

Kishoge Community College
Substance Abuse Policy
Adopted by Board of Management 1st May 2019

1. INTRODUCTION – Aims, Scope and Rationale.

Aim

KCC aims that ‘all students reach their full potential’¹ and emphasises ‘positive behaviour’² as a core value of the school community. KCC recognises substance misuse as detrimental to the aims and values of our community, and, from this standpoint, the KCC substance abuse policy outlines the following:

1. the education afforded to the school community in relation to substance use and misuse
2. the procedure for managing instances related to substance use and misuse

The term ‘substance’, as used in this policy, refers to alcohol, tobacco and any illegal drug and , furthermore, to ‘any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally’ being used in a way detrimental to the user or those around him/her. Students using drugs for legitimate purposes during must inform the school in writing, and thus, with the agreement of school management, are exempt from the terms of this policy.

The KCC substance abuse policy upholds, and reinforces, the KCC Code of Positive Behaviour and the KCC Expulsion Policy, which state;

- We do not bring prohibited substances such as aerosols, sprays, correction fluid, permanent markers, cigarettes, lighters, matches, **alcohol, illegal drugs or any substance that may be abused** to school.
- Smoking is forbidden in school, on the way to and from school, on school trips and activities or while wearing school uniform.
- We never come to school under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the Code of Discipline could include: ... Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school

Scope

This policy applies to teachers, parents, students, the Board of Management, all other school staff and any person on entering the school premises. This policy operates in accordance with the KCC Code of Positive Behaviour, which states:

“The Code of Behaviour applies to the students of Kishoge Community College and relates to all school activities both during and outside of school hours. Any behaviour that damages the school or is detrimental to other students, either outside, inside or online; may be subject to the provisions of the Code... any behaviour deemed to be contrary to the ethos of KCC, the Code of Behaviour or the NEWB Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools will be dealt with appropriately.”

The Board of Management may permit the responsible and legal use of alcohol at special designated functions.

Rationale

It is recognised that exposure to substance use and misuse is part of the reality in which our school community exists, and that such exposure poses risks to the health and wellbeing of

¹ Kishoge Community College Ethos

² Kishoge Community College Aims

members of the KCC community. The importance of developing policies and procedures, in advance of drug-related incidents and issues coming to attention, is acknowledged. Furthermore;

- This policy is part of a general pastoral approach being adopted by this school to ensure a caring community of learning environment. This policy serves to strengthen, affirm and promote the school's ethos and aims.
- The school policy aims to co-operate fully with the strategic plan adopted by the government under the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 which was made mandatory for schools in Circular 18/02.
- The Education Act 1998 provides that schools promote the social and personal education of students and provide health education for them.
- The National Drugs Strategy, 'Building on Experience' is now government policy and it requires schools to have a substance abuse policy in place
- Other reports from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drug Use Prevention' underlines the importance of school developing a substance abuse policy and the 1999 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) highlighted the seriousness of the problem amongst 16-year olds in Ireland. Alcohol was identified as the dominant drug of misuse in Ireland.

2. IMPLEMENTATION – Education and Incident Management

2.1 Education

Staff Education and Training

- All staff members are required to read all school policy, and to seek further training (from both in-house and external providers) in any areas of pastoral care they deem necessary.
- All teachers involved in the teaching of SPHE are given opportunity and encouragement to avail of relevant training, as provided by the PDST, HSE and other relevant agencies.
- All staff are informed of procedural and policy updates in a timely manner, by email or staff meetings, as appropriate.

Student Education

KCC is committed to providing a comprehensive and time-tabled drug education programme for all students which is incorporated into the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme currently running in the school.

- At Junior level students will receive Drug Education through SPHE class
- At Senior level students will receive drug education through SPHE and RSE

Community Approach

In keeping with KCC's core value of 'democratically run'³ schooling, all members of the school community are requested to participate in substance related education. Staff, students, parents and Board of Education members have responsibility for the formulation, and review, of the Substance Abuse Policy. Further involvement from parents specifically, is requested as below;

Parents and Guardians:

³ KCC ethos

Parents and Guardians have the most influence on the lives of children and are therefore crucial in any prevention issues which arise.

Parents and Guardians are asked/expected to:

- Acknowledge the importance of these programmes – SPHE, RSE
- Recognise that they are important stakeholders in the education process in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse
- Assist and co-operate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any substance abuse issues that may arise

To assist Parents and Guardians in their role the school will:

- Provide them with information in relation to education programmes
- Encourage and welcome consultation with parents on the best use of available resources in the community to support the school in its programme and policy implementation.

Relevant Resources, Documentation and Legislation

Walk Tall Programme: SPHE programme for the prevention of Substance Misuse (DES),
Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Post Primary School DES (2001 and 2008),
On My Own Two Feet Educational resource material for SPHE (DES),
Directory of Alcohol, Drugs and related services in the Republic of Ireland Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health and Children.

2.2 Incident management

KCC's Procedures for Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Related or Substance Abuse Incidents:

In the event of a substance abuse incident, the school will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student(s) involved, the welfare of the school community as a whole and the reputation of the school.

Direct Intervention:

In the event that substance use or misuse is witnessed, or suspected, within the scope of this policy (as above), the following **direct action** will be taken:

1. This occurrence will be immediately reported to the Year Head (or acting authority) and the principal will be informed as soon as possible.
2. Where it is apparent that there is an immediate danger to students or the school community; persons suspected of, or witnessed engaging in, substance abuse or misuse will be removed from the community environment pending a further and complete investigation into the incident.
3. The school will immediately take possession of any banned or prohibited substances and drug paraphernalia associated with a substance abuse incident, carefully recording all such items and retaining them pending completion of the investigation, unless otherwise instructed by appropriate outside agencies.
4. If persons involved are under 18, parents or guardians will be contacted as soon as possible.
5. The school will take all of the steps necessary to fully investigate and assess any substance abuse incident and will record the incident in the manner outlined below.

6. In the result of a completed investigation, the Board of Management may implement disciplinary procedures, which may include an oral warning, a written warning, a suspension of three days, a suspension of more than three days duration, other sanctions short of expulsions and expulsion.
7. The school will endeavour to provide pastoral support to the student and their parents/guardians affected by any incident of substance abuse. This may involve services of a tutor or guidance counsellor, or alternatively the facilitation of third-party intervention and assistance.
8. In appropriate cases Gardaí will be contacted.

Reporting:

In the event that substance use or misuse is witnessed, or suspected, within the scope of this policy (as above), the following **steps to record and report the incident** will be taken:

1. All persons involved in the incident will record and sign a written statement of events.
2. Any illegal substance use will be reported immediately to the principal. Use of legal substances, banned under the terms of this policy, will be reported to the Year Head.
3. The investigating member of staff will complete a Substance Abuse Form (available upon request from the office).
4. In the event of disciplinary procedures involving the Board of Management, the principal will prepare the appropriate documentation for review by the Board.
5. In the event of media intervention, the following procedures will apply:
 - a. The Principal is the point of contact in relation to all media enquiries
 - b. The school will not comment on individuals or individual cases whilst an investigation is underway other than to outline the schools policy in relation to managing such incidents

Confidentiality

KCC recognises the value of confidence and discretion when dealing with sensitive issues at school. However, where a young person is in danger, it is noted that confidentiality cannot, and should not, be guaranteed. It is recognised that the handling of the disclosure and incident may have an important bearing on the outcome. The young person must be informed of what is happening and why. Confidentiality and its limits will be explained to all through the SPHE programme and relevant in-service training.

Student Drug Testing:

The Board of Management or Principal shall have the right to require any student(s) to undergo a drugs test and may require a student to undertake a series of drugs tests in the event of:

1. A positive result and/or
2. A student found in the possession of drugs and/or
3. The student has been before the courts in any matter relating to drugs

In the case of a minor the parents/guardians will be informed before a drug test takes place and will be informed of the results of the test.

A positive drug test constitutes a breach of this policy.

This policy operates in accordance with the KCC School Trips Policy, which states:

- In a situation where a student is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol the school authorities may require the student to undergo a breath test using a device that measures alcohol content in the human breath.
- The purchase, possession or consumption of alcohol, cigarettes or drugs is not permitted.

Banned Substance Search:

The school reserves the right to search any part of school property, school bags, vehicles or other belongings on school property or at any school event or school trip. Students may be given the opportunity to surrender the drug prior to the search.

Where there is reasonable belief that a student or person is in possession of a drug and refuses to surrender the drug, the Gardai may be contacted and asked to conduct the search. Two staff members are required to be present during any form of search. Every effort will be made to notify the parents/guardians of any student prior to a search being conducted.

Roles of Responsibility

The Principal:

The Principal or delegate is the person responsible for all matters relation to the area of substance abuse. The Principal may nominate the Deputy Principal or Year Head or other nominated staff to act on the Principals behalf.

The duties and responsibilities of the Principal (or nominee) in this regard include the following:

- All reports of substance abuse incidents or suspected incidents must be reported to the Principal
- The Principal makes all decisions regarding investigation of a substance abuse incident, and is responsible for coordination of such investigations.
- The Principal is responsible for the secure storage or any substances or related paraphernalia and written documentation associated with the incident
- The Principal is responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed at up to date regarding investigation developments
- The Principal will be the point of contact in relation to all media enquiries

Teachers:

- Responsible for making every effort to recognise or identify suspected breaches of this policy
- Referring any suspected breaches of this policy to the Year Head.
- Undertake CPD in relevant areas.

4. POLICY DISSEMINATION AND REVIEW

Dissemination of Policy

This policy will be distributed to all members of the school community via publication on the school website. It will be available also in hard copy from the Principal's Office, Deputy Principal's Office and Office of the Guidance Counsellor. Copies will be given to all new staff and parents of new pupils as part of their induction to the School. Students will be made aware of the policy within the context of the SPHE programme.

Monitoring, Reviewing and Evaluating:

KCC, teachers, parents/guardians and the Board of Management will monitor, review and evaluate this Policy and all related work and procedures after this policy has been in place for one year to ensure legal compliance and maintenance of best practice.

