b) To offer advice to their parent(s) or guardian(s) where further support and information may be found.
- c) To offer counselling as appropriate.
- d) To liaise with outside agencies concerning counselling and related support.

Role of students:

- a) To co-operate fully with the school implementation of the policy.
- b) To bring any such information or suspicion to the attention of the principal in a timely manner.

Role of Parents:

- a) To educate their children about substance abuse.
- b) To support the policy and to co-operate fully with the school in its implementation.
- c) To bring to the attention of the school authorities any concern or information they may have in relation to substance misuse.
- d) To appraise this policy with regard to its suitability and the effectiveness of its implementation and to make recommendations for improvement where appropriate.

Procedures for Review, Monitoring and Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed, and its impact evaluated when necessary. The Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, and the staff delivering the SPHE programme assume the responsibility for monitoring the effective implementation of this policy. Ongoing review will take into consideration changing information, legislation, developments in the school programme and feedback from parents/ guardians, students, teachers, community members, Gardaí etc.

Success Criteria:

That the school is free of drugs and drug abuse; that incidents and reasonable suspicions are reported and acted upon.

Implementation:

This policy will be implemented by the Board of Management of Castlepollard Community College.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2 – The Two Objectives of the National Drugs Strategy:

Objective 1.1: Promote healthier lifestyles within society:

Substance misuse prevention strategies targeting families, schools and communities are an effective way of promoting health and wellbeing among the general population and result in wider benefits for society in terms of savings in future health, social and crime costs. Prevention strategies include measures to prevent early use of alcohol and other drugs among young people, reduce the misuse of alcohol and other drugs, and minimise harm, where drug use has already started.

Raising awareness of the risks of substance use and increasing understanding of the harmful effects of substance misuse on the health of the user and other people in the person's life is an important part of the work of prevention. DATFs have made a significant contribution in this area through organising local and regional awareness initiatives and promoting evidence-based approaches to community action on alcohol that raise awareness of alcohol-related harm. Support for these initiatives will continue under the new strategy.

Evidence suggests that education and awareness programmes that are delivered alongside other measures and build the life skills and confidence necessary to support positive behaviours and choices, are more likely to be effective in encouraging protective and healthy behaviour than stand-alone measures. On the other hand, initiatives that use scare tactics or testimonials from ex-drug users to discourage drug use can be counterproductive and may have little impact on changing behaviour

Effective drug prevention involves integrated holistic policies and actions, which take account of the different risk factors for substance use, such as parental substance misuse, family circumstances, peer pressure, school or work life, lifestyle reasons and socio-economic factors. Promoting a joined-up approach between different government policies and strategies that may have a bearing on the risk factors for substance misuse is important in this context.

Prevention is a collaborative effort, which involves a range of stakeholders, including parents and families, those working in education, DATFs, family support networks, youth services, student unions, sporting organisations and networks of people who use drugs. Prevention programmes should be evidence-based, adhere to quality standards and involve participants in programme design and implementation.

Using manual-based programmes, which set out the practical aspects of the intervention and ensuring programmes are implemented and regularly evaluated, all increase the likelihood of success and better outcomes. A coordinated and consistent approach to prevention and education interventions will be achieved by supporting specific capacity building initiatives aimed at the relevant sectors and interests' groups involved in drug and alcohol education

Objective 1.2: Prevent use of drugs and alcohol at a young age:

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures 16, the national policy framework for children and young people, 2014-2020, provides an additional context for this strategy to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of children and young people. In particular, Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures commits to a whole-of-Government and whole-of society approach to supporting children and young people achieve good physical, mental, social and emotional health and wellbeing to make positive choices to be safe and protected from harm and realise their potential.

Preventing or delaying substance use aims to reduce the negative health and social consequences of drug and alcohol use in society and is therefore an important element in promoting healthier lifestyles and a healthy society generally. Using substances at a young age increases the likelihood of developing problems with alcohol and other drugs later in life. There are physical health risks associated with drug and alcohol use, and adolescents who use substances expose themselves to those risks over a longer period of time. Family circumstances, socio-economic status and a lack of educational attainment can be underlying reasons for early substance use, and drug use in adolescents frequently overlaps with other mental health problems.

Surveys from the past ten years show that the greatest increases in drug use are amongst younger people. Research shows that the proportion of young people consuming illegal drugs in the last year has risen since 2002/03. The use of ecstasy among 15-34 year olds rose sharply from 0.9% in 2010/11 to 4.4% in 2014/15.

School-based Interventions & The Wellbeing Programme:

Most universal prevention programmes take place in an educational setting. In Ireland, substance use education in primary and post-primary schools has been developed through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). The 2015 Life Skills Survey indicates that more than 90% of schools provide their students with information on alcohol and drug misuse through SPHE and other means and that 95% of post-primary schools have, or are progressing, a substance abuse policy. DATFs can play a valuable role in supplementing, complementing and supporting a planned, comprehensive and established SPHE programme.

Building the capacity of young people to take charge of their own physical and mental health and wellbeing is at the heart of a whole-school health promotion approach to substance misuse. The Action Plan for Education 17 aims to ensure resilience and personal wellbeing are integral parts of the education and training system.

Evidence suggests that comprehensive school-based programmes that combine social and personal development and provide information about substance use are more likely to be effective in preventing early substance use. This is the approach recommended in the Action Plan for Education 17 and has become a key component of a new Wellbeing area of learning introduced at Junior Cycle level.

Schools will have flexibility in designing their Wellbeing Programme to ensure that it suits their students and their local context. They will be encouraged to work towards a shared vision and set of indicators which describe what is important.

It will also be important to ensure that SPHE teachers, Guidance Counsellors and Home School Liaison Co-ordinators are given the opportunity to avail of continuing professional development to build their capacity to deliver substance use education in line with the Action Plan.

In addition, Wellbeing Guidelines that provide a clear and rational structure to support the promotion of health and wellbeing in all schools, have been developed by the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive and the

Action Plan is committed to the roll out of a national programme to support the implementation of these guidelines in all primary and post-primary schools.

Appendix 3 – Relevant Resources, Documents & Legislation:

Service	Contact Details
Midlands Community Alcohol and Drug Service	043 33 50137
Alcoholics Anonymous	01 - 8420700
Drugs helpline	1800 - 609090
C.A.D.S (Community Alcohol & Drug Service) HSE	044-9341630
Midlands Youth Drug and Alcohol Support (MYDAS)	057 935169
HSE Health & Wellbeing Division	057 9357817
HRB National Drugs Library	01 2345175
NACDA – (National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol)	01 6354271
Family Support Network – Supporting family members living with substance misuse.	018980148
Jigsaw – The National Centre for Youth Mental Health.	018905810

Websites & Publications:

- ☐ www.drugs.ie – providing information and support for both parents and teachers.
- ☐ www.spunout.ie – youth powered national charity working to empower young people to create social and personal change.
- ☐ www.Hse.ie/eng/health/az/D/Drug-misuse/facts-about-drugmisuse.html
- ☐ www.drugwise.org.uk – Promoting evidence-based information on drugs, alcohol and tobacco, contains information on 150 drugs and drug related terms.
- ☐ www.garda.ie/controller.
- ☐ www.irishhealth.com
- ☐ www.barnardos.ie
- ☐ Walk Tall Programme – a Social, Personal & Health Education programme for the prevention of Substance Misuse: Department of Education
- ☐ On My Own Two Feet - Educational Resource Materials for SPHE: Department of Education

