

# **CORRAN COLLEGE, BALLYMOTE, CO. SLIGO**

## **Substance Misuse Policy**

### **The School Position**

Corran College is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school community in relation to drugs, tobacco and alcohol. This policy has been drawn up and accepted by the principal, teachers, parents/guardians, Board of Management and students in conjunction with advice from the DES and HSE, and applies to all members of the school community and users of the school.

It is necessary that all members of the school community work together to implement this policy, and comply with health and safety regulations as outlined in the school's approach: firstly, issues arising with will be dealt with under the schools Code of Behaviour and where appropriate, will involve communication with the Gardaí. Secondly, the school will support those involved in related incidents through provision of counselling and advice. In addition, the school engages in an ongoing programme of education in relation to this issue through timetabled classes, guest speakers and consultation with outside agencies.

In this policy, 'drug' means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically, or emotionally. The school recognises that drugs, both legal and illegal, are available in the local community, and that Corran College, as part of the community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug-related incidents.

This policy applied to the whole school community including teachers, students, parents/guardians and users of the school building.

The policy was formulated in keeping with the school's ethos and mission statement, and as an integral part of the general pastoral care programme by the staff, Substance Use Committee, Board of Management and Parents Association and subsequently adopted by the Board of Management.

### **Mission Statement**

**Corran College by excelling in teaching and learning creates opportunities for excellence for all its students through an all-embracing well balanced education. We aim to achieve the highest standards of learning and behaviour in a caring atmosphere where all students feel valued.**

## **Substance Use**

- Smoking on school premises/grounds is illegal and is prohibited by school rules and subject to sanctions in accordance with the schools Code of Discipline.
- Possession of use of Tobacco/alcohol/solvent based substances/or illegal drugs is forbidden at all times including all school related activities. Sanctions will apply in accordance with the schools Code of Discipline.
- The possession, use, or supply of illegal drugs in the school or on any related activities, by any member of the school community is absolutely prohibited and will be subject to sanctions in accordance with the schools Code of Discipline.
- Parents/guardians must inform the School Principal in writing if legitimate medicines have been prescribed for a student. This information will be securely stored and will only be disclosed on a need to know basis.
- Remedies which are not prescribed drugs may be dispensed by staff in cases of emergency, e.g. glucose drinks.

## **Rationale:**

This policy reflects the view that:

- The prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and drug misuse pose challenges and opportunities for the school community as an important social partner in providing drug awareness and education.
- The Board recognises and accepts the seriousness of various research findings regarding the problems associated with drug and, in particular, alcohol misuse.
- The school policy aims to co-operate fully with the strategic plan adopted by the government under the National Drugs Strategy 2001 – 2008 and made mandatory for schools in circular 18/02

This policy is drawn up in the context of the duty of care that the school owes to all its pupils and also in the light of the statutory duty of teachers 'to contribute generally to education and personal development of students' as stated in section 22 – (1) of the 1998 Act.

## **Aims, Goals and Objectives**

Our educational aims in relation to drug education are:

- To increase the self-esteem and confidence in young people.
- To equip young people to make healthy and responsible choices.
- To provide honest and age appropriate information on drugs.
- To minimise the harm caused by drug use by offering supportive interventions

## **Goals of the policy**

To create a healthy school environment, free of tobacco, drugs and alcohol.

To encourage responsibility.

To provide procedures for the school staff to use to manage situations where students may present with symptoms of having consumed an unlawful drug, should such a situation arise, by employing appropriate disciplinary and pastoral responses to individual situations.

To facilitate the training of school staff in relation to substance abuse issues.

To enable the school to comply with State requirements in relation to this area.

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

We acknowledge that in all situations involving Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the students, the need of the school community, the reputation of the school and legal consideration.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to report any incident of Alcohol, Tobacco, or Drug abuse to the Principal or the designated person in his/her absence.

Assessing an Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs incident – if there is no damage to the student/s it is important to:

- Take time to listen and assess before responding.
- Separate fact from rumour.
- In situations of confirmed use or possession or supply, all details must be recorded and acted upon.
- Complete an incident report form

## **Managing a Drug Incident**

A limited number of people are involved in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents. People will be informed on a 'need to know' basis. All written records will be held confidentially by the Principal or Deputy Principal. Parents/Guardians will be involved. They will be informed sensitively and support offered to them. In the case of illegal drugs, the Principal or Deputy Principal will contact the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer, and any drugs will be dealt with by the Gardaí.

In response to all incidents pastoral support will be offered to parents/guardians, staff and students. Confidentiality is a complex issue and it is important that the limits of confidentiality are discussed with students before any disclosure is made. The wellbeing and welfare of the student must be the primary focus.

The Principal or Deputy Principal will handle all media enquiries. They will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the policy and procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules are broken, sanctions and punishments consistent with the schools Code of Discipline will be implemented, taking into account the nature of the offence.

### **Procedures for Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug or Substance Abuse Incident**

As a general rule in the event of an abuse incident, the school (The Principal or staff member authorised by him/her) will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the students involved, the welfare of the whole school community and the reputation of the school community.

The following steps will be taken in managing and investigating an abuse incident:

1. 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 abuse incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident.
2. All incidents involving the use of drugs will be investigated immediately or as soon as practicable and an Abuse Incident Report Form will be completed and the Garda Liaison Officer will be notified.
3. The school will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any abuse incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this.
4. The school will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of an incident, including all communications and documents associated with the incident.
5. If the circumstances merit and the investigation is continuing, the school will put the full particulars of the incident to the students concerned and their parents in the following manner:
  - a) Copies of all records deemed relevant to the position of the student concerned and to the nature of the complaints of allegations that a student is facing will be made available to the student and his/her parents – 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.
  - b) The school will allow the student concerned and his/her parent's reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. The school will take into account any

response so mad and any other relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.

- c) 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 sanctions that it intends to impose in the circumstances.
- d) In relation to a verified and investigated incident, the Board of Management may implement disciplinary actions or sanctions, including but not limited to: and oral warning, a written warning, a suspension of three-day duration, a suspension of more than three-day duration, other sanctions short of expulsion, and expulsion.
- e) The school can, at its sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstances of representations that it considers should be taken into account. The school asserts the right to exercise an appropriate show of mercy.
- f) The school will also ensure that pastoral supports are offered to the students and the parents/guardians affected by the incident of substance abuse. The services of the Chaplin, Guidance Counsellor or Year Head may be offered by the school as a demonstration of the school's social commitment at a time of personal crisis. In addition, the school will play its part in initially liaising with the various statutory bodies with a view to establishing ongoing support for the family.

### **The involvement and roles of various parties in the incident investigation**

The Principal is the person responsible for all matters relating to this area. He/she may nominate the Deputy Principal, Year Head, or other nominated staff to act on his/her behalf in the investigation of a substance abuse incident.

The duties of the Principal (or his/her nominee) in this regard include the following:

1. The Principal is responsible for dealing with abuse incidents arising at the school and for informing the Garda Liaison Officer immediately if deemed necessary.
2. All reports of abuse incidents or suspected incidents must be reported to the Principal. The Principal is responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed regarding investigation developments.
3. The Principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any written documents and records associated with the incident.
4. The Principal or designated person will inform at an early stage parents of children involved in drug related incidents particularly when there are health and safety concerns relating to the child.
5. Students involved will also be kept informed of what is happening and why. Such actions will be taken without prejudice to the schools separate and independent

obligation to investigate and manage any abuse incident, and its duty to impose whatever disciplinary sanctions as are appropriate to the nature and seriousness of the incident, as laid down in the schools Code of Discipline.

However, students and parents/guardians are asked to accept that:

- The duty of teachers and staff to the school community preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any students when they come into contact with an abuse incident.
- The school may be required in a given situation to contact as appropriate such authorities as the Gardaí, Health Board, Probation Service or the Officers of the courts.
- The school may need to engage the expert assistance of an appropriate third party to properly investigate an incident.

### **Media Enquiries**

It is the policy of the school that media enquiries involving a substance abuse incident will be handled as follows:

- The school will not comment on any individual matter when an investigation is in progress other than to outline its policy and procedures for managing incidents.
- In the interests of the school's reputation the Board of Management may clarify the schools position regarding an incident after the investigation has been concluded, being mindful not to name individuals or to disclose personal information about them.
- Questions relating to an identified individual should be declined, confining statements to the schools Policy and Procedures.

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Parents and Board of Management**

- The school will provide opportunities to attend information evenings and workshops in relation to drugs and the school policy.
- Parents and the Board of Management will be consulted and kept informed of this policy and matters relating to Substance Use Policy in the school.
- The school will provide opportunities to attend drug workshops, information evenings and sessions on the School Drugs Policy in this current year. From next year onwards this will be offered as part of the induction for parents/guardians of new pupils to the school.

### **Staff**

The school will facilitate training for staff involved in delivering S.P. H. E. programmes. Staff will be offered appropriate information and awareness training. Details and specific training will be made available to the S. P. H. E. co-ordinator and key staff in relation to managing drug incidents. First Aid training will be made available to key staff.

### **Students**

- Corran College will offer all its students drug education programmes within the context of their S. P. H. E. classes. Drug, Alcohol awareness will be an integral part of the Pastoral Care Programme of the school.
- Guest speakers will be invited to address students on a regular basis in regard to Drug/Alcohol use.

## **MONITORING, REVIEWING AND EVALUATION**

### **Monitoring**

The Principal, Year Heads and S.P. H. E. Co-ordinator will regularly monitor and update aspects of the policy on the three areas of

- Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents
- Parent, Staff and Management training

The results of the monitoring will be recorded and made available to the Principal, the teaching staff and the Board of Management.

### **Policy Review**

The policy will be reviewed bi-annually, or in the light of changing information or circumstances by a drug policy working group set up by the Principal and the representatives of the wider school community.

### **Evaluation**

Teachers, parents/guardians, students and the Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for one year. Again the three specified areas above will be evaluated.

Three main areas of the policy to be evaluated are:

- Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents
- Parents, staff and Board of Management Training and courses offered to the school community.

# Appendix

## Definitions

1. The following are examples of drug incidents
  - Intoxication/uncharacteristic behaviour
  - Suspicion/rumour of drug use, possession or dealing
  - Disclosure by another person
  - Possession of an illegal drug on the school premises or on a school related activity.
  - Selling/supplying of legal/illegal drugs
  - School grounds being used for drug activity
  - Drugs paraphernalia found on school property.
2. 'The school' is Corran College including all school buildings, grounds: play areas and public areas where students congregate coming to and going from school. It also applies to all school activities taking place away from the school in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
3. 'Parents' including a foster parent, a guardian appointed by the Guardianship of children Acts, 1964-1997, or other persons acting in *loco parentis* who has a child in his or her care subject to any statutory power or order of a court and, in the case of a child who has been adopted under the Adoption Acts, 1952 – 1998, or, where the child has been adopted outside the state, means the adopter or adopters of the surviving adopter.
4. 'Students' means students enrolled in the school
5. 'Banned or prohibited substances' includes all substances covered by the misuse of Drugs Acts, non-validated prescription medication, all alcohol and tobaccos, glue, thinners etc., used contrary to the law of the land. The school reserves the right to determine that a substance found at the school qualifies as a banned or a prohibited substance.
6. 'Drug Paraphernalia' include any banned or prohibited substance as defined above, any items that may seem to be used in the taking of illicit substances.
7. 'The Principal' means the Principal as appointed by the school and defined in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 or the Deputy Principal where the principal is unavailable or has delegated to the Deputy or another staff member of the school.

## Steps to be taken by a teacher if an alcohol or a drug related incident arises

1. Take steps to secure the health and safety of the class or group and the individuals involved in the incident.
2. Make contact with and, if possible, send for the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head whichever is available at the particular time.
3. Ask for, collect and secure any substance or paraphernalia associated with the incident if such are in evidence (remember only the Gardaí have the authority to search an individual)
4. Complete a full report of the incident and give it to the Principal.
5. 'Procedures' refer to Section Procedures for further information.

## **Anti-Smoking**

### **Rational**

Smoking is illegal in any part of the school building or grounds.

### **Goals of the Policy**

To create a healthy school environment

To promote a smoke free school

To encourage responsibility

### **Content**

Students are expected to remain smoke free during school outing and activities.

Staff actively encourage students to be smoke free by providing smoking education in the Health Education Programme, and providing smoking cessation courses.

Visitors are expected to comply with the smoke free policy.

Students found smoking in the school building or on the school grounds receive suitable sanctions, in accordance with the schools Code of Discipline.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### Board of Management

To ensure that a policy is developed and implemented.

To approve the policy.

#### Principal and Deputy Principal

To implement the policy

To monitor sanctions

#### Staff

To implement the policy

#### Success Criteria

The goals of the policy are achieved

#### Monitoring Procedure

Supervision of students

#### Reviewing Procedure

The policy is review annually by staff, parents and students.

***Abbreviations used throughout the Policy:***

'The 1998 Act' for The Education Act 1998

'The Welfare Act' for the Education (Welfare Act) 2000

'The Tobacco Act' for The Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2004

'The DES' for the Department of Education and Science

'The DES Guideline' for the Guidelines for developing a school Substance Use Policy published by the DES

'The Nation Strategy' for the National Drug Strategy 2001-2008.

**The school does not accept or tolerate the possession, or supply of banned or prohibited and/or drug paraphernalia by any student in the school, on school trips and outings, or during any school-related activity.**

**We do however acknowledge exception for the use of properly prescribed drugs and insist that parents of students taking prescribed medication inform the school in writing of that fact.**

**REF {Administration of Medicines Policy}.**

### Education Progress:

The school, within the limited resources available to it, will provide appropriate education programmes for all its students.

This programme of education will be age-appropriate and will seek to build on and complement existing programmes already being taught in the school – SPHE, PE, CSPE etc.

### **Role of Parents**

#### Parental support:

Parents are asked to:

- Acknowledge the impotence of these programmes
- Recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse.
- Assist and co-operate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

Information for Parents:

To assist the parents in their role the school will

- Provide them with information on what is happening in the school regarding education programmes (ex. SPHE etc).
- Encourage and welcome consultation with parents on the best use of available resources in the community to support the school in its programme and policy implementation.

