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St Mac Dara's Community College Drugs Policy and Substance Abuse Policy

St. Mac Dara's Community College Drugs Policy

Clear definition of drugs as understood by the college;

A Drug can be defined as a chemical which causes changes in the way the human body functions, either mentally, physically or emotionally. "Drugs" include illegal drugs such as cannabis, ecstasy etc. and legally available drugs such as alcohol, tobacco and solvents. Use of prescribed drugs must be authorised by parental/guardian consent.

(All young people are living in a drug-using society. Students, irrespective of social background or educational attainment, are at risk. Unprescribed drugs, including tobacco and alcohol, have no place in the healthy environment that schools strive to achieve.)

College's Mission Statement

We, the community of this college, through a caring and collective approach, aspire to provide a broad-based education for all, to foster respect and dignity and to promote a safe and just environment by positively encouraging all to realise their full potential.

School Policy

Smoking – The school is a smoke-free area.

- Students are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on school premises.

- Students found smoking on the school premises will be suspended.
- Staff or visitors to the college may not smoke on school premises.

Alcohol – The school building and the school grounds are alcohol-free areas, except for designated staff and parent functions where prior notice is given to the principal. Consumption of alcohol by students at any after school activities in the school will not be allowed.

- Students are not allowed bring alcohol into school or school grounds or to consume alcohol in school or on school grounds.
- Students are not allowed to consume alcohol on school trips or tours.
- Where a student comes to school under the influence of alcohol, his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted immediately and asked to take their child home.
- Students found drinking on school premises will be suspended.

Illicit Drugs and Solvents– Students are prohibited from being in possession of, or using, illicit drugs or solvents on the school premises.

- Illicit drugs found on the school premises should be locked away and the Gardaí contacted to dispose of them.
- Parents are encouraged to inform the school authorities if they suspect their child of drug taking.
- Students suspected of drug taking outside school will be observed and every effort will be made to support them and to ensure they get appropriate help and counselling, where necessary.
- Students found in possession of drugs for distribution will be excluded permanently from the college, subject to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act.

Aims and Objectives

1. To provide a comprehensive substance abuse prevention programme, as part of the overall Social, Personal and Health Education Programme, so as to maintain a safe and healthy school environment. . TY students are trained in Defibrillator use and CPR.
1. To maintain a whole school approach – in the prevention of drug abuse
 - In the implementation of the school's disciplinary procedures in cases of possession, consumption or drug dealing
 - In the provision of advice and support in the rehabilitation process when drug abuse occurs.
2. To educate students to accept responsibility for their actions.

3. To train staff in the implementing this programme. First Aid training is be made available to all staff regularly.
4. To secure the full cooperation and support of parents/guardians in the implementation of this policy.
5. That the Board of Management monitor and evaluate policy and procedure on an annual basis.

Categories of substance abuse as understood by the college

The Substance Abuse Policy is broken down into the following categories which apply while in school, on school premises or on school related activities:

1. Substances which are affecting someone's behaviour which is a cause for concern.
2. Substances which are in someone's possession for his or her own use.
3. Substances which are being taken in school.
4. Managing drug related situations involving harmful and/or illegal drugs.
5. Substances being distributed or sold.
6. Suspected overdose.

Procedures for dealing with the categories

Substances affecting someone's behaviour which is a cause for concern

Symptoms might include a deterioration in work over a period of time, dilated pupils, erratic or uncharacteristic behaviour.

Any staff member who is suspicious about the behaviour of a student should refer the matter to the Principal/ Deputy Principal and should furnish the Principal/ Deputy Principal with a "behavioural report form". Casual discussion about the student, in any context, is inappropriate and unhelpful. The priority is to seek help for the student as quickly as possible.

After consultation with the student, the Principal or Deputy Principal should discuss the matter with the referring member of staff. Parents/Guardians will be informed and the student may be referred for appropriate treatment.

Illicit Substances which are in someone's possession for his or her own use.

The member of staff who finds a student in possession of any substance should

1. Remain with the student and send another student to request the presence of the Principal or Deputy Principal.
2. Ask the student to hand over the substance and give it to the Principal or Deputy Principal who locks the substance/drug(s) away until Gardaí dispose of it.

3. Write a report of the circumstances.

If a student has the illicit substance, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be summoned by phone to the school. While waiting for the arrival of the parent(s)/guardian(s), the student will be kept in school under supervision, away from the main student body, until the parent(s)/guardian(s) arrive to discuss the situation with the Principal/Deputy Principal. The Gardaí will also be summoned to the school and invited to interview the student in the presence of the Principal/Deputy Principal in loco parentis, if the parents are not also available to attend this interview.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and student will be obliged to enter a contract. Inhouse consequences may include

- consideration of permanent exclusion.
- a specific period of suspension, subject to requirements of the Education Act.
- the student may not participate in school trips.
- the student may not represent the school in extra-curricular activities.
- the student will not be permitted to hold any office for a specific period of time.

If the college considers the student to be at risk as a result of their involvement with such substances, it may require that the student attend for professional assessment and counselling.

Substances which are being taken in school

The care and management of a student in this category is dependent on the substance and severity of substance being used. If required, medical attention should be sought immediately for a student in this category. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should be informed as soon as possible. The student should be accompanied to hospital by a member of staff appointed to do so in the absence of parent(s)/guardian(s).

The student may be suspended from school. Consideration of return to school will be dependent on a medical and/or treatment report being received. The duration of absence from school will be determined by the nature of the substance taken, the level of dependency, recommendations from outside professionals and arrangements made with parent(s)/guardian(s). In the event of being allowed return to school the following conditions will apply:

1. The student will be cautioned, prior to return, by the Principal/Deputy Principal concerning his/her long term future in the school. A letter confirming such will be sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
2. The Principal/Deputy Principal, if deemed necessary, will inform the Gardaí to ensure that additional support is available to the student.

Further conditions may include external counselling, ongoing testing for drug abuse and ongoing consultation with external agencies.

Managing Drug Related Situations

A staff member should report the incident which has arisen and refer the student(s) involved to the Principal/Deputy Principal and, subsequently, submit a written report of the incident. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called to the school by the Principal/Deputy Principal and informed of the situation. Pending an investigation by the appropriate authorities, action will be taken according to prevailing procedures which may include the following:

(i) The parents(s)/guardian(s) and student will be obliged to enter a contract with the school regarding the student's future behaviour in the school.

(ii) A specific period of suspension may be imposed on the student, subject to Department of Education and Skills guidelines.

1. The student may not be allowed participate in school trips or represent the school in any external or extra-curricular activities.
2. The student may not be permitted to hold any office for a specific period of time.

The school may, as it deems appropriate, liaise with any relevant authorities in seeking advice or assistance when investigating a drug related incident.

Substances being distributed or sold

Following clear evidence, any student deemed to be involved in the selling or distribution of drugs/substances on school premises or during school-related activities will be reported immediately to their parents, and to the Gardaí, and will be suspended from school pending a decision by the Board of Management on their continued presence in the school.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) have the right to appeal any suspension or expulsion to the Board of Management.

If the student is accepted back into the school, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be obliged to enter a written contract. In school sanctions may include not being allowed to participate in school trips or hold any office for a specific period of time.

Emergency Procedures in Suspected Overdose

1. Don't leave the student alone.
2. If the student is unresponsive, access emergency services immediately.
3. Keep the student awake and as alert as possible.
4. If deemed necessary, seek medical help. Utilise trained staff, as needed, for first aid.
5. Comfort and reassure the student and, at all times, be conscious of preserving the student's dignity.
6. Notify the Principal/Deputy Principal.
7. Contact the parent(s)/guardian(s).
8. Attempt to determine the drug taken, be it through a friend or associate, another student or by checking the student's locker, clothing or odours.
9. In the absence of a parent(s)/guardian(s), a teacher should accompany the student if s/he is being brought to hospital.

10. Report the incident to the Gardaí.
11. Complete an incident report form.

Relevant Resources, Documents & Legislation

Walk Tall Programme – a Social, Personal & Health Education programme for the prevention of Substance Misuse – Department of Education & Skills.

Child Protection Guidelines & Procedures for Primary Schools – Department of Education & Skills (2001).

Substance Misuse Prevention Information booklet outlining a multi-strand approach for Boards of Management, Teachers, Parents and other Educators – Department of Education 1997.

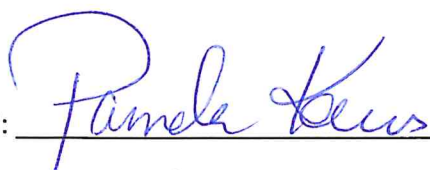
On My Own Two Feet – Educational Resource Materials for Social Personal & Health Education – Department of Education & Skills.

Junior Cycle Post Primary Curriculum & Teacher Guidelines for Social Personal & Health Education – Department of Education & Skills/NCCA (2001).

Directory of Alcohol, Drugs & related services in the Republic of Ireland – Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health & Children.

Facts about Drug Abuse in Ireland, compiled by Des Corrigan – Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health & Children (revised edition 2002).

- www.education.ie - Department of Education and Skills
- www.dohc.ie - Department of Health and Children
- www.hse.ie - Health Service Executive
- www.healthpromotion.ie - Leaflets / Resources
- www.drugs.ie - Ireland's National Drug & Alcohol Information & Support

Signed:  Date: 28/03/2020

Chairperson Board of Management St Mac Dara's CC

Signed: Deek Jand Date: 23/03/2020
Principal and Secretary of Board of Management St Mac Dara's CC