



Carrigaline Community School
Substance Misuse Policy

School Mission Statement

We at Carrigaline Community School aim to promote the holistic development of our students in a happy, caring, ordered and inclusive environment. We promote personal and academic excellence, together with a strong sense of social responsibility based on the principle of mutual respect.

Background

A drug is any substance that changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. Drug misuse means the use of any drug, legal or illegal, which damages some aspects of the user's life.

We acknowledge that as a school, we have an important role to play in educating students around drug misuse, both in terms of prevention and offering support to those who use drugs. It is essential to help our school population to develop positive attitudes and behaviours which are free from dependence on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Aims and Objectives of the Policy

The school sees itself as having a role in the process of enabling individuals to increase control over and improve their health. We endeavour to promote the wellbeing of individuals by:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment.
- Promoting positive health behaviours.
- Increasing knowledge about health.
- Promoting the self-esteem of individuals.
- Working in particular with parents, students, teachers and outside agencies.

To this end, we feel the need to implement a policy to address substance use.

Implementation of The Policy

The school does not accept the possession, use or supply of drugs in the school, on school trips, or while in school uniform by any members of the school community. The only exception is for legitimate medical use, about which the school must be informed.

A. Smoking/Vaping

- The school is a smoke free area (this applies to the whole school community and any visitors to the school)
- People are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes or E-cigarettes on the school premises.
- Students found smoking/vaping on the premises will be reported to the Year Head/Deputy Principal and appropriate sanctions will be administered (suspension).
- Repeated and blatant offending will result in further instigation of the school disciplinary procedures.
- Counselling, where appropriate, will be sought.

B. Alcohol

- The school is an alcohol free area.
- People are not allowed to bring alcohol into the school or to consume alcohol in the school.
- Alcohol will not be available at any after-hours activities for students arranged by the school.
- Where it is suspected that a student has come to school under the influence of alcohol, their parents

- will be called to take them home.
- Students breaking these rules will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary procedures.
- Counselling, where appropriate, will be sought.

C. Illicit Drugs and Solvents

- People are prohibited from being in possession of or using, illicit drugs or solvents on the school premises.
- Where it is suspected that a student has come to school under the influence of illegal drugs, their parents will be called to take them home.
- Illicit drugs found on the school premises will be given to the Principal/Deputy Principal immediately, and will be locked away. Advice regarding the disposal of the substance will be sought from the Gardai. An investigation by Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head will be made into the origin of any illicit drugs found.
- Where the school suspects trafficking of drugs, an investigation will be carried out by the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head. Parents of any student involved will be informed. The advice and assistance of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer/Community Garda will be sought.
- School management expects parents to inform the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head if they suspect their child of drug taking.
- Students suspected of taking drugs or solvents will be monitored carefully. Every effort will be made by the Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal to ensure they get counselling and the support they need.
- In situations where the school has been alerted by the parents of a student, of concerns regarding illegal drug use, the school may, as it sees fit, request the student to only use a specific toilet throughout the school day.
- Students breaking these rules will be dealt with according to the school's disciplinary procedures. This can include up to and including expulsion from school in serious cases.

Education and Support

A. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes

Education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs is most effective if provided in the broader context of a Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme which is developmental and delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment. It is important that:

- Students have clear information about the effects of various drugs.
- Students examine their attitudes to alcohol, tobacco and illicit substances in their lives and in the environment in which they live.
- Students are equipped with the skills to make informed and healthy decisions about substance use.

B. Counselling

Substance misuse rarely occurs in a vacuum and where a student has been in difficulties because of their use of any drug, it is usually discovered they have been using it to help cope with, or avoid some other problem. Counselling will be offered to students impacted or engaged with drugs.

Where a member of staff requires support, the school may consider facilitating links with an Employment Assistance Scheme and the Occupational Health Services of Medmark.

Procedures for Dealing With Alcohol, Tobacco And Drug-Related Incidents

A. Examples of Drug Related Incidents:

- Emergencies where the person may be unconscious.
- Intoxication/unusual behaviour.
- Suspicion/rumour of drug use, possession or dealing.
- Disclosure by another person.
- Possession of illegal drugs on the school premises or at a school related activity.
- Selling/supplying illegal drugs.
- School grounds being used for drug activity.
- Drug paraphernalia found on school property.

B. Assessing and Managing Drug Incident:

- Where there is no immediate danger to the person(s), it is important to take time to assess the situation before responding.
- Where it is suspected that a student has come to school under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, their parents will be called to take them home.
- In situations of confirmed use/possession or supply, all details will be recorded and acted upon. Documentation will be held confidentially by the Principal.
- Staff will be informed on a need to know basis.
- All cases will be handled sensitively and support will be offered wherever needed.
- If a person has a serious drug problem, referral to a drug treatment centre will be recommended.
- Where school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence.

Procedures for Review, Monitoring and Evaluation

- Given the nature of society and the changes in drug types and drug use, policy and procedures should be regularly evaluated and updated where necessary.
- This policy will be made available to all members of the school community via the school website

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Carrigaline Community School on May 16th 2023

It will next be reviewed in May 2025

Appendix 1

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS ON MANAGING DRUG-RELATED INCIDENTS

Substances affecting someone's behaviour

- Symptoms may include a fall-off in work over time, erratic or uncharacteristic behaviour.
- Any staff member who is worried about the behaviour of a student should refer observations immediately to the Year Head/Deputy Principal.
- The aim is to seek help for the student as soon as possible. Concern will be expressed for the consequences of this behaviour and as much information as possible elicited from the student.
- After consultation with the student, appropriate feedback should be given to the referring member of staff.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed and the student may be referred for appropriate treatment/support. Parents will have the opportunity to voice their own worries/fears.

Substances which are in someone's possession for his/her use

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

- Accompany the student to the office and stay with the student while seeking the assistance of the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head.
- The student will be asked to hand over the substance and give it to the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- If a student refuses to hand over the substance, the Principal/Deputy Principal should inform the parents/guardians by telephone.
- The student will be kept in school, out of circulation, under supervision, until the parents/guardians arrive to discuss the situation with the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- The Principal/Deputy Principal will inform the relevant outside agencies to ensure that additional support is available to the student.
- A referral will be made to the school counsellor in agreement with the parents/student.

Sanctions

Possession of illegal drugs in school will result in immediate suspension (as a minimum). Further sanctions (i.e. expulsion) will be possible.

Substances which are being taken in school

The care and maintenance of a student in this category is dependent on the pattern and severity of the abuse.

- If required, medical attention should be sought immediately for a student in this category.
- Parents/Guardians should be informed as soon as possible.
- The student should be accompanied to hospital by a member of staff in the absence of Parents/Guardians.
- The duration of absence from school will be determined by:
 - The nature of the substance taken
 - The level of dependency
 - Recommendations from outside professionals
 - Decisions taken by Board of Management
 - The student will be suspended from the school pending an investigation by the appropriate authorities and action taken according to the prevailing legislation.

If returning to school, the following system of care and management may apply:

- The student being cautioned strongly by the Principal concerning his/her long-term future in the school.

A letter confirming this will be sent to the Parents/Guardians.

- The Parents/Guardians and student will be obliged to enter a contract.
- If necessary, the Principal will inform the relevant outside agencies to ensure that additional support is available to the student.

Substances being given or sold

- Any student involved in the selling or distribution of banned substances on the school premises or school-related activities will be reported to the Gardai and recommended for expulsion from the school.
- Parents/Guardians have the right to appeal any suspension or expulsion to the Board of Management

Appendix 2

GUIDELINES FOR YEAR HEAD/ DEPUTY PRINCIPAL/ PRINCIPAL ON MANAGING DRUG-RELATED INCIDENTS

Dealing with the Student

Having observed the behaviours of concern, verified it with others, the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head, may talk with the student.

1. Focus on concrete behaviour. Tell the student what you have observed and express concern for the consequences of this behaviour.
2. Show concern and care.
3. Listen.
4. Beware of the trap of confidentiality. It is important to let a student know that you will try to help him/her resolve the situation, show support through it, and let him/her know when you will involve others.
5. Consult with relevant others and work out strategies which will monitor the young person's behaviour.

Aims of Intervention

- Establishment of alliance between home/school/therapist to positively influence the young person's behaviour.
- Positive re-definition of young person.
- Encouragement of all parties by having a positive attitude regarding outcome.
- Awareness of difficulties for family.

Dealing with Student under the influence of Drugs

- Don't leave alone.
- Attempt to determine drug taken from student/friends/clothing/odour.
- Contact parents.
- Seek medical help if needed.
- Postpone discussion until clear of drugs.

Guidelines for Interview with Parents

- Arrange a suitable place for meeting.
- Set parents at ease
- Be aware of fears they may have.
- Be specific and descriptive when recounting what you have noticed.
- Share concerns of the school. Ask them about their concerns.
- Be supportive. This is a crisis for them.
- Inform them of the support services available to them and their child outside of school (Carrigaline Family Support Centre, Foroige, Cork Local Drugs Task Force).
- Offer parents advice re: discussion with their child.
- Help them to handle the problem of misuse: need to set limits, access to money, relationship issues.
- Arrange a follow-up meeting to discuss further action or to assess improvements in the situation.