

# Coláiste Choilm Drugs Policy

## Introduction

This school is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs. We believe that Teachers, Parents, Board of Management and Students need to work together and that co-operation is essential to the acceptance and implementation of the policy.

It has been agreed that a drug is: 'Any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally physically or emotionally'.

This school recognises that drugs - both legal and illegal - are available in the local community and that the school, being part of this community, will have drug incidents which need to be handled in a consistent and sensitive way. This school 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.

The policy applies to students, parents, all school staff and school management.

## School Ethos

This school believes that the Personal and Social Development of each member of the school community is important. Education flourishes in an environment where good relationships are encouraged, where people feel valued and respected and where there is genuine tolerance, fairness and support for those in difficulty.

## The use of Drugs in school

This school does not accept the possession, use or supply of drugs, in the school or on school trips/events, by any member of the school community. The only exception is for legitimate medical use and the school has to be informed.

If a student is required to take legitimate medicines during school hours a note from his/her parents to that effect must be placed in the student's file in the main office (if this information is not already recorded on the student's registration form).

The class tutor is responsible for accessing information and informing the teachers of the student involved. In the case of a school/event trip, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer of the child involved to inform the organiser of the event of any medication which the child may be taking.

This school's drug policy focuses on four main areas:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.
2. Managing Drug Related Incidents.
3. Training and Staff Development.
4. Monitoring Review and Evaluation.

## 1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes:

This school is committed to providing a comprehensive and timetabled drug education programme for all students as part of the Social and Personal and Health Education Programme.

Our educational aims in relation to Drug Education are:

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

These aims will be met through the following action:

All teachers involved in SPHE will be given the opportunity to avail of training in group facilitation skills and personal development.

Ms. Michelle Sliney has been appointed as the Drug Co-Ordinator. The Guidance Counsellors and Chaplin will work in tandem with the Drug Co-Ordinator.

Drug information and Drug awareness training will be provided for all staff through ongoing in-service.

Information on drug education and on drug awareness courses will also be made available to parents through the Parent Association organised programmes.

## **2. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug related incidents:**

We acknowledge that in all situations involving drugs, there needs to be a balance between the need of the young person and the needs of the school community.

Definition of a drug incident:

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

### **Procedure:**

- (a) Where there is no immediate danger to the young person, it is important to take time to assess the situation before responding.
- (b) Any class teacher who encounters a drug incident must complete a Drug Incident Report Form and hand it to the Drug Coordinator.
- (c) It is important that, in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents, a limited number of people are involved in managing the incident. People will be informed on a 'need to know' basis.
- (d) Disciplinary procedures will be used if school rules are broken and expulsion will only be an option if all else has failed.
- (e) Confidentiality: Where a student confides in a member of the school Counselling Team re: drug use with a view to seeking help, it is important to recognise the confidentiality of the student-counsellor relationship. The Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain, in conjunction with the Drugs Coordinator will then decide on the involvement of parents/guardians at an appropriate time.
- (f) The Principal will liaise with the Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) in the event of any drugs found on the premises.
- (g) In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered.
- (h) If a person has a serious drug problem then referral to a G.P. and /or Drug Treatment Centre will be recommended.
- (i) Staff involved in the incident will be offered support.
- (j) The Principal will handle all media queries. The school will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug-related incident.

## **3. Training and Development:**

Staff: All SPHE staff will be facilitated in accessing courses to equip them to deliver an effective drugs programme. Staff members will be offered drug information and awareness training. Staff will be facilitated to train to an appropriate level in First Aid.

Students: All students will follow a drug education programme in SPHE class.

Parents: Information on drugs and on workshops/courses available on drugs will be circulated to parents.

## **4. Monitoring the Policy:**

The Drug Policy Group will monitor and review the policy. The policy will be reviewed annually and any changes incorporated into the amended policy.

Copies of the policy will be disseminated to all the school community. It will also be freely available from the Principal's Office and printed in the school handbook each year. It will be available to parents of new children as part of their induction to the school. Students will be made aware of the policy through SPHE class.