

Tulow Community School

Drugs & Substance Misuse Policy

SCHOOL DRUGS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

In relation to drugs, Tullow Community School is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school.

This policy was developed following consultation with the Board of Management, staff, parents and students.

It has been agreed that a Drug is “*any substance legal or illegal, which when misused, can be addictive or harmful to ones health, and which may alter one’s behaviour*”.

Such substances may include alcohol, tobacco, solvents and illegal drugs, as well as the whole range of over-the-counter and prescribed medicines.

This school recognises that Drugs, both legal and illegal, are available in the local community, and that the school being part of this community may have drug incidents, which need to be handled in a firm consistent and sensitive way. This school also acknowledges that it has an important role to play in drug education, both in terms of prevention and offering support to those who use drugs.

MISSION STATEMENT

This school believes that we should nurture the wellbeing of all, so that they may grow in knowledge conscience and compassion.

This philosophy underpins and informs all the work that we do, and it is central to this policy document.

THE USE OF DRUGS IN SCHOOL

Tullow Community School does not accept the possession, use or supply of drugs in the school, on school trips or on any school business by any student. Exceptions will be made for medical reasons.

This policy is focused on three key areas:

1. Drug Education Programmes
2. Managing Drug Related Incidents
3. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

DRUG EDUCATION

The School Position

The school aspires to providing drug information to all students. Some members of staff have attended drug information and drug awareness courses. It is hoped that similar courses will continue to be offered.

Our educational aims in relation to Drug Education are:

- ◆ to equip young people with personal and social skills, thereby developing their self-esteem and confidence, enabling them to make more informed healthy and responsible choices.
- ◆ to provide honest and age appropriate information
- ◆ to offer support and referral counselling if necessary

ORGANISATIONS

The school supports and encourages organisations in the community, that promote alcohol and drug free recreational activities.

MANAGING DRUG RELATED INCIDENTS

The School Approach

As stated in the introduction, the policy of this school is to manage drug related incidents in a firm, consistent and sensitive way.

Our response to drug related incidents will be determined by the nature and seriousness of the incident.

Recognising the sensitivity of many such incidents, our approach will be both pastoral and disciplinary.

The primary focus will be on the welfare, care and protection of the school community.

Drug Incidents

- ◆ The following are some examples of a drug incident:
 - ◆ Emergencies when the person may be unconscious
 - ◆ Intoxication/unusual behaviour
 - ◆ Suspicion/rumour of drug use, possession or dealing
 - ◆ Disclosure by another person
 - ◆ Possession of an illegal drug/alcohol on the school premises, or on a school related activity
 - ◆ Selling/supplying legal/illegal drugs
 - ◆ Person seeking help from a member of staff
 - ◆ School grounds being used for drug activity
 - ◆ Drug paraphernalia found on school property
 - ◆ Vaping Devices.
 - ◆ Misuse of 'over the counter' medicines

Assessing a Drug Incident

In cases where there is no immediate danger to a student, we will take time to establish the facts before responding.

Recording Procedure

In situations of confirmed use/possession or supply then all details will be recorded and acted upon (see incident report form).

Managing a Drug Incident

A limited number of people will be involved in managing the incident. As well as those directly involved, this may include the Principal.

Parents

In most cases the school will want to involve the parents/carers. This will be handled sensitively and wherever possible support will be offered to them.

Gardaí

It is agreed that the Principal or a designated person will contact the Gardaí in the event of a serious drug incident, and any illegal substances found on the premises will be dealt with by Gardaí

Counselling/Pastoral Care

- ◆ In response to incidents, pastoral support will be offered.
- ◆ If the person has a serious drug problem, then referral to a drug treatment centre will be recommended.
- ◆ Parents and staff involved in the incident may be offered support.

Disciplinary Procedures

In situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, the sanctions and punishments will be implemented according to the nature and seriousness of the offence. Serious sanctions will only apply after careful consideration of all aspects of the incident, and after the facts have been established.

Suspension and expulsion will be options in any situation where the safety, health or welfare of any member of the school community has been put at risk.

Confidentiality

Teachers cannot offer total confidentiality to a young person who discloses drug involvement.

We recognise the need for care in this area, as the young person may be coming to the teacher because they trust him/her and need help. Information must remain private and only disclosed on a strict 'need to know' basis. The young person must be informed about what is happening and why.

The school recognises that the issue of confidentiality is complex. It is important that confidentiality, and its limits are discussed with young people.

Media

The Principal or a nominated spokesperson will handle all media queries. The school will

not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug-related incident.

Monitoring of the Policy

Review of the Policy

The policy will be reviewed periodically. Any review will involve the drug policy-working group in consultation with the wider school community.

This review will include:

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

Evaluation

Teachers, Parents, Students and Board of Management, will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for one year and any changes incorporated into the amended policy. This policy works in tandem with other school policies.

Distribution of policy

Copies of the policy will be made available to all the school community. It will be given to all new staff and parents of new children as part of their induction to the school.

Young people will be made aware of the policy as part of their drugs education within the context of a Social and Personal Health Education Programme.

Reviewed June 2022.

Signed: _____

Date: _____