

Grange Community College Substance Use Policy (2022) Draft

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National Drugs Strategy 2017 - 2025

Grange Community College Substance Use Policy

1. Scope

This policy applies to all students, teachers, parents, users of the school building and visitors. It applies before, during and after school time, in the building and on the school grounds, on school trips, tours and at school activities.

2. Relationship to School's Mission Statement

This policy reflects the school's mission to create 'a safe, healthy environment that nurtures self-discipline'. It also aims to foster 'an atmosphere which promotes self-esteem, honesty, justice and respect for others'. This policy further seeks to promote co-operation between the partners in education by involving students, parents and staff as well as other services in the community.

3. Rationale

- The school is required to have a policy on substance use by the National Drugs Strategy, the Education Act '98, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and DES Circular 18/02.
- Central objective of the substance abuse policy is the welfare, care and protection of every student, in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
Within the rationale:
The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
The National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 requires every school to have a substance use policy in place
- Action 21 of the National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 mandates the Department of Education and Skills to monitor the implementation of substance use policies in schools through the whole school evaluation process as operated by the Inspectorate. It is also mandated to ensure that best practice is disseminated to all schools.

4. The College Position on Substance Use

The College does not accept or tolerate the possession, use, 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.

The College acknowledges that the only exception is for the use of properly prescribed drugs and requests that parents of students taking prescribed medication inform the school in writing of that fact. Non-prescription medication will not be stored or administered in the school. Students are not permitted to carry non-prescription medication in the school and such medications will be confiscated for secure retention and disposal by parents/guardians who will be contacted.

5. Definition:

A drug is any substance which changes the way the body functions mentally, physically or emotionally. The supply, use, possession, sale or distribution of tobacco, e-cigarettes (Vaping) prescribed medication, alcohol or illegal/prohibited substances will not be tolerated in the college, on school tours and outings or during any college related activity. The college reserves the right to act on any information it may receive regarding the use, possession or distribution of illegal/prohibited substances.

Pupils are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes and/or e-cigarettes on the school premises, on school trips, or when involved in any school activities. Smoking is also legally forbidden in enclosed places of work, such as Grange Community College. The ban was introduced by the Tobacco Smoking (Prohibition) Regulations 2003. The purpose of this ban is to offer protection to those who are exposed to the harmful and toxic effects of tobacco smoke. Smoking has been identified as a major cause of heart disease and a significant contributor to lung cancer.

Vaping (to inhale vapour from e-cigarettes) is also not permitted on the school premises, on school trips, or when involved in any school activities. In May 2014, The Health Service Executive banned the use of e-cigarettes in all health service facilities. As e-cigarettes resemble ordinary cigarettes, their use may promote Substance Abuse or re-normalise smoking, disrupt the environment for non-smokers, and make it harder for the school to enforce a no smoking policy.

Visitors and all members of the GCC school community must comply with our no smoking and no vaping policy.

Where a pupil is found in possession of cigarettes/e-cigarettes, they will be confiscated and dealt with under our Code of Positive Behaviour.

6. Prevention Education

Education Concerning Substance Use

The school is committed to providing all pupils with a substance use programme, based on:

- Existing school subjects
- Specific modules and programmes
- Outside speakers/workshops
- Pupil access to relevant information and resources.

Existing School Subjects

- Pupil development and drug information will be co-ordinated by the SPHE Department. SPHE will provide the basis for the pupils' education about alcohol, tobacco and drug use.
- Pupil development and education will be reinforced through the syllabi of the following subjects.
 - PE – (Health Education)
 - Science – (e.g. Human biology)
 - Religion – (e.g. Moral decision making)
 - CSPE - (e.g. Rights and responsibilities)
 - Metalwork /Woodwork – (e.g. Hazardous substances).
- The criteria used to inform the pupils will be based on curriculum content.

Specific Modules/Programmes

- The pupils' awareness of substance use will be developed further using supplementary modules/programmes (e.g. co-curricular activities, project work, school retreats, school visits).
- These will occur during the school year and will be age appropriate.

Outside Speakers/Workshops

- These will be used where appropriate, during the school year, to reinforce the work done in class. These will be used in a planned manner to complement the class programmes.
- Speakers will come from the following organisations: Trinity Youth Service (Donaghmede), Northside Partnership, and Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Teenline and JLO.

Pupil access to substance use information and resources

- If/when a pupil requires support and/or information regarding substance use, he/she will have access to the relevant staff and resources. The school acknowledges the pupil's needs and concerns in a situation involving substance use. Students encountering difficulties can be referred for appropriate, focused counselling e.g. SASSY (Youth substance abuse counselling) to help them overcome their particular problems. These referrals are made by Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain, in consultation with parents.
- The school will provide a supportive framework for the pupil, which reflects the ethos and value-systems of the school.

7. Training and Development

Staff

- Attendance at relevant training as provided by statutory and voluntary organisations.
- Training for teachers of SPHE is available from the SPHE support service. (See SPHE folder)
- Information sessions for staff when requested, or where/when a need has been identified.

Parents

Information will be given to parents/guardians by the following means:

- Parent/teacher meetings.
- Induction (First Year Pupils) and curriculum information meetings.
- GCC Substance Use Policy (available on website and in student journal)
- Information/training meetings when required.
- Access to substance use information/education materials/policy.

Parents will also be involved in the policy review.

8. Procedures and Implementation

Management of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Related Incidents

Grange Community College will respond to substance related incidents with discretion balancing the needs of the student, the school community and the reputation of the school. Each incident will be investigated thoroughly and fairly.

The following are examples of such incidents:

- Emergencies where the person may be unconscious
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour
- Suspicion of drug use or possession.
- Disclosure of drug related incident by another person
- Possession/use of a legal/illegal drug on the school premises, on a school related activity or on the way to or from the school.
- Selling/supplying legal/illegal drugs.
- Discovery of drug paraphernalia in or on school grounds.

Procedure

1. In all cases where there is no immediate danger to the person, the staff member should seek the assistance of another staff member
2. The staff member completes a Substance Incident report form. (A staff member may not search property but is entitled to request the surrender of a suspicious substance or may ask a student to empty bags, pockets etc.)
3. The staff member informs the Principal or Deputy Principal and passes on the written report and any substances found.
4. The Principal/Deputy Principal/member of the teaching staff will investigate the incident. It will then be assessed by the Principal and appropriate action will be taken.
5. Parents will be contacted and informed of the incident. This will be handled sensitively with support provided by the Guidance Counsellor or Chaplain.
6. In serious cases the Principal/Deputy Principal at his/her discretion will liaise with any appropriate outside authority including the Gardaí. Advice or assistance will be sought, where necessary.

Disciplinary Procedures

1. Breaches of the school rules regarding the use of drugs will be dealt with via the school Code of Positive Behaviour.
2. Parents will be contacted, informed of the incident, and a meeting will be arranged.
3. In certain cases the student will be required to remain at home throughout the investigation.
4. Counselling will be offered by the school to the students.

5. Students involved in distribution of banned substances will be reported directly to the Gardaí and will face expulsion from the school.
6. In serious cases Management will apply appropriate sanctions such as suspension/exclusion.

Return to school will depend on the student being fully involved in appropriate counselling. Parental involvement and guarantees will also be required.

Confidentiality

Matters relating to misuse of substances legal or illegal will be treated confidentially within the school.

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with all relevant school policies, especially:

Code of Positive Behaviour
Pastoral Care/Guidance Policy
Anti-Bullying Policy
Child Protection
Suspension/Expulsion
Enrolment
Policy for Coping with Sudden Death/Critical Incident
Data Protection Policy
National Anti-Smoking Legislation
Health and Safety Statement
International School Tour Policy

Also policies as and when developed on:

Administration of Medicine
Staff development
Policy for storing chemicals

10. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

- The policy will be reviewed regularly and updated in the light of changing information, legislation developments in education programmes and feedback from parents/guardians, staff and students.
- An initial review will take place within the first academic year of its implementation. This process will be co-ordinated by the Policy Steering Committee in consultation with the wider school community.
- The responsibility for policy review rests with the Principal and the Board of Management and will be carried out within the framework of whole school planning.

11. Ratification and Communication

- After ratification this policy will be distributed to staff including any new staff
- It will be published on the school website.
- Parents will be informed that they can find the policy on the web.
- Copies will be available in the school on request.

Signed:

Dated:

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date for review

I, parent/guardian of (Student's name), agree to act in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating my child regarding substance use, and to assist and co-operate with the school in dealing with any incidents that may arise.

Signed parent/guardian

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Resources

SPHE support programme
WALK tall support programme
DNE - Drugs Task Force
Gardaí - Junior Liaison Officer/Community Guards
HomeSchool Community Liaison Scheme
School Completion Programme
St. Benedict's Family Centre
Kilbarrack Coast Community Programme
Kilbarrack Community Development Project - Club 4 U
Cross Care
CAD – Community Awareness of Drugs
KLEAR - Adult Education Centre
Trinity Youth Services
SASSY - counselling for youth
National Drugs Strategy and reports 2009 – to date
Junior Cycle Post Primary and Teacher Guidelines for SPHE –DES/NCCA
Child Protection Guidelines for Post primary schools - DES
Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools – DES
Directory of Alcohol, Drugs and Related Services in the Republic of Ireland –
Department of Health and Children

This list is not exhaustive

Substance Abuse Report Form

Name of student: _____

Date on Incident: _____

Reporting Teacher: _____

Factual Account of Events:

Who has been informed?

What action has been taken?

Signed

Date

APPENDIX

The National Drugs Strategy 2017 – 2025

Objective 1.1: Promote healthier lifestyles within society Substance misuse prevention strategies targeting families, schools and communities are an effective way of promoting health and wellbeing among the general population and result in wider benefits for society in terms of savings in future health, social and crime costs. Prevention strategies include measures to prevent early use of alcohol and other drugs among young people, reduce the misuse of alcohol and other drugs, and minimise harm, where drug use has already started.

Raising awareness of the risks of substance use and increasing understanding of the harmful effects of substance misuse on the health of the user and other people in the person's life is an important part of the work of prevention. DATFs have made a significant contribution in this area through organising local and regional awareness initiatives and promoting evidence based approaches to community action on alcohol that raise awareness of alcohol-related harm. Support for these initiatives will continue under the new strategy.

Evidence suggests that education and awareness programmes that are delivered alongside other measures, which build the lifeskills and confidence necessary to support positive behaviours and choices, are more likely to be effective in encouraging protective and healthy behaviour than stand-alone measures. On the other hand, initiatives that use scare tactics or testimonials from ex-drug users to discourage drug use can be counterproductive and may have little impact on changing behaviour 12.

Effective drug prevention involves integrated holistic policies and actions, which take account of the different risk factors for substance use, such as parental substance misuse, family circumstances, peer pressure, school or work life, lifestyle reasons and socio-economic factors. Promoting a joined up approach between different government policies and strategies that may have a bearing on the risk factors for substance misuse is important in this context.

Prevention is a collaborative effort, which involves a range of stakeholders, including parents and families, those working in education, DATFs, family support networks, youth services, student unions, sporting organisations and networks of people who use drugs. Prevention programmes should be evidence-based, adhere to quality standards and involve participants in programme design and implementation.

Using manual-based programmes, which set out the practical aspects of the intervention and ensuring programmes are implemented and regularly evaluated, all increase the likelihood of success and better outcomes. A coordinated and consistent approach to prevention and education interventions will be achieved by supporting specific capacity building initiatives aimed at the relevant sectors and interests groups involved in drug and alcohol education