

ST. MOGUE'S COLLEGE

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

St. Mogue's College is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs. It is agreed that a drug is a chemical which causes changes in the way the human body functions either mentally, physically or emotionally.

The school recognises that drugs, both legal and illegal are available in the local community and in response to this encroaching drug culture recognises the need to implement a comprehensive Substance use Policy.

The school acknowledges that teachers, other school staff, parents, students and Board of Management must work together and that this co-operation is essential to the acceptance and implementation of the policy.

Scope of the Policy

The policy applies to the entire school community including students, parents, teachers, other school staff and users of the school building and school premises. It applies to all in-school and to all school related activities.

Relationship to the Schools Mission Statement.

St. Mogue's College's Mission Statement includes a commitment to:

- Ensuring for its' students a safe, nurturing and positive environment where all have the opportunity to succeed.
- Promoting the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students.

The policy on Substance use is part of a general pastoral approach, adopted by the school to ensure a healthy, caring and supportive learning environment. It is one of a number of policies that serve to implement the school's mission.

Rationale for having a policy.

- The School in conjunction with parents and the wider community recognises its responsibility to provide drugs education.
- A clearly stated policy that is known to all and that reflects the ethos of the school and its community allows for a measured and considered response if or when an incident occurs.

SCHOOL POLICY

School Position on Drugs

The school does not accept or tolerate the possession, use or supply of drugs by any member of the school community, in the school, on school trips, or during any school related activity. The only exception is for the use of properly prescribed medication and the school must have notification in writing of such use.

Key Policy Areas

1. Substance Use Education Programmes.
2. Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug-related incidents.
3. Provision for Training and Staff Development.

1. Substance use Education Programmes.

The school is committed to providing a comprehensive and timetabled Substance use education programme for all students. This programme will be incorporated into:

- Social, Personal and Health Education.
- Civic, Social and Political Education.
- Social Education, Leaving Certificate Applied.
- Science Curriculum.
- Home Economics Curriculum.
- Guidance Counselling.

Aims of Substance use Education Programmes.

- To provide students with a broad range of life skills that will enable them to make informed, healthy and responsible choices.
- Promote self-esteem and confidence.
- To provide age-appropriate information on drugs.

Outside Speakers:

Trained teachers are in the best position to implement Substance use education programmes. Outside speakers can supplement or reinforce class work.

Parents

Parents play a supportive role in implementing the school's Substance use Policy by:

- Acknowledging the importance of Substance use education.
- Recognising that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating young people regarding Substance use.
- Assisting and co-operating fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

To assist parents in their role the school will offer parents:

- Courses aimed at long term prevention of substance misuse by improving family communication and enhancing self-esteem.
- Substance awareness and information sessions in co-operation with the Gardai and the North Eastern Health Board.
- Workshops on substance awareness for Parents, Staff and Students.

Confidentiality.

The School recognises the importance of limiting as far as is practicable, the number of people involved in investigating and managing an abuse incident. However, through Substance use Education Programmes, parents and students must be made aware that:

- The duty of teachers and staff to the school community preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any student or parent.
- The school may be required in a given situation to contact as appropriate such authorities as the Gardai, Health Board, etc.
- The school may need to engage the expert assistance of an appropriate third party to properly investigate an incident.

2. Management of alcohol, tobacco and drug related Incidents

The School defines incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use as:

- Use or suspected use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs on the school premises or during a school related activity.
- Intoxication/dubious behaviour.

- Disclosure about use.
- Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia.
- Possession and/or supply on the school premises or during a school related incident.

In the event of a misuse incident, the school will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student(s) involved and the welfare of the school community. Incidents will vary greatly in levels of seriousness and will, therefore, demand a wide variety of responses.

Counselling/Pastoral Care

The pastoral care system is the schools' first response to a drug incident. For some young people their involvement with drugs may be marking some underlying difficulties and for others it may be a phase of experimentation.

- In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered.
- Parents and staff involved in the incident will also be offered support.

Referral

If the seriousness of the incident warrants it then a referral to an appropriate service will be recommended.

Garda Involvement

In the event of a confirmed drug incident, the Principal will contact the Garda with responsibility for Drug Investigation and any drugs found on the premises will be dealt with by that Garda.

Procedure to be followed

- All reports of misuse incidents or suspected incidents must be reported to the Principal.
- The Report Form (Appendix 1) for recording incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use will be completed.
- The School will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any misuse incident and will take whatever time is necessary to do this.

- The school will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of an incident, decisions taken and any penalties or disciplinary measures imposed.
- The school will liaise with any appropriate outside authority and seek advice or assistance as it deems appropriate in relation to its investigation of an incident.
- The School will put the full particulars of the incident to the student concerned and his/her parents/guardians.
- The student and his/her parents/guardians will be allowed reasonable time to respond and any response so made will be considered.
- The student and his/her parents/guardians will be informed of the school's findings and of any sanctions to be implemented in respect of the incident.

Roles

- The Principal or her delegate is the person responsible for the investigation of a substance misuse incident.
- The Principal will always be informed about such an incident.
- To co-ordinate the intervention process in school, a Substance use Co-Coordinator will be appointed.
- The Class Tutor/Year Head system will be used to process incidents, as appropriate, in conjunction with the Substance use Co-Coordinator.
- Counselling and support in school will be offered by Guidance Counsellor or School Counsellor.

Disciplinary Procedures

- Where school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions will be implemented depending on the nature and severity of the offence.
- These sanctions will be consistent with disciplinary measures regarding other breaches of conduct.
- Where it is apparent that there is an immediate danger to students or to the school community the school reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school any student involved in a suspected misuse incident pending a complete investigation of the incident.
- Expulsion will only be an option when all other interventions in relation to substance use have failed.

- Expulsion will be immediately considered by the School Board of Management in situations involving the supply and sale of illicit substances in the school or its environments.

The Media

- The School will not comment on individual cases when an investigation is in progress other than to outline its policy and procedures for investigating incidents.
- In the interests of the school's reputation, the Board of Management may clarify the school's position regarding an incident after the investigation has been completed.
- The Principal or a nominated spokesperson will handle all media queries to the School.

3. Provision for Training and Staff Development.

The school acknowledges the need for training and information opportunities to be made available to the entire school community on an ongoing basis.

Staff Training & Development

AIMS;

- That staff members be aware of and sensitive to the signs and symptoms of substance misuse.
- That Staff be aware of legislation relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use.
- That teachers be aware of the contribution they make to the prevention of substance misuse within their own subject areas.

Training and Development

- The school will make available training to teachers delivering modules on Substance use.
- All staff will be offered drug information and awareness training.
- Detailed and specific training will be made available to the Substance use Co-ordinator and other key staff on how to manage a drug related incident.

- First-aid training will be made available to all staff.

Board of Management

The school will provide opportunities to Board of Management members to attend information sessions and workshops on issues relating to Substance use and the school policy on substance use.

Review and Evaluation of the Policy.

- The policy will be reviewed and evaluated regularly in light of changing information, legislation, developments in the school-based programme and feedback from parents, teachers, other school staff and students.
- The Substance use Co-ordinator and Substance use Committee will co-ordinate the review and evaluation in consultation with the wider school community.
- Any suggested amendments to this Policy will be presented to the school Board of Management for subsequent ratification purposes.

Dissemination of Policy

- Copies of this Policy will be circulated to all the school community.
- New students to the school will receive copies of this Policy.
- Parents/Guardians and students will be required to sign a statement to the effect that they have read the Policy and agree that they are bound by its contents.

Links to other Policies

Implementation of this Policy is closely aligned to the School's Code of Behaviour Policy, the Positive Behaviour and Sanctions Procedure Policy and Suspensions and Expulsions Policy.

Please sign Agreement to Policy slip and return to the school.

St. Mogue's College

Agreement to Policy

We have read, understood and agree to the Substance Use Policy.

Signed by Parent/Guardian: _____

Signed by Student: _____ Class: _____

Date: _____

ST. MOGUE'S COLLEGE

REPORT FORM FOR RECORDING INCIDENTS
INVOLVING ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND DRUG MISUSE

To be completed and given to Class Tutor

Name of Teacher: _____ Date: _____

What happened?

(Include only the facts. What was seen? Who said it? Who was involved?)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Completed form to be given to Substance use Co-Ordinator by the person taking action.