

Substance Misuse Policy

Nenagh College

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Nenagh College of Further Education

Substance Misuse Policy

Mission Statement

‘To educate all students for their personal development and for the community’

This policy applies to all teaching and non teaching staff (including contract and occasional workers), students, parents/guardians and all other users of the school campus, during any school related activity and situations which reflect on the school community.

The substance misuse policy reflects the role of the school in caring for the Health and Welfare of all those who make up and represent the school community as outlined in our mission statement above.

Rationale for Substance Misuse Policy:

1. The clear role of the school is to create safe environment for all who are served by the school
2. In the event of a substance misuse incident, it is important that there are clear and consistent guidelines and procedures which are followed by all members of the school community.
3. Schools are now obliged to have a Substance Misuse policy by the national Drug Strategy 2001 – 2008.
4. The Education Act 1998 states that schools should promote the social and personal development and provide a health education programme for all students.

Objectives:

- To formalise a drug education programme for students.
- To provide clear procedures for dealing with drug related incidents to support both students and staff.
- To offer appropriate support and guidance to those that may need it as we have a duty of care to all students.
- To provide staff with the necessary training to support and implement this policy
- To comply with legislation governing use and misuse of substances.
- To ensure that issues are addressed in an appropriate manner, i.e. prevention and intervention.
- To provide students with an education that aims to give them the confidence skills and knowledge to make healthy choices.

Definition of Substance /Drugs and Substance Misuse:

The term Substance/drug is defined as

Any chemical which may alter the normal working of the human body works and effect a how a person behaves or feels.

Substance misuse

The use or provision for use of any drug (substance) which may potentially lead to injury of the individual or others.

For the purpose of this policy, this includes tobacco, alcohol, both legal (over the counter and prescribed drugs) and illegal drugs, solvents, aerosols, adhesives, Tippex, permanent markers. This list is not exhaustive

Substance Misuse Education Programme

Students: The school will provide with an ongoing substance misuse education programme, primarily through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) to Junior Certificate and it will be reinforced by cross curriculum. Junior Certificate students will have at least four classes devoted to substance misuse. In Senior Cycle substance misuse issues will be delivered as part of the RSE programme and again a minimum number of class periods will be dedicated to this topic.

Visiting Speakers: The organising teacher will make visiting speakers aware of the existing substance misuse policy and the ethos of the school. When visiting speakers are used, the content of their input should be discussed in full with the organising teacher prior to giving the presentation, in order to satisfy themselves that it is in line with school policy. The teacher should remain in the class to enable follow-up concerns and questions to be addressed.

Parents/Guardians: Parents/Guardians have most influence in the lives of their children and are therefore crucial in any prevention strategy. The school recognises that parents/guardians have an important role to play in substance misuse education. Individual parents/guardians and the Parents Council are encouraged to liaise with Senior Management when drug awareness is required and every effort will be made to facilitate the request. The school in cooperation with Parents provide information meetings specifically for Parent/Guardian groups.

Managing Substance Misuse related incidents

At all times the needs and concerns of the individual will be treated with the utmost respect, balanced with the needs and concerns of the wider School Community and also fulfilling any legal obligation which may apply. Elements of the Critical Incident Policy may need to be activated when managing a substance abuse incident.

Definition of an incident

The use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit substances is not permitted on the school premises or during any school related activity (with the exceptions as outlined below). The possession, use, supply, or being present under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs is viewed as unacceptable by this school.

Students under 18 are not allowed to have cigarettes/tobacco on the premises or to supply them to another student.

Students eighteen and over are not permitted to supply cigarettes/tobacco to another student.

Smoking on the school grounds is prohibited by law.

The finding of alcohol or illicit substances or items associated with their use is also a drug related incident as is the voluntary disclosure by a school member of their own problematic

drug or alcohol use. However, where disclosure is voluntary and where a breach of policy is not an issue, it will be treated as an approach for help and will not normally be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Limited Exceptions:

- The correct and supervised use of cleaning agents and curriculum related materials/ingredients as specified by the staff member involved. The use of Material and substances which may be dangerous if taken orally or inhaled will be used only under the supervision of the teacher.
- Alcohol may be provided for adult use only at special school events/occasions with the prior consent of Senior Management.

Internal lines of reporting

- All substance misuse incidents will be reported to senior management who will inform the Year Head and other staff members as appropriate.
- Students are also encouraged to alert Senior Management or another member of the teaching staff if they are aware of a substance misuse incident.
- While on excursions, the teacher in charge will be responsible for the implementation of this policy, however, every effort should be made to contact and seek guidance from the School Principal at the first opportunity.

Records

Written records are to be retained of all confirmed incidents and stored by the Principal in a confidential file. Records should include any warnings and/or advice given to the student and the consequences of repetition of the behaviour. The student(s) involved will be notified of this. In the written records, the recording of factual information is preferable. Any opinion must be stated as such.

Confidentiality

If a student requests confidentiality the teacher must attempt to retain the respect and confidence of the student while ensuring that the information is acted on, so confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Information may need to be shared, for example, with certain staff members, with the parents of those dissolved or with the appropriate external agency. However, discretion within these limits will be observed.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians will be notified at the earliest opportunity if their son/daughter is involved in a substance misuse incident. The parent/guardian will be required to attend the school to discuss what has happened and the course of action to be taken. The student will be informed that their parents/guardians are being notified. Every effort will be made to deal with the matter as discreetly and sensitively as possible within the terms of the School Substance Misuse Policy.

Gardaí

Garda advice may also be sought about incidents that are illegal and constitute a breach of this policy. The final decision will rest with Senior Management and other key staff members. ***In incidents involving the supply of illegal drugs, the school will inform Gardaí.*** The school also asserts their right to inform the Gardaí of any alcohol or illicit substance activity affecting the welfare of the school community. Where the Gardaí contact the school, the school will endeavour to co-operate fully.

Sanctions/Disciplinary Issues:

As per the Schools Code of Behaviour, firm and graded sanctions up will apply to students in breach of the schools substance misuse policy. Breaches as defined in the scope of the policy will be dealt with on a case by case basis. Parents/Guardian may be requested to seek external medical advice or counselling or the student may be subjected to a curfew imposed by the school for a period of time.

In all cases of repeated breaches of the policy and in the case of supply of illegal drugs expulsion will be recommended by the Board of Management.

Counselling / Pastoral Care

With regard to students, the whole school community's health happiness and general well being, every possible support will be offered. Due to the potentially insidious nature of substance misuse for the person, the school community and our desire to aid the resolution of the difficulty for all involved, students directly involved in incidents relation to alcohol and illicit substances must agree to avail of the school Counselling and Pastoral service or where appropriate, and Parents will be advised to seek support and help from external agency through their GP.

Procedure for Disposal of illegal substances

If an illegal substance (or suspected illegal substance) is found on school property or during a school activity, it should be brought to the attention of Senior Management. It should be stored securely in the presence of at least two staff members while Gardaí are informed and until they come to collect it. The substance should be handled as little as possible in the interim, and no attempt should be made to analyse it.

Search

Under the 1977 Misuse of Drugs Act – Section 19, the school is legally obliged to keep its school and property drug free. This includes school lockers. The students will be afforded the option to hand over the substance voluntarily prior to search. If a search is necessary, two staff members must be present. If the search is resisted in the case of student(s), Parents/Guardians will be notified and the Gardaí may be called (in the case of a suspected illegal substance). Search refers to locker, bag, coat and pocket search only. Where there is reasonable cause to believe a student has on their person (including clothes actually being worn) a drug in breach of this policy, they will be asked to volunteer the drug. If they refuse the Gardaí may be called in to conduct the search. Parent/Guardian of the student will be notified prior to a Garda search.

Health and Safety

In accordance with the Health and Safety Policy of the school, all materials of a dangerous nature will be stored securely in a safe area where they will be unobtainable by anyone other than those who use them in the course of their work duties. These include cleaning agents and solvents. The possession and use of solvent based correction fluid is prohibited for students. The use of non-aerosol personal hygiene products is encouraged from the point of view of the environmental and health aspects in terms of abuse and respiratory problems e.g. asthma. If students are required to use solvents or adhesives they should only do so under the supervision of their teacher.

Student Medical details

On enrollment to the school, parents are required to notify the school authorities of any medical problems relating to their child and of any medication prescribed or otherwise being taken by their child, e.g. epilepsy, asthma sufferers and their inhalers. This information is relayed to the Year Head. The school authorities/staff will not issue the students with any medication. An arrangement will be entered into with parents/guardians whereby the Centre will facilitate the issue of such medication by parent/guardian. Contact will be made with parents/guardians should a student need to go home because of sickness, or where there is a need to take a student to a doctor.

Staff Training

Any training needs arising out of the implementation of this policy will be organised and staff are invited to monitor their training needs on an ongoing basis and bring any deficit to the attention of the School Management.

Media / Incident

In the event of an incident relating to substance misuse, Senior Management only, will be responsible for dealing with the media (see Critical Incident Policy).

Monitoring

The school Substance Misuse Policy will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated in line with the Whole School Development Planning.

Dissemination

Present students and parents will be informed. There after, parents and incoming students will be given a copy of the Policy prior to accepting a place in the school. The policy will be circulated to existing staff members, thereafter it will be included in the Staff Handbook

Consultation Process

In line with the development of all school policy all partners in education will be consulted. The following groups were consulted during the drafting of this policy.

Staff Development committee (charged with drafting discussion document)

Student Council (input, amendment and approval)

Staff (input, amendment and approval)

Parents Association (input, amendment and approval)

Board of Management (input, amendment and final approval)

Every effort was made to ensure that all partners had a genuine input into the content of this policy

Adopted by the Board of Management:

The policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 10th October 2012

Submitted for approval and ratification to North Tipperary VEC October 2012

Submitted for approval and ratification to Tipperary ETB October 2013

Implementation Date

October 2012

School name revision: December 2013