



Coláiste Mhuirlinne/
Merlin College

Drugs and substance abuse Policy.

Coláiste Mhuirlinne/ Merlin College
Doughiska,
Galway City.



**Ratified by the Board of
Management on**



Table of Contents

Substance abuse policy.....	1
Rationale.....	1
Aims.....	1
Focus.....	2
Definition of a Drug.....	2
Drug Education.....	2
Drug Related Incidents.....	2
Sanctions/ Disciplinary Issues.....	3
Counselling/ Support.....	3
Disclaimer.....	3



Colaiste Mhuirlinne

Substance Abuse Policy

The National Drugs Strategy, 2001 – 2008 sets out a detailed programme of action to be implemented by Government Departments and Agencies to combat the very serious problem of drug misuse in our society. The strategy, highlights the important contribution that schools can make and requires them to have substance use policies in place.

Section IV of the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools states that all schools should be actively engaged in the process of developing and agreeing a Substance Use Policy in line with Action 43 of the National Drugs strategy and Circular.

The School's policy on substance use is part of a pastoral approach, in keeping with the schools mission statement to ensure a healthy, caring and supportive learning environment. The aim of the Substance Abuse Policy is to prevent the use of drugs and alcohol **including cigarettes and e-cigarettes** and to offer support to those who use them either through education and by fostering the development of personal responsibility. The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.

This policy applies to staff, visitors to the school, people using the school facilities, within the boundaries of the school grounds and to students throughout the whole school day, either on or off the school premises including all school related activities and outings.

Rationale

- To educate all school users, parents, pupils and staff.
- To clarify the rights and responsibilities of parents, pupils and staff in relation to the use of drugs and alcohol.
- To facilitate the fair and equitable treatment in all cases
- To facilitate compliance with the law.

Aims

- To encourage healthy living.
- To provide a safe environment for all who work in and use the school.
- To create awareness about alcohol and drug related issues including smoking.



Focus

- Strategies for prevention of substance misuse problems through the S.P.H.E and other programmes.
- Procedures for dealing with drug incidences in the school.
- Guidelines and information for teachers to improve their response to the problem of substance misuse.

Definition of a Drug

A chemical which causes changes in the way the human body functions mentally, physically or emotionally.

Drug Education

Drug Awareness Education will be part of the SPHE course for each of the three years up to Junior Cert . However, education is ongoing until students leave the school. Guest Speakers will be invited in to Colaiste Mhuirlinne from the relevant agencies.

Drug Related Incidents

The school is committed to providing a fair and considered response to drug related incidents.

Any incidents relating to illegal drugs will be immediately reported to the school Principal who will contact parents/guardians without delay.

If illegal drugs are found they will be kept by the Principal or a designated staff member in a secure place to be handed over to the Gardai.

Parents will be immediately contacted and asked to take the student home until an investigation can take place.

Disciplinary action will be implemented if warranted after a fair process. (See Suspension and Expulsion Policies)

The school will be considerate of the rights and needs of the individual in question but will also be considerate of the general student body. If appropriate, help will be sought from other agencies to assist student welfare.



Sanctions/Disciplinary Issues

Suspension and/or expulsion may be imposed.

In the case of the explicit sale or use of illegal drugs including alcohol and cannabis by a student during school hours, expulsion may be recommended to the Board of Management after all of the facts are determined.

Counselling/Support

Students directly involved in illicit drug incidents will be seen by the school counsellor, who may refer to an external agency if required in a confidential manner but with the knowledge of the child's Parents/ Guardians.

Disclaimer

While Colaiste Mhuirlinne has made every effort to make this policy as clear as possible for all, the school can not be held responsible for any misunderstandings or misinterpretations. If any person is unclear about all or any of the provisions of this policy they are asked to seek clarification from school personnel as soon as possible.