

# **Corpus Christi Girls' National School Substance Use Policy**



**Corpus Christi Girls' National School  
Substance Use Policy**



## **Introduction**

Corpus Christi GNS is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs. The staff, management and parents drew up the policy initially and this review took place during the third term of 2019. It is essential that parents/guardians work actively with the school to implement this policy to ensure their children's health and safety. The primary role of substance misuse and prevention rests with the parents/ guardians of the pupils. However, the school recognises that drugs both legal and illegal are available in the wider community and that the school, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents. A number of other policies are in place in the school which support the substance abuse policy including;

- The Child Safeguarding Statement
- The Administration of Medicines Policy
- The Health and Safety Policy
- Code of Behaviour

## **Definition of a drug**

For the purposes of this policy the term "Drug" is used to denote means any chemical substance, which changes the way the body functions, physically how we behave, mentally how we act and emotionally how we feel. Drugs include nicotine, tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, over the counter medicines, prescription medicines and solvents.

## **Rationale**

The policy on substance misuse is revised periodically in order to;

- Ensure the welfare, care and protection of every young person provided for in the Education Act, 1998 and the Education Welfare Act, 2000
- Comply with requirements of the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008: 'Building on Experience', which sets out a detailed programme of action to be implemented by Government Departments and Agencies to combat the very serious problem of drug misuse in our society.
- We need to be pro-active in meeting the needs of our students and in helping them cope with the challenges of modern society.

## **Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to all pupils, all staff members whether employed by the Department of Education or by the Board of Management, all users of the premises and all visitors. It is applicable at all times and to all school related activities. It relates to the school grounds, school building and to any other area in which a school related activity is taking place. Any substance abuse issues which any arise in relation to adults using the premises will be dealt with in the first instance by the Board of Management. This may be an employment issue and due process will apply in all matters of employment.

## **Relationship to the school ethos**

The implementation of this policy will enable us to adhere to the ideals and goals of our Mission Statement, which states "Corpus Christi is a Catholic School in which the children strive to learn together in a happy and safe environment where everyone is valued and respected and encouraged to do their best." We are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for the whole school community. The school also is committed to fostering the development of personal responsibility. This is the ethos which guides the policy.

- The school does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the school, or on outside activities or in non-school time by any member of the school community.
- The school does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco in the school or on school activities by any pupil.
- The school does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances. Pupils are not allowed to use over the counter medicines in school. The school must be informed by parents/ guardians if a pupil is required to have in her possession or to use any drug conditions for conditions such as cystic fibrosis, diabetes, epilepsy or any other long-term illness.
- A pupil or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine.

The policy is focused in four key areas:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.
2. Managing Drug Related Incidents.
3. Training and Staff Development.
4. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation.

### **1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.**

The school is committed to providing an alcohol, tobacco and drug education programme for all students.

Our aims are:

- To safeguard the welfare, care and protection of the pupils
- To increase the self-esteem and confidence of our pupils
- To equip our pupils with personal and social skills
- To enable our pupils to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions
- To provide clear and age appropriate information on drugs
- To minimise the harm caused by drug abuse by offering supportive interventions.

These aims will be achieved by:

1. Staff training and regular in-service.
2. The use of outside speakers where appropriate to reinforce the work done in class.
3. Consultation with parents on the need for drug education.
4. Provision of outside speakers for parent talks.

5. Pupil drug education which will be achieved through the following:

- SPHE Programme
- Walk Tall programme
- Science Policy Content
- Education and Prevention

Our Substance Misuse Prevention programme will be implemented at class levels in accordance with our Social, Personal and Health Education Primary Curriculum Statement. Through S.P.H.E., which is generic in approach and spiral in nature, our pupils will practise specific skills and experience a value system, which supports primary prevention in a holistic, caring, supportive environment. We will address the content objectives relating directly to 10 substances in an age appropriate manner using discrete S.P.H.E. time. (see Appendix 3a of SPHE policy) **2. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug**

**Related Incidents** Drug related incident might include any of the following:

- The use or suspected use of alcohol, drugs, solvents or tobacco.
- Intoxication or unusual behaviour
- Disclosure about use
- Finding drugs or associated paraphernalia on the premises
- Possession and or /supply on the school premises or at a school event.

The school will respond to any drugs related incident in a planned and balanced way taking into consideration the individual needs of the pupil, the needs of the school community, the reputation of the school and any other considerations.

#### **Smoking**

- The school and school yard are no smoking areas.
- Smoking is not allowed at school events and activities

#### **Alcohol**

- The school is an alcohol restricted area.
- At the School Fair an adult must collect alcohol prizes.
- If alcohol is to be used in the school for an after- school hours function, prior permission must be sought from the Board of Management. **Illicit drugs and Solvents**
- The Possession and use of illicit drugs and solvents in school or on the grounds of the school is prohibited.
- Cleaning products are kept locked away.

The school's shared understanding of a 'drug related incident' is:

- Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs
- The sale or passing on of any illegal substance,
- The possession of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs on school grounds or at school related activities

- Disposal of drugs or related items (e.g. syringes) found on school property.

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

**Step 1:** Witness to drug related incident informs teacher/staff member/Principal

**Step 2:** Principal inform parents/guardians

**Step 3:** Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management

**Step 4:** Gardai informed depending on seriousness of incident **Step 5:**

Area Health Board informed for disposal of items

### **Managing a drug related incident**

A limited number of people will be involved in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents. People will be informed on a "need to know" basis. All written records will be held confidentially by the Principal or Deputy Principal. Parents/Guardians will be involved. They will be informed sensitively, and support offered to them. In the case of illegal drugs, the Principal or Deputy Principal will contact Gardai or the Juvenile Liaison Officer and any drugs will be dealt with by them. If a pupil has a problem, then referral will be recommended and as necessary a child protection report may be made to an outside referral agency such as TUSLA. Parents/Guardians, staff and other pupils involved in the incident will be offered support. It is important that the limits of confidentiality are discussed with pupils before any disclosure is made. The well-being and welfare of the student and teacher will be a primary focus.

#### Disciplinary Procedures

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. These will be consistent with school rules (see the Code of Behaviour).

### **Management of Persons in the Workplace Under the Influence of Drugs and/or Alcohol**

The Board of Management shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that pupils and other persons in the workplace are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare from persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The term "in the workplace", in the preceding sentence includes all school related activities taking place under the supervision of a teacher, with the Board's approval, and both within and away from the school premises.

Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and others. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of any contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a parent or adult collecting a pupil from school or presenting themselves on the premises for another reason is unfit to be on the premises or to take care of the said pupil, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal will be informed and the duty of care

will apply to the pupil. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the pupil and safeguard their best interests.

In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove him/herself from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers. An Employee Assistance Service (telephone: 1800 411 057 or e-mail: [ees@vhics.ie](mailto:ees@vhics.ie)) is available to teaching staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service.

The Board of Management also acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all other staff members. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the

non-teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to seek counseling or other professional intervention.

All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded and reported as soon as possible to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management shall consider all such reports and decide on the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

### **3. Training & Development**

Staff training is available from a number of sources. The following agencies may be used to provide professional development for the staff;

- Department of Health and Children
- Department of Education and Skills
- TUSLA
- Professional Development Service for teachers (PDST)

Staff are notified of upcoming in-service and may also attend outside courses through the local education centre. The School will facilitate training for staff involved in the SPHE programmes. All staff will be offered drug information and awareness training regularly. First Aid training will be made available to all staff regularly.

#### Training for Parents/Guardians

The school in consultation with the Parents Association will provide the opportunity to attend drug awareness workshops and information sessions. The school policy on substance abuse will be available in hard copy from the office and on the school website.

### **4. Monitoring the Policy, Review and Evaluation**

The principal/ deputy principal or relevant post holder will monitor the policy to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the School. The following areas be included in the review:

- Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents
- Parent, Staff and Management Training

This policy will be reviewed every three years or more often if necessary.

## **Ratification and Dissemination of Policy**

Teachers, Parents/Guardians, Students and the Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for one year. Again, the three specified areas above will be evaluated.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on May 11<sup>th</sup> 2021. It has been made available to staff, the parents association and is available on the school website. Pupils will be made aware of the policy within the context of the SPHE programme.

*Níamh Greene*

Principal

*Aidan Savage*

Chairperson

## **Appendix**

### **Important Contact Numbers**

Drugs Advisory and Treatment Centre 01 -677 1122 Trinity Court, 30/31 Pearse Street, Dublin 2

#### ***Drugs/AIDS Services:***

*Northern Area Health Board,  
01-882 0300*

#### ***Alcohol Services***

*East Coast Area Health Board:  
Baggot Street Community Alcohol Treatment Unit*

*01-660 7838*

Substance Misuse Prevention Programme

01 -4528017