

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

Killinarden Community School



KILLINARDEN
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Killinarden Community School aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. This is in keeping with our mission statement: *'Our school community is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment, enabling students to achieve their full potential, promoting excellence and fostering respect for the individual and the community. We strive to do this in a spirit of co-operation and partnership and in keeping with true Christian values'*.

The Board of Management has drawn up a Substance Use Policy as one element of the school's policies and plans. The school has a number of policies and procedures in place which aim to safeguard the physical and psychological safety and wellbeing of its students and staff, these are detailed in this document

1. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students, staff, and personnel of Killinarden Community School (KCS).
- All activities on school premises, during school hours, breaks, and lunchtimes.
- Activities off-site where students or staff are representing the school, including school trips, sporting events, and other school-related activities.
- Students traveling to and from school or wearing the school uniform.
- All visitors to the school premises.

2. Mission Statement

Killinarden Community School is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school community in relation to alcohol, tobacco, and drug use. We aim to provide a safe, inclusive, and nurturing learning environment where:

- Teachers are mindful of their duty of care.
 - Cooperation between teachers, parents, students, Board of Management, and relevant personnel is essential.
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3. Rationale

KCS recognises that:

- Drugs, legal and illegal, may be available in the wider community and can affect students.
- The school has an important role in prevention, education, and support related to substance use.
- Substance abuse has consequences for the individual, the school community, and society.
- Each incident is unique, requiring a flexible and fair response.

Definition of Substances:

This policy covers:

- Substances listed under the Misuse of Drugs Acts.
- Misuse of prescription medication, solvents, matches, lighters, fireworks, or other hazardous substances.
- Alcohol and tobacco used contrary to the law.
- Any substance the school deems prohibited.

The policy aligns with:

- Circular 18/02 and the National Drugs Strategy (2017-2025)
- Education Act 1998, supporting health and personal development education.
- Code of Behaviour Guidelines
- Child Protection Guidelines
- Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002 and the Tobacco Smoking (Prohibition) Regulations 2003
- Bí Cineálta Policy

4. School Policy

- Killinarden Community School does not accept or tolerate the possession, use, or supply of banned or prohibited drugs, substances, solvents, volatile substances or any other material which may be injurious to health and/or drug/substance/solvent/injurious material or paraphernalia by any person in the school buildings or grounds, on school trips or outings, or during any school-related activity, whether those involved are wearing school uniform or not.
- The use of tobacco, vaping devices or alcohol in the school building or grounds, on school trips or outings, or during any school-related activity, whether in or out of school uniform is also unacceptable.
- In relation to the school building or grounds, this policy extends to all persons, whether they be members of the school community or not and whether they be legally in the

building or on the grounds or not.

4.2 Prescribed Medication

- Parents must inform the school in writing if a student requires prescribed medication.
 - Staff are not required to administer medication unless previously agreed and documented.
 - Long-term medical conditions (e.g., asthma, diabetes, epilepsy) will be accommodated following GP/consultant guidance.
 - Emergency medications may be administered in life-threatening situations following written instructions from parents and medical professionals.
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5. Policy Focus Areas

1. **Education on Substance Use**
 2. **Training and Staff Development**
 3. **Managing and Investigating Substance Incidents**
 4. **Storage and Disposal of Substances**
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5.1 Education on Substance Use

- Delivered through SPHE, RE, PE, CSPE, Science, Home Economics, and other relevant subjects.
- Supported by Guidance Counsellors, SCP, HSCLO, and external agencies (HSE, Gardai, Foróige).
- Expert speakers may be invited to supplement curriculum education.

Role of Parents:

- Support and reinforce school programmes.
 - Attend talks and workshops on substance use/abuse.
 - Cooperate with the school in incidents or investigations.
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5.2 Training and Staff Development

- Staff receive in-service and CPD training in drug awareness, education delivery, and pastoral care.
 - KCS draws on local expertise and external agencies to support staff training.
 - All staff will be familiar with this Substance Abuse Policy and related procedures.
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5.3 Procedures for Managing Substance Incidents

Initial Approach:

- Listen, establish facts, and provide support.
- Follow disciplinary procedures if school rules are breached, including possible suspension or expulsion in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Investigation Process:

1. Gather statements from all parties involved or aware of the incident.
2. Record all findings in an Abuse Incident Report Form (Appendix 1).
3. Liaise with appropriate external authorities if necessary.
4. Confiscate substances/paraphernalia and store securely; hand over to Gardai when appropriate.
5. Maintain confidential records of all communications, decisions, and outcomes.
6. Inform students and parents of the findings.
7. Apply sanctions proportionate to the incident, considering mitigating circumstances.

Pastoral Support:

- Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain, Year Heads, and the Care Team provide support.
 - Participation in counselling or addiction programmes may be required before reintegration.
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5.4 Concern Regarding Off-School Substance Use

- Parents will be informed of concerns in a non-accusatory manner.
 - Support services, including GP or Drug Awareness Units, may be suggested.
 - The school may liaise with external agencies where appropriate.
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6. Roles and Responsibilities

Principal:

- Oversees all substance incident management.
- Liaises with staff, parents, external agencies, and authorities.
- Decides on sanctions, suspension, or referral to the Board of Management.
- Ensures secure, confidential record-keeping.

Staff:

- Report any suspected substance use, possession, or distribution immediately to the Principal.
 - Do not confront students publicly or attempt personal searches; request surrender of substances.
 - Complete an incident report for the Principal.
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7. Health, Safety, and Confidentiality

- Health and safety of students and staff is paramount.
 - Confidentiality will be maintained where possible, but statutory obligations to report may override confidentiality.
 - Media inquiries will be addressed in line with policy and only after investigations are concluded.
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8. Review

- The Substance Abuse Policy forms part of the Whole School Plan; it is an active document that will be evaluated, reviewed and updated routinely.
 - The Plan will be the basis for which a regular review and evaluation by School Management, stakeholder groups and the BOM takes place.
 - On-going review and evaluation of the whole school plan will take cognisance of changing information or guidelines (e.g. from the DE or the Department of Children and Youth Affairs), legislation and feedback from parents/guardians, students, school staff and others.
 - The plan will be fully reviewed every three years. The next date for a full review is during the academic year 2028/2029.
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This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____ Signed: _____
Secretary Board of Management Chairperson Board of Management

Appendix 1 – Substance Incident Report Form

Student Name: _____

Year/Class: _____

Date/Time of Incident: _____

Location: _____

Reported By: _____

Substance(s) Involved: _____

Description of Incident:

Actions Taken:

Parent/Guardian Contacted: Yes No

Support/Follow-Up Actions:

Investigator Name & Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2 – Response Plan: Suspected Use

1. Isolate student(s) discreetly
 2. Gather facts and statements
 3. Notify Principal
 4. Inform parents
 5. Offer pastoral support
 6. Confiscate substances (if present) and store securely
 7. Determine disciplinary action
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Appendix 3 – Response Plan: Confirmed Use

1. Immediate notification to parents
 2. Remove student from class if necessary
 3. Engage pastoral support team
 4. Liaise with Gardai if illegal substances are involved
 5. Implement appropriate disciplinary sanctions
 6. Reintegration plan including counselling and parental involvement
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Appendix 4 – Response Plan: Distribution/Dealing

1. Immediate notification to Principal
2. Confiscate substances and preserve evidence
3. Notify parents and Gardai
4. Investigate and record statements from all involved
5. Apply sanctions, including possible suspension or expulsion
6. Provide support and monitoring for wider student body