

ST. MUNCHIN'S COLLEGE

Policy on Substance Use

1. Introduction

The ethos of St. Munchin's College encourages all connected with the college to provide a safe and secure learning environment and to attend to the welfare, care and protection of our pupils.

Young people are faced with many challenges that affect their health and well-being. Exposure to tobacco, solvents, drugs and alcohol is part of this reality. Every school has a duty to inform students, parents and staff of the dangers associated with substance abuse and to implement procedures aimed at curbing such abuse.

Our policy on substance abuse applies not only to students, but also to staff, visitors and users of the school buildings and facilities and to all related school activities.

2. Information

It is the policy of the school to inform students, parents and staff of the dangers associated with substance abuse in a number of ways:

- Each year during student assemblies either the Principal, Deputy-Principal or relevant Year-Head will refer to the school policy and to the problems associated with substance abuse. The students will also be informed of procedures and possible sanctions to be imposed in the event of a breach of the policy.
- Teachers of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) will incorporate a module on substance abuse, outlining the dangers involved. In the Senior Cycle teachers of Religion and Guidance Counselling will incorporate a similar module.
- During the academic year speakers with expertise in the area of substance abuse will be invited to speak with first year students, their parents and staff in relation to substance abuse. These speakers would include members of An Garda Síochána, Health Board Personnel and members of various related agencies and organisations.

3. Rules on Substance Use and Procedures for dealing with the breach of these rules.

Smoking:

Students of the college are not allowed to smoke or have nicotine in their possession while on the school premises or on a school activity. Any student in breach of this rule will be fined. In the case of a repeated breach the student will have the fine increased and his parents will be informed.

Illegal Drug Abuse:

Students using or found in possession of illegal drugs will be removed from class or current school activity and An Garda Síochána and the students' parents/guardians will be informed. Furthermore, students suspected of using or being in possession of illegal drugs are liable to be removed from class or school activity pending an inquiry. The Principal and/or Deputy Principal and the appropriate Year Head should be informed at once and the student's

parents/guardians requested to come to the College as soon as possible. The incident of use or possession will be investigated as fully as possible and the findings carefully recorded. Confidentiality should be observed during the period of investigation. In some cases it may be necessary to seek outside assistance, such as legal advice and/or the involvement of An Garda Síochána. A student using or in possession of illegal drugs will be suspended. However, parents need to be aware that the student may be expelled for the offence.

In the event of a student supplying drugs within the school or on school related activities, the above procedures should be followed and the student is likely to be expelled.

Alcohol:

The most widespread problems in relation to substance abuse is in the area of alcohol. The consumption or possession of alcohol by students either in the school or on college activities is strictly forbidden. Neither is it acceptable for a student to attend school under the influence of alcohol. The appropriate Year Head should be informed and parents/guardians contacted as soon as possible. Students in breach of this rule may be suspended or in the event of a repeat breach may be expelled.

4. Conclusion:

In keeping with the ethos of the college this policy is designed to provide the greatest care and protection for the entire College Community. It is hoped that all members of the college community, students, parents and staff will be vigilant in relation to substance abuse and report/record any incidents to the appropriate Year Head or in his/her absence to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Approved by the Board of Management: 8th December, 2014

Review Date: December, 2016

Signed: Noreen Caulfield - Chairperson