

Grange Community College Draft Substance Use Policy

Title of Policy

Grange Community College Substance Use Policy

Scope

This policy applies to 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.

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.

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.
- The school's policy on Drugs, Alcohol and Substance Abuse was in need of up-dating.
- It had been identified as an area to review at a staff meeting.

Goals/Objectives

This policy aims to inform teachers about issues regarding confidentiality and appropriate reporting procedures. It also aims to clarify an agreed procedure for involving parents/guardians, liaising with Gardai and responding to media inquiries.

Policy Content

a) Definition of a drug:

A drug is defined as a chemical that causes change in the way the human body functions mentally, physically and/or emotionally. These include legal drugs such as alcohol, solvents, tobacco, prescribed medication and illegal drugs of any description.

b) 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 Dept. SPHE will provide the basis for the pupils' education about alcohol, Tobacco and drug use.
- Pupil development and education will be reinforced through the syllabii of the following subjects.
 - 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, and not used in a reactionary manner.
- Speakers will come from the following organisations: Trinity Youth Service, Donaghmede, Northside Partnership, Alcoholics Anon. Narcotics Anon, 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 to appropriate focused counselling to help them overcome their particular problems. Students can be referred to "Teen Counselling" (Cross Care), or to SASSY (Youth substance abuse counselling). 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.

Training of Facilitators

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

c) 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

In all cases where there is no immediate danger to the person, the staff member

- Investigates and writes a report of the incident. 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.
- The staff member informs the Principal or Deputy Principal and passes on the written report and any substances found.
- The Principal will assess each incident individually and take appropriate action. Parents will be contacted and informed of the incident. This will be handled sensitively with support provided by the Guidance Counsellor or Chaplain.
- In serious cases the Principal or Deputy Principal will inform the Garda/Juvenile Liaison Officer who will deal with any confirmed incident of illegal drug use. Legal advice will be sought, if deemed necessary, through Co. Dublin V.E.C.

Pastoral Care/Counselling

Pastoral support will be offered in response to all incidents. Drug problems considered serious will be referred to the appropriate service. Parents and staff will also be offered support.

Disciplinary Procedures

Breaches of the school rules regarding the use of drugs will be dealt with via the school Code of Behaviour. In serious cases the school Board of Management will apply appropriate sanctions such as suspension/exclusion or a counselling situation. Return to school may depend on involvement in appropriate counselling. Parental involvement and guarantees may also be required.

Confidentiality

Matters relating to misuse of substances legal or illegal will be treated confidentially within the school. Information is shared on a need to know basis.

Media

In the event of a drug incident the school's spokesperson does not comment on an individual case but clarifies that all incidents will be dealt with in accordance with school policy and appropriate support services will be provided or accessed.

d) Staff and Parent Training and Resources

Staff

- The School will support the teacher by providing the relevant resource materials.
- Any training needed will be given to school personnel.

Parents

Information will be given to parents/guardians

- At parent/teacher meetings.
- At induction (First Year Pupils) and curriculum information meetings.
- Parents receive a copy of completed Substance Use Policy
- Parents will be involved in the policy review group
- Organisation of information/training meetings when required.
- Access to substance use information/education materials/policy.

Resources

SPHE support programme

WALK tall support programme

DNE - Drugs task Force

Gardai - 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

Links with Other Policies

The following policies should be read in conjunction with the Substance Use Policy:

Code of 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

There is a need for policies to be developed in the following areas linking with this policy:

Health, Safety and Welfare

Staff development

Policy for storing chemicals

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

- The policy will be reviewed regularly.
- An initial review will take place within the first academic year of its implementation. This process will be co-ordinated by the joint working group in consultation with the wider school community.
- The policy will be updated in the light of changing information, legislation developments in education programmes and feedback from parents/guardians, staff and students.
- 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.

Ratification and Communication

- After ratification this policy would be distributed to staff including any new staff
- It would 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:
Chairperson of Board of Management

Dated: