



## **Substance Use Policy**

**2026**

## **Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to students, staff members, users of the school premises, visitors, i.e. every person who enters the building. It is applicable during school-time – including breaks and to ALL school related activities. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place, e.g. School Tour/ClassTrips.

## **Aims of Policy**

The aim of the substance use policy of Cork Educate Together is primarily prevention. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents, legal and illegal drugs. We aim to develop in our pupils' better self-esteem, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils age-appropriate information from educational programmes.

## **Relationship to School's Mission, Vision and Aims**

The characteristic spirit of our school has been developed and agreed with our partners in education. This Substance Use Policy reflects the school policy by drawing together all staff, Parent/Guardians, Board of Management and the Executive Committee of Cork Educate Together N.S.

## **Rationale**

### **Why is this policy necessary?**

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, drugs is part of this reality. The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them. Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery is a health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025. It sets out the

Government's strategy to address the harm caused by substance misuse in our society up to 2025. 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.

## **Implementation Procedures**

Copies of the policy were distributed to Board of Management members for ratification in January 2024. When ratified and amended, copies were given to:

- All staff members
- Parent Teacher Association
- School Community
- Available on our website

### **Timeframe**

This policy in its final draft was circulated to staff members, Parent/Guardians, Board of Management and The Executive Committee. It will be reviewed annually each October.

### **Monitoring and Review Procedures**

A record will be kept in school of all substance use incidents. A copy of this policy will be issued to all staff members and a reminder of its contents will be given at the first staff meeting of each year. A Board of Management member has agreed to take responsibility to monitor procedures annually and ensure they are being adhered to.

### **Policy Content Children enrolled in Cork Educate Together N.S.**

#### **Management of Alcohol, Tobacco, e-cigarettes and Drug Related Incidents**

The policy committee members believe that young people are most at risk in relation to substance use in Cork Educate Together N.S. in recreational areas, on the way to and from school and at out of school related activities supervised by staff members.

Incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes and drug use will be addressed and pupils may be suspended or expelled if involved in any drug related incident.

The school's shared understanding of a 'drug related incident' is:

- Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes or drugs
- The sale or passing on of any alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, drugs or illegal substance.
- The possession use or passing on of any medicine except as permitted by the school's Administration of Medicine Policy.
- The possession of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes or drugs on school grounds or at school related activities

- The discovery of drugs or related items found on school property.

In Ireland, substance use education in primary and post-primary schools has been developed through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). Our SPHE Plan and Policy supports our Substance Use Policy. Response to concerns from pupils and age-appropriate information will be given using the following programmes

- Stay Safe – All classes
- Walk Tall
- RSE
- Weaving Wellbeing
- Friends for Life

**The reporting procedure for such incidents is:**

Step 1: Witness to substance related incident informs teacher/staff/principal

Step 2: Principal inform Parents/Guardians

Step 3: Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management

Step 4: Gardai informed depending on seriousness of incident

Step 5: Area HSE informed for disposal of items.

Step 6: DLP for Tusla

Parents/Guardians will be involved by accepting the school's Code of Behaviour and Enrolment Policies. They will be informed of an incident involving their own child and will be asked to accept responsibility, co-operate with the school authorities and with the Gardai if necessary.

Parents/Guardians will be involved in incidents involving another child only if deemed necessary by the school authorities; if Parents/Guardians are aware that another child is involved in drug related incidents under the scope of this policy they should inform the teacher, principal or a board member.

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Ratify this policy
- Implement this policy
- Monitor and evaluate it
- To sponsor/provide training for staff members
- Make decisions involving critical incidents
- To deal with the media in the event of a critical incident.

This policy puts the following procedures in place to deal with an incident requiring medical intervention:

- 'Universal Precautions' will be applied, e.g. wearing of proper protective gloves etc., washing and making safe an area after an incident.
- First Aid training has been given to a staff member who is now qualified and certified to assist with medical emergencies
- Copies of all relevant phone numbers are in Appendix 1

The school has established an excellent rapport with the Bridewell Garda station and will invite representatives from the local Garda station to speak with senior pupils. Whether or not to inform the Gardai of minor incidents will be at the discretion of the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management, but they will be involved in any serious substance use incidents.

At local level the following support agencies are available to which students involved in substance misuse might be referred:

- N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous)
- Child Care & Family Support Services
- Drug Education Officer

- Drug Helpline
- Community Garda

In the event of media interest in relation to a 'drug related incident', the matter will be referred to the Board of Management and the Chairperson will issue a prepared statement to the media.

### **Cork Educate Together N.S. Employees Management of Persons in the Workplace under the Influence of Drugs And/or Alcohol**

The Board of Management shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that pupils and other persons in the workplace are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare from persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The term "in the workplace", in the preceding sentence includes all school related activities taking place under the supervision of staff member, with the Board's approval, and both within and away from the school premises.

Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and should not ever use alcohol, tobacco or drugs during teaching and learning time or at school related activities.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and others. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of any contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a Parent/ Guardian or adult collecting a pupil from school or presenting themselves on the premises for another reason is unfit to take care of the said pupil due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal will be informed and the duty of care will apply to the pupil. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the pupil and safeguard their best interests. The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life is reflected in all of the school's procedures, practices and activities. The school will at all times recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations

In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove him/herself from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all school staff. An Employee Assistance Service <https://www.spectrum.life/> (telephone: 1800 411 057) is available to all staff. In the event that substance use appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service., counselling or other professional intervention.

All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded and reported as soon as possible to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management shall consider all such reports and decide on the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on April 23rd, 2026

Signed:



Maura O'Riordan  
Principal

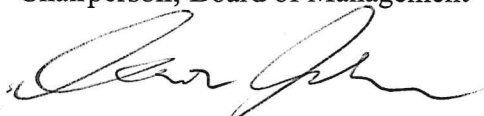
Date:

23/4/2026

Claire Coleman  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date:

23/04/2026



## Appendix 1

### Important Contact Points

**AI-Anon and Alateen:** [www.al-anon-ireland.org/](http://www.al-anon-ireland.org/)

Alateen is for young people, aged twelve to twenty, who are affected by a problem drinker.

**Alcoholics Anonymous:** [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie/](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie/) Tel: 01 842 0700

Self-help organisation holding regular meetings around the country.

**Alcohol Action Ireland:** [www.alcoholireland.ie/](http://www.alcoholireland.ie/)

Alcohol Action Ireland is a national charity for alcohol related issues.

**Drugs Awareness Programme:** [www.drugs.ie/](http://www.drugs.ie/) Helpline: 1800 459 459.

Providing information, support and counselling in relation to drugs, substance misuse or addiction.

**Gamblers Anonymous:** [www.gamblersanonymous.ie/](http://www.gamblersanonymous.ie/) Tel: 01 872 1133.

Self-help organisation holding regular meetings around the country.

**Merchants Quay Ireland:** [www.mqi.ie/](http://www.mqi.ie/) Tel: 01 524 0160.

Merchants Quay Ireland is a voluntary organisation providing a wide range of services to people who are homeless and for drug users.

**Narcotics Anonymous:** <https://www.na-ireland.org/> Tel: 01 6728000.

A group of recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean.

**Smoker's Quit Line:** 1850 201203.

Advice and/or support on quitting smoking

**Drugs and Alcohol Helpline:** Email: [helpline@hse.ie](mailto:helpline@hse.ie) Helpline: 1800 459 459.

Freephone helpline offering support, information, guidance and referral to anyone with a question or concern related to drug and alcohol use.

**BeLonG To:** [www.belongto.org/](http://www.belongto.org/) Tel: 01-873 4184.

Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) young people.