



Coláiste De Lacy

SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

1. Rationale

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges that affect their health and wellbeing. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs is part of this reality. It must be assumed that tobacco, alcohol and drugs are available to members of our school community. Coláiste De Lacy prepares students for dealing with the many challenges affecting their health and wellbeing.

The central objective of our Substance Misuse Policy is the welfare, safety, care and protection of students in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare Act 2000).

2. Ethos

The school recognises that drugs, both legal and illegal, are available in the local community and that the school, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and response to drug related incidents. Coláiste De Lacy asserts its right to take whatever steps are necessary to protect and promote the school's values/principles by requiring certain standards of behaviour and prohibiting certain practices that undermine it. Coláiste De Lacy also asserts its right to protect the rights of the compliant majority of students and its good name as a school.

The underlying philosophy is one of concern and caring for students.

3. Scope of Policy

- 3.1.** This policy applies to the whole community of Coláiste De Lacy with the exclusion of staff who are governed by the LMETB *Workplace Substance Abuse Policy*. The policy will apply at all times during normal school hours and during all school related activities (as defined below).
- 3.2.** The Board of Management of Coláiste De Lacy affirms that students who are over the age of eighteen years must comply with this policy and that they shall have the same rights and responsibilities as are given to other students and their parents/guardians in this policy.
- 3.3.** This policy relates to any substance that changes the way the body functions mentally, physically and emotionally. These include illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, tobacco related products, medicines, solvents etc. and all come under the general heading of drugs¹.

3.4. Definition of *School Related Activities*

The term 'school related activities' applies to:

- any activities on the school premises,
- travelling to and from school,
- representing the school or working as part of a school programme,
- educational tours, fieldtrips, reward trips...etc.,
- any activities organised by the school that take place offsite
- It also applies to being clearly distinguishable as a student of Coláiste De Lacy, i.e., when wearing the school uniform.

Coláiste De Lacy is very proud of its students and the school uniform which clearly identifies and distinguishes them. Our school uniform is a huge part of our identity as a community of learners. The students of Coláiste De Lacy wear their uniform with pride and honour. The manner in which students present and conduct themselves while in uniform reflects significantly on the public image of Coláiste De Lacy. Therefore, students wearing the school uniform should always be conscious that they represent the entire school community, and as such, their

¹ As defined later in this policy

conduct, attitude and manners should reflect our school principles and values (school ethos).

3.5. Definition of *Substance Misuse Incident*

Our school believes that a substance misuse incident is as follows:

- any incident involving tobacco, tobacco related products, alcohol, solvents, drugs (legal or illegal) during a school related activity
- use or *suspected use* of tobacco, tobacco related products, alcohol, solvents, drugs (legal or illegal) during a school related activity
- possession or supply of tobacco, tobacco related products, alcohol, solvents, drugs (legal or illegal) or associated paraphernalia during a school related activity
- where intoxication arises from suspected substance misuse or where behaviour suggests the use/ misuse of tobacco, tobacco related products, alcohol, solvents, drugs (legal or illegal)
- medical emergencies where substance misuse is suspected during a school related activity

4. Aims and Objectives of Policy

- To provide a safe and secure environment within which the educational development of every student can take place
- To protect each student and staff member in the school from the potentially harmful effects of tobacco, tobacco related products, alcohol, solvents, drugs (legal or illegal)
- To provide clear guidelines in regard to address incidents of substance misuse
- To ensure that no student will have possession of², use, sell, supply or attempt to sell/supply to others on the school premises, on the way to or from school or during any school related activities as defined in this policy.

² Unless the *student* is in full compliance with the *LMETB Administration of Medications in Schools Policy*

5. Relationship to other policies

This policy operates in conjunction with other Coláiste De Lacy and LMETB policies:

- *CDL Admissions and Participation Policy*
- *Code of Conduct*
- *LMETB / School Suspensions and Expulsions Policy* as incorporated into the CDL *Code of Conduct*
- *Child Safeguarding Statement*
- *LMETB Administration of Medications in Schools Policy*
- *LMETB Educational Tours and Field Trips Policy*
- *Safety Health and Welfare Statement*
- *Critical Incident Policy*
- *RSE/SPHE Policy*
- *Use of e-Cigarettes on LMETB Premises – Statement of Policy*

This list is not exhaustive and may be added to from time to time as appropriate.

6. Relevant Legislation

A range of legislation applies to the operation of this policy including:

- Education Act 1998
- Education (Welfare Act 2000)
- Health Act (1947)
- Poisons Act (1961)
- Medical Preparations Regulations (1970)
- Misuse of Drugs Acts (1977 to 2015)
- Criminal Justice Act (1994 - 2007)
- Public Health (Tobacco) Acts 2002 – 2015
- Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010
- Children First Act 2015
- National, EU and other international regulations

7. Policy Implementation

For simplicity, the implementation of this policy is described in two parts. Part 1 deals with Drugs and Alcohol and Part 2 deals with Smoking and Tobacco products.

Part 1 – Drugs and Alcohol

7.1. Definition of a Drug

A drug can be defined as any chemical that causes a change in the way a person functions either, mentally, physically or emotionally.

A drug or substance (as used in the context of this policy) is any chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels.

Drugs or substances may be addictive and illegal as well as potentially harmful for an individual. Prescribed drugs, when taken other than as prescribed, can be harmful to the person for whom they have been prescribed or to other(s) for whom they have not.

Substances such as cannabis, ecstasy, magic mushrooms, solvents, cocaine, heroin, synthetic drugs such as Ecstasy, LSD, methamphetamine etc. are increasingly becoming a problem in our community. It has been recognised that drug use has serious negative effects on the educational experience, performance and attainment of young people. There are many short term and long term effects of drug use.

7.2. The Schools Position regarding Drugs or Alcohol (Use or Possession)

- Coláiste De Lacy does not tolerate or condone, under any circumstances, the use, possession or supply of prohibited drugs, drug paraphernalia, behaviour altering substances or alcohol by anyone in the school, on school trips, while wearing the school uniform or during any school related activities.
- Possession or consumption of alcohol or other substances defined as a 'drug' in the policy, in the school building, on the school premises, while wearing the school uniform or by students while they are engaged in any school related activities is **expressly forbidden**.
- Students found with alcohol or another drug for their own consumption, or

suspected of being under the influence of any or either, will be disciplined under the Code of Conduct. Sanctions and punishments (**up to and including permanent exclusion from the school**) will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence.

- Being in the presence of or in the vicinity of other students using alcohol or another drug is also **expressly forbidden** and will be disciplined under the Code of Conduct.

7.3. The Schools Position regarding Drugs or Alcohol (Sale, Trade, Supply or Distribution)

- Any student involved in selling, exchanging, trading, supplying or distributing illicit substances during any school related activity, will be reported to the Gardaí.
- The student will be suspended in accordance with the Code of Conduct Suspensions and Expulsions Policy and Procedures, pending a decision by the Board of Management.
- Sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence, but include the possibility of **permanent exclusion from school**.

7.4. Dealing with a Suspected Substance Misuse Incident (Possession, Sale, Trade, Supply or Distribution)

- A member of staff, having good reason for believing that a student may be in possession of tobacco, alcohol or drugs, may, in the presence of another teacher or responsible adult, ask that a student empty his/her pockets or bag. If the student refuses, the matter should be referred immediately to an Assistant Principal, the Deputy Principal or the Principal, who will repeat the request. In the event of another refusal, the parents/guardians shall be contacted to obtain their support. Where there is good reason for doing so, or where a student attempts to destroy, or otherwise dispose of any tobacco, alcohol or drugs, the Gardaí may be called, and reasonable efforts will be made by staff to preserve evidence.
- The Board of Management affirms that school authorities shall have the right to search lockers (school property) allocated to students and that this shall be done in the presence of another teacher and/or the student.

- A limited number of staff will be involved in the management of suspected or confirmed drug incidents. Staff will be informed on a "need to know" basis. The Principal or Deputy Principal will hold all written records confidentially.
- The school recognises the importance of limiting, as far as is practicable, the number of people involved in investigating a substance misuse incident. However, the school can give no absolute *guarantee* of confidentiality. In the event of any substance misuse incident or suspected substance misuse incident, the school will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the pupil involved and the welfare of the school community as a whole and the reputation of the school.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed and support will be offered to them. The Principal or Deputy Principal will contact Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer/Community Gardaí and the Gardaí will deal with any illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia found. In some instances, it may be necessary to seek the assistance of the Gardaí in identifying suspected drugs or drug paraphernalia.
- Pastoral support will be offered in response to all incidents. If a student has a problem with substance misuse, referral to outside agencies will be recommended; for example; the SUST Counsellors (Substance Use Services for Teens), LAR (Laytown, Ashbourne and Ratoath Foróige Project), Jigsaw Meath, CAMHS, NEPS, family doctor ...etc.
- Parents/Guardians, staff and other students involved in the incident will be offered support where appropriate.
- The Principal or Deputy Principal will handle all media enquiries. They will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.
- The school will assist the Gardaí in any investigations.

7.5. On Site Management of a Suspected Substance Misuse Incident (Consumption)

- If a member of staff is of the opinion that a student is unsafe/a threat to others due to suspected substance misuse, then the staff member may not allow the student to participate in a lesson/activity. The staff member will err on the side of caution

and will immediately report their suspicions or an incident to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

- Should a member of staff suspect that a student is under the influence of a substance (s)he will ensure that the student is not left unaccompanied at any time.
- The assistance of another member of staff will be sought, if appropriate and practicable, so that the safety of all students involved is not compromised.
- In the case of suspected misuse during school, the school will contact parents/guardians to arrange for the collection of the student as soon as possible. This is to ensure that the student is evaluated and seeks whatever care/medical attention may be necessary.
- If necessary, medical assistance will be sought immediately.
- The student may be suspended from school. His/her return may be dependent on receipt of a medical/treatment report indicating that he/she is drug or alcohol free.
- The duration or suspension will be determined by the nature of the substance taken; the level of dependency; recommendations from external professionals and arrangements with parents/guardians
- Admittedly, incidents may occur where the school's suspicions are incorrect. However, in the interest of care for the student and the health and safety of everyone else, it is best to err on the side of caution and seek parental assistance.

7.6. Disciplinary Procedures

- The protection and safety of students who have breached the Code of Conduct in relation to use of potentially harmful substances is a priority. However, the use of such substances cannot be condoned and students who offend will be disciplined in accordance with this policy and the Code of Conduct.
- A programme of support may be recommended for the student. In certain circumstances, the school will insist that if the student is to remain in the school he/she must participate in an agreed programme of support.
- A student who continues to misuse substances may be suspended or expelled from the school following due process.
- A student who supplies drugs to another person(s) in the school will be suspended or expelled from the school following due process.
- Illicit substances confiscated in the school will be passed on to the appropriate authorities for identification purposes.
- The Board of Management shall reserve the right to proceed to expulsion procedures without rehabilitation where re-admission is considered hazardous to

others in the school.

7.7. Medication

- Medication will not be issued by school staff. If a student becomes unwell at school, parents/guardians will be contacted and asked to take the student home.
- The LMETB *Administration of Medication in Schools Policy* governs the administration of medicines in the case of students with on-going medical conditions.

7.8. Returning to School after a Substance Misuse Incident

- The student will receive an appropriate caution/sanction from Principal/Deputy Principal under the Code of Conduct.
- A letter confirming this will be sent to parents/guardians.
- The student may be asked to renew their commitment to the Code of Conduct in writing. This undertaking may be supported by a declaration signed by the parents/guardians as appropriate and necessary.
- The Garda JLO/Community Garda may be informed if deemed necessary.
- The school reserves the right to request that the parent/guardian arranges to have the student tested for drug use.
- The school reserves the right to request that the student attends drug/alcohol counselling.
- The school reserves the right to request a medical certificate indicating that the student is drug or alcohol free.
- A formal written report will be made by the member(s) of staff involved.

Part 2- Smoking

7.9. The Board of Management is obliged to ensure that the terms of the Public Health Tobacco Act 2002 and the Public Health Tobacco Amendment Act 2004, are implemented in school.

- Smoking/use of tobacco of related products on the school grounds is forbidden by law.
- Smoking/use of tobacco of related products while wearing the school uniform is also expressly forbidden.
- Cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, vapes or other smoking paraphernalia are prohibited and will be confiscated.

- Students who use tobacco related products on the school grounds, while wearing the school uniform, on school trips or while engaged in any school related activity will be suspended from school.
- Students who are with other students who are smoking, though they may not be in the act of smoking themselves, are also deemed to be in breach of the Code of Conduct and will be disciplined in the same manner as the smokers in whose company they are found.
- The use of electronic smoking devices 'vaping' is prohibited in all LMETB schools and centres.

7.10. Disciplinary Procedures

- A student, who is found smoking by a member of staff in the school, will face immediate suspension from class and their parents/guardians will be contacted.
- In-school suspension from class will continue until a parent/guardian comes to the school to collect his/her son or daughter. He/she may face further suspension from school.
- Disciplinary action will be decided upon by the Principal and/or Deputy Principal in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- A second or further offence will result in more severe disciplinary action than a first offence.
- The school reserves the right to remove break time/ lunchtime privileges from students found smoking during school time.
- Students who are with other students who are smoking, though they may not be in the act of smoking themselves, are also deemed to be in breach of the Code of Conduct and will be disciplined in the same manner as the smokers in whose company they are found.

8. Training & Development

8.1. Staff

- The School will facilitate training for staff involved in the SPHE programmes.
- All staff will be offered drug information and awareness training.
- Specific training will be made available to key staff in relation to managing drug related incidents.
- First Aid training will be made available to all staff regularly.

8.2. Parents/Guardians

- The School will provide opportunities to attend drug workshops, information evenings...etc. Links to various supports will be uploaded onto the school website.

8.3. Students

- The school provides Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes on a formal and informal, cross-curricular basis.
- These programmes may be run within the context of SPHE classes.
- Age appropriate educational programmes from the community and visiting speakers build on and enhance existing school programmes.
- TY students may study First Aid.

9. Availability of Policy

This policy is available to staff, students and their parents/guardians, persons who work in the school on a part time and or temporary basis and it applies to all persons who encounter the school or its staff or students when engaged in school related activities. New staff will be informed of the policy when they take up employment in the school.

10. Review of Policy

- This policy will be monitored and reviewed every two years or as necessary on behalf of the Board of Management, by the Principal. The practical application of the policy during the preceding year(s), its efficacy in preventing the use of tobacco or other substances and an assessment of the needs of students and staff in regard to education and awareness about use of these, will form part of the review process.
- The policy may be reviewed periodically, in light of emerging legislation and circulated Guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills.

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This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed by the Chairperson of the Board of Management: _____

Date: _____

Date of Next Review: _____