



Substance Misuse Policy

DEFINITIONS

Coláiste Muire defines drug related incidents as any of the following:

- Use/suspected use of alcohol/drugs on the school premises or during a school related activity.
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour.
- Disclosure about use.
- Finding these substances and/or associated paraphernalia on school premises or during a school related activity.
- Possession and/or supply on the school premises or during a school related activity.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to the entire school community including teachers, students, parents/guardians and users of the school building. It applies to all in-house and out-of-house activities.

RELATIONSHIP TO MISSION STATEMENT

The Substance Misuse Policy is part of a general pastoral approach being adopted by Coláiste Muire to ensure a healthy, caring and supportive learning environment.

RATIONALE FOR THIS POLICY

This policy has been formulated to protect all students and staff of the school. By substance the school means illegal drugs, alcohol, solvents and misuse of such. The prevalence of such substances poses challenges and opportunities for our school community as an important social partner in providing drug/alcohol awareness and education.

POLICY CONTENT/OBJECTIVES

Coláiste Muire does not accept or tolerate the possession, use of or supply of banned or prohibited and/or drug paraphernalia by a student or staff member in the school, on school trips or during any school related activity.

Provision for Training & Staff Development

The Board of Management in Coláiste Muire is committed to providing training in the area of Substance Use/Misuse. Programmes of in-service training are, on occasion, provided by the SPHE Support Service, the PDST and the HSE.

Student Education

- Student education will be provided through specific modules as part of existing school subjects, e.g. SPHE, RE, CSPE, Wellbeing and PE.
- Outside speakers may be brought in to deliver information. These speakers will be accompanied by a staff member.
- Education through workshops.

Management of Alcohol and Drug Related Incidents

The Management of the school will respond to substance related incidents with discretion and consideration of the particular situation in the interest of the welfare of the individual and the general school population.

Steps in Managing and Investigating a Misuse Incident (Students)

- The Board of Management requires all staff to report immediately, via the incident report, any incident.
- School personnel will seek to establish facts, without the assumption of guilt. Students should not be confronted before his/her peers.
- In the event of a substance use related incident, if students refuse to co-operate, the pupil should be brought to the Deputy Principal/Principal, whose responsibility is to proceed with the matter.
- The Deputy Principal/Principal will recognise that the health, safety and well-being of the student/s is of utmost importance and will seek medical aid if deemed necessary. The student/s will be provided with the appropriate guidance and support needed.

Right to suspend pending investigation

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 misuse incident pending a further investigation of the incident.

Incident Report Form

- A misuse incident form will be completed by the staff member reporting the incident.
- The school will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any misuse incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this.

Confiscated Substances

- The school will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances and/or drug paraphernalia associated with a misuse incident, carefully recording all such items and retaining them pending completion of the investigation, unless otherwise instructed by appropriate agencies.
- In the event of an incident, the school will seek a statement from all persons involved in, concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident and will record these statements.

Record Keeping

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 of these decisions, any penalties or disciplinary measures imposed following the investigation, and the management and outcome of an appeal that may arise following the investigation.

Outside Authority Involvement

- The school, at its 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.
- A statement that if the circumstances merit and the investigation is continuing, the school will put the full particulars of the incident to the student/s concerned and their parents.

Report to be made available to parents

1. Principle of Natural Justice

Copies of all records deemed relevant to the position of the student/s concerned and to the nature of the complaints or allegations that a student/s is facing will be made available to the student and his/her parents/guardians – at the discretion of the school – in time to permit the student a reasonable opportunity to make his/her own reply to the matters at issue and any representations that he/she would wish to make or have made on his/her behalf.

2. Reasonable Time/Reasonable Approach

The school will allow the student concerned and his/her parents/guardians reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. The school will take into account any response so made and any other relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.

3. Formal Communication of School Findings

The school shall shortly thereafter inform the student and his/her parents of the school's findings and their reasons for these. If the school finds that the student has been guilty of or involved or implicated in an incident, it shall indicate the penalty or sanction that it intends to impose in the circumstances.

Disciplinary Procedures and Sanctions

- 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 3 days duration, a suspension of more than 3 days duration, other sanctions short of expulsion, and expulsion.
- 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.

Pastoral Support

The school should ensure that pastoral supports are offered to the student/s and parent/guardians affected by an incident of substance use/misuse. These incidents can be sometimes traumatic for those involved and the services of a Class Tutor, Year Head, Counsellor, etc. would demonstrate the school's Christian commitment at a time of personal crisis.

Student Support Team

- The Principal and Deputy Principal will liaise with the relevant support systems within the school – Guidance Counsellor, Year Heads, Class Mentors, SPHE Co-ordinator, Subject Teachers, etc.
- Legal advice will be sought, if necessary.
- Teachers have a dual responsibility:
 - duty of care towards students
 - confidentiality but without compromising their position as a teacher
- If teachers notice a change in student behaviour, this should be noted, discussed and reported to the relevant body.
- The Principal/Board of Management will have the final say in relation to sanctions, for substance related incidents.

Steps in Managing and Investigating a Misuse Incident (Staff)

Misuse incidents by staff will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary procedures for teachers in primary, voluntary secondary, and community and comprehensive schools, Circular 0049/2018

SUCCESS CRITERIA

The performance of this policy can be judged by the use of the following criteria:

- Mutual respect evident between all members of school community.
- Good relationships achieved and maintained.
- Low or no rate of substance use/misuse incidents.

MONITORING PROCEDURES

Monitoring of the agreed policy should take place on a regular basis in conjunction with all members of the school community and with outside agencies as necessary.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

Review of the policy will take place in collaboration with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Board of Management, Staff, Parents and Student Council.

REVIEW AND RATIFICATION

This Policy was reviewed in December 2019 and ratified by the Board of Management on 16th January 2020.

Signed



Date 16/01/2020

Chairperson, Board of Management