



Ballincollig Community School

Substance Use Policy

Reviewed: February 2023

Ratified by Board of Management: April 2023

Signed: Karen Forde
Principal and secretary to the Board of Management.

Review date: April 2024

Introduction

This policy was created in response to the New National Drug and Alcohol Strategy - Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017-2025, the Healthy Ireland Framework and staff reflection on the issue of substance use in our community.¹ Ballincollig Community School understands that the world in which we live presents young people with many challenges that affect their health and wellbeing. Exposure to alcohol and drugs is part of this reality. Alcohol and drug misuse in young people has a detrimental impact on a young person's ability to reach their full potential. All stakeholders of Ballincollig Community School are therefore fully committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to substance misuse in a sensitive, compassionate and respectful manner. Furthermore, this policy will operate in conjunction with all other school policies, most notably The Code of Positive Behaviour and the Health and Safety policy.

Scope

This policy applies to the students, staff and management of Ballincollig Community School, parents/guardians, ancillary staff and all users of the school building and grounds. This policy comes into action when a person is on school grounds or partaking in any school related activity e.g. school tours, matches, day trips, retreats, etc.

Relationship to School's Mission/Visions/Aims

Ballincollig Community School is committed to the holistic development of each student. In devising this Substance Use Policy we are encouraging all members of the school community to have a sense of respect for themselves, for one another and for our community and society at large. Ballincollig Community School is a health promoting school. We take our role in the teaching and learning of substance use and mis-use seriously and in doing-so we aim to equip our students with life skills and knowledge that will serve them into the future.

Rationale

- Substance mis-use is recognised as a growing problem in Irish communities. Key findings from *My World Survey 2* and *Growing Up in Ireland* surveys outline the facts in relation to alcohol and drug mis-use amongst young people.² This Substance Use policy will respond to the educational and pastoral needs of our students/staff/all

¹ School Development Planning meeting + date.

² O'Dwyer, Claire and Mongan, Deirdre (2020), *Alcohol and drug use among young people and adolescents in Ireland – Results from My World and Growing Up in Ireland Surveys*. <https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/31716/>

users of the school building and grounds in relation to substance use/mis-use whilst outlining appropriate responses to what are sensitive and emotive issues.

- The Education Act 1998 states that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education.
- The New National Drug and Alcohol Strategy - Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017-2025 is now a Government Policy. This policy endorses the need for high quality drug and alcohol education in schools in conjunction with wellbeing programmes and information campaigns.³ Ballincollig Community School is committed to playing its role in implementing a holistic policy approach to substance use education.
- Children's First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017) and the Children's First Act(2015) sets out best practice procedures that should be in place for all organisations providing services to children.

Goals and Objectives

- To provide honest, factual and age appropriate school wide substance misuse education in the following subject areas: Wellbeing, SPHE, CSPE, P.E. Social Education(LCA), Science, Career Guidance and R.E. Signposting of drug prevention organisations/agencies and where to get supports will be included.
- To encourage and equip students with the ability to make informed, healthy and responsible lifestyle choices.
- To welcome and provide for expert guest speakers on the topic of substance mis-use.
- To invite parents/guardians to information sessions on substance misuse.
- To establish and maintain positive relationships with Túsła, the HSE, An Garda Síochána and others professional agencies involved in the care of young people in the community.
- To ensure the safe storage and use of prescribed medications, epi-pens and inhalers in the school.
- To ensure that staff are aware of the strict protocols in relation to prescribed medications and their storage and use in school/ extra-curricular activities.
- To ensure that parents/guardians aware of the strict protocols and their obligations in relation to prescribed medications and their storage and use in school/extra-curricular activities.
- To deal compassionately and sensitively and within the parameters of the law with substance misuse incidents/alleged incidents.⁴
- To offer supportive interventions and pastoral supports where necessary.

³ http://www.drugs.ie/downloadDocs/2017/ReducingHarmSupportingRecovery2017_2025.pdf

⁴ See section entitled Scope.

School Policy

A drug is any substance (other than food) that is used to prevent, diagnose, treat or relieve symptoms of a disease or abnormal condition. Drugs can also affect how the brain and the rest of the body work and changes in mood, awareness, thoughts, feelings or behaviour. ⁵ Substance mis-use is defined as “the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol, illegal drugs and the abuse of prescribed medications. ⁶ Ballincollig Community School does not accept or tolerate the possession, use or supply of banned or prohibited substances/products/preparations as set out in the section entitled Scope. Examples include: alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes/vapes/pens, solvents, cannabis, tranquilisers, depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, opiates and all drug paraphernalia.⁷

This is not an exhaustive list.

Prescribed medications and medical devices protocols

We understand that some staff/students attend BCS with long term recurring health problems such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes etc. From time to time a person may need to use prescribed medications to support their attendance in school. However, proper procedures for the administration of such medicines must be made and are detailed below as follows:

Protocols in relation to prescribed medications and their storage and use in school/extra-curricular activities – Parents/Guardians.

- Parents/guardians are asked to provide maximum support and assistance in helping the school accommodate students using prescribed medications. This would include measures such as self-medication where necessary and only after approval from a GP/consultant or under parental supervision.
- In the case where a student is suffering from a life threatening illness, parents/guardians should consult with the Principal/Deputy Principal and should outline clearly in writing what may and may not be done in a particular emergency situation with particular reference to what may be at risk to the student. This must be backed up with a letter from the GP/consultant caring for the student.
- Parents/Guardians must ensure that all prescribed medications are clearly labelled with the student’s name, year, class and expiry date. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to replace prescribed medications that are due to expire.

⁵ <https://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms/def/drug>

⁶ <https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/25262/>

⁷ <https://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov/content/how-identify-drug-paraphernalia>

Protocols in relation to prescribed medications and their storage and use in school/ extra-curricular activities - Staff

- The school has two Defibrillators. The first defibrillator is mounted to the wall beside the main office and the second defibrillator is mounted to the wall beside the Sports Hall. The list of staff trained to use this device and administer First Aid is located beside the Deputy Principal's office and beside both defibrillators.
- All prescribed medications are clearly labelled with student's name, year, class and expiry date are stored in the Principal's office.
- In the case of medical emergencies where staff have been given prior permission to administer medication(s), only the smallest dose possible to ensure recovery should be given until a medical expert can take over.
- No member of staff has the authority to administer any other medication or over the counter painkillers to a student without parental approval and permission from the Principal/Deputy Principal(s)
- Staff may issue parents/guardians with a medical consent form in advance of extra-curricular activities seeking information and permissions to administer medications.

Roles and Responsibilities

The development, implementation and evaluation of this policy will involve all stakeholders in the school community.

- The following subject areas will engage in a co-ordinated approach to the teaching and learning of substance use and mis-use: SPHE, CSPE, Career Guidance, RE, Science and Junior Cycle Wellbeing. The heads of these school departments will inform management about subject specific education in the area of substance use.
- The leadership and management team in BCS will use the indicators as outlined in the section entitled success criteria to gauge the effectiveness of this policy.
- Teaching staff and the leadership and management team will be encouraged to attend CPD workshops which deal with the issues of substance use/mis-use.⁸
- Experts in the area of substance mis-use will facilitate age appropriate workshops/information sessions. Where possible parents/guardians will be invited to attend a separate awareness session.⁹

⁸ See Appendix B: Substance Use Education in Ballincollig Community School.

⁹ *Ibid.*

- The various needs of the students will determine the methodology and the syllabus content. Department of Education guidelines will be followed.
- The Pastoral Care team will liaise closely with the management and leadership team in relation to substance use/mis-use education and awareness campaigns.¹⁰
- Information on drug, alcohol and addiction services/help-lines will be flagged during drug use/mis-use classes. This will include a student friendly summary of the Children’s First Act 2015.¹¹
- The Principal’s report to the Board of Management will include information on substance use education in the school. This will include information on substance mis-use CPD, awareness campaigns etc.

Success Criteria

The leadership and management team in BCS will use the indicators as outlined in this section entitled success criteria to gauge the effectiveness of this policy. Solutions will be found as the need arises.

Subject:	Yes	No	Solution(s)
Information on drug, alcohol and addiction services/help-lines have been flagged during drug use/mis-use classes.			
Students are aware that teachers are mandated persons under the Children’s First Act 2015 and are made aware of the roles and responsibilities of mandated persons including DLP and DDLP			
Substance Use/mis-use education has been taught to every year group as per DE subject specific guidelines.	1 st year 2 nd year 3 rd year TY 5 th year 6 th year	1 st year 2 nd year 3 rd year TY 5 th year 6 th year	
All parents/guardians have been invited to attend a substance use/mis-use information session or equivalent workshop			

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Appendix C Summary of Children’s First Act

Procedures for Managing Substance Use Incidents, i.e. allegations against a student, young visitor, member of staff, parent/guardian or adult visitor

- In the event of a substance use incident, the school will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the person(s) involved and the welfare of the school community as a whole and the reputation of the school.
- The school's Critical Incident Plan and CCTV may be used as deemed necessary and will be in line with GDPR and the school's Acceptable Use policy.
- The school at its own discretion, will liaise with any appropriate outside authority e.g. H.S.E, J.L.O, the local community guard, Túsla and seek advice or assistance, as it deems appropriate in relation to its investigation of an incident.
- The following steps should be followed:

1. The Principal, Deputy Principals and Year Head (if appropriate) will be informed.
2. A Drug Incident Report Form will be completed. See point 8 below. Appendix 1.
3. The school will take the steps required to fully investigate and assess any incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this. If deemed an immediate health and safety risk the school authorities will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances and drug paraphernalia associated with an incident and the local community guard will be notified. The school will carefully record all such items and retain them pending completion of the investigation having contacted the local community guard. Should the person refuse to hand over these items the gardaí will be called immediately. In the event of an incident, the school will seek statements from all persons involved in, concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident and will record these statements.
4. Where it is apparent that there is immediate danger to students or the school community, the school reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school any person involved in a suspected abuse incident pending further and complete investigation of the incident. This will comply with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour, Critical Incident Plan and Suspension and Expulsion Policy.
5. If there is a reasonable suspicion that a person has been involved in an incident an initial assessment will be carried out in order to decide further action.
6. The school will question the person; this may include principal, deputy principals and the year head.
7. Parents/Guardians will be informed.
8. The school will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of an incident; including records referred to in the above steps; communications with other people or agencies involved or concerned with the matters under investigation; the investigation outcome, decisions taken and the rationale for these decisions; penalties or disciplinary measures imposed following an investigation and the management and outcome of any appeal that may arise following an investigation.

9. If the circumstances merit while the investigation is continuing, the school will put the full particulars of the incident to the people concerned and their parents/guardians, if necessary in the following manner:
 - I. Copies of all records deemed relevant i.e. Substance Mis-Use Incident Report form/school policy will be made available to the person and in the case of students or minors their parents, by the principal, in time to permit the person a reasonable opportunity to make their own reply to the matters at issue and any representations that they would wish to make or have made on their behalf.
 - II. The principal will allow the person concerned and their parents, if appropriate, reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue. The school will take into account any response so made and any other relevant extraneous consideration or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.
 - III. The principal shall shortly thereafter inform the person and their parents, if appropriate of the schools findings and their reasons for these. If the school finds that the person has been guilty of or involved in or implicated in an incident, a formal letter will be sent to the person(s) involved. The letter will indicate the penalty or sanctions the school intends to impose in the circumstances.
 - IV. The person(s) involved has the right to appeal a decision made in regard to their case within a time frame specified by the principal.

***The school will comply with GDPR regulations and The Freedom of Information Act.**

10. In relation to a verified and investigated incident, the Board of Management will deal with each case on its own merits.
11. The school can, at its sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstance or representations that it considers should be taken into account. The school asserts the right to exercise an appropriate show of compassion and sensitivity in relation to substance mis-use incidents.
12. The school will also ensure that pastoral supports are offered to the person(s) affected by an incident. This includes both the by-stander and the substance mis-user. School management and leadership acknowledges that these incidents can sometimes be traumatic for those involved. The services of the chaplain, guidance counsellor, year head and class tutor will be made available. The school will seek outside support/advice if appropriate.
13. The school will record all decisions and monitor the outcome for the pupil and school community.

Monitoring the policy

This Substance Use policy is subject to regular review and update. Attendance at Ballincollig Community School is conditional upon acceptance of this Substance Use Policy. The Board of Management have the right to make the final decision regarding the interpretation and application of this policy.

This policy is written in conjunction with all other school policies including the Child Protection Policy.

Copies of this policy will be available online <https://www.balcs.ie/policies> Students will be made aware of this policy through the CSPE/SPHE class.

Date of next review: April 2024

Appendix 1 - Substance Mis-Use Incident Report form

Date and time of alleged incident:	Location(s) of alleged incident:	This incident was reported by:
Name(s) of alleged person/people involved:		Class and Year group if applicable:
Description of known facts (witnesses, location(s), time(s), actions taken/medical and other professional responses etc.)		
Contact and follow-up made where appropriate	Name of contact person	Additional relevant details(contact number, time of arrival)
Ambulance		
An Garda Síochána		
Drug Support Agency		
Youth Support Service		
Túsla – Child and Family Agency		
Parents/Guardians		
Other (please specify)		
Outcomes and rationale:		
Disciplinary measures:		

Appendix B: Substance Use Education in Ballincollig Community School

Wellbeing:

Subject	Programme/unit of work	Guest Speaker	Year group
SPHE	Substance Use-Minding Myself and Others (Strand 2)	Liam Doocey (Drug Awareness)	1st
SPHE	Substance Use-Minding Myself and Others (Strand 2)	Liam Doocey (Drug Awareness)	2 nd
SPHE	Substance Use-Minding Myself and Others (Strand 2)		3rd

Science

Subject	Unit of work	Year group	Relevance
Science	The Breathing System	1 st year	Investigating the effects of smoking on the human respiratory system
Science	The circulatory system	1 st year	The effect of smoking on the human circulatory system
Science	Human Health	3 rd year	The lifestyle factors which negatively impact human health
Biology	The Breathing System	6 th year	Investigating the effects of smoking on the human respiratory system
Biology	The Circulatory system	5 th year	The effect of smoking on the human circulatory system
Biology	The Nervous System	6 th year	The effect of addiction on neurotransmitters
Chemistry	Organic Chemistry	6 th year	How alcohol is processed by the body

PE

Subject	Programme/Unit of Work	Guest Speaker	Year group
Leaving Certificate Physical Education	Part of topic 6 Ethics and Fair play		5 th and 6 th

	Performance enhancing Drugs And the categories of each along with health and wellbeing risks World Anti-Doping rules, Irish rules, Past violations from high performance sports athletes. Sports supplements Therapeutic Use Exception		
PE		Alex's Adventure of a lifetime	5 th 6 th LCA

Subject	Programme/Unit of Work	Guest Speaker	Year group
Whole school initiative	n/a	Nicole Ryan Alex's Adventure	1 st – 6 th

Parents/Guardians

Subject	Programme/Unit of Work	Guest Speaker	Year group
Parents/Guardians	n/a	Parents/Guardians drugs education workshop for parents/guardians with Nicole Ryan	n/a

Staff CPD

Teaching Substance Use in the SPHE Classroom – HSE
PDST 2023 Post Primary Substance Use Workshop

Appendix C: **Children First E-Learning Programme (Summary)**

Children First Act 2015

This Act has placed certain statutory obligation on certain professionals, including registered teachers, who are referred to as **mandated persons** in the Act. Under the terms of the Act schools are legally required to ensure that they provide a safe environment for children.

A mandated person means a person who is specified in schedule 2 of the Children First Act 2015 and includes all teachers registered with the Teaching Council.

Topic 1 Safeguarding children

The importance of safeguarding children

Safeguarding is about protecting and supporting children, being alert to children's safety and care, recognising concerns about a child's welfare and taking action when we are worried about a child. It is also about promoting children's welfare. Safeguarding is about providing children with appropriate care.

Your Role in safeguarding children

Each of us has a responsibility to safeguard children by recognising child protection or welfare concerns and responding appropriately. Mandated persons are required by law to tell Túsła, the Child and Family Agency when you have concerns about the safety of a child. Anyone can make a report to Túsła. If unsure about making a report you can always seek advice from Túsła.

It is good practice to inform parents if a report is being made about their child, unless it places the child at risk or prevents the Child and Family Agency from making a risk assessment.

Mandated persons have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015

- To report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Túsła
- To assist Túsła, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated person

The **Children First Act** places specific obligations on organisations which provide services to children and young people, to

- Keep children safe from harm while using their service
- Carry out a **risk assessment** to identify if a child or young person could be harmed while using their services
- Develop a **Child Safeguarding Statement** that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks which have been identified
- Appoint a relevant person to be the point of contact in respect of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement.

(BCS has a Child Safeguarding Statement displayed in the reception area of corridor A, next to the lift.)

Role of the DLP (Designated Liaison Person) (K.Forde)

- to act as a key resource person for all school personnel including teachers who have a child protection concern
- to ensure that the reporting requirements of the procedures are followed correctly and promptly
- to ensure appropriate records are properly maintained

- To provide the Principal's Report (which now includes a new **Child Protection Oversight Report**) to each BOM meeting

Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP) G.O'Sullivan shall assume the responsibilities of the DLP, in her absence

(The name of the DLP and DDLP is displayed in the reception area of corridor A, next to the lift)

If the DLP and the registered teacher both agree that the concern is at or above the defined threshold of harm, the concern shall be submitted as a mandated report to Túsła **jointly** by the DLP and the registered teacher

Topic 2 Recognising Abuse

It is very important for you to be able to recognise abuse in order to safeguard children. If you have any concerns that a child is or may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected, you must report it to your DLP

There are **4 types of abuse**:

- **Neglect**- When a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally.
- **Emotional Abuse**- The systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child.
- **Physical Abuse**- is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt.
- **Sexual Abuse**- When a child is used by another person for his/her own gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Bullying- Children First National Guidance 2017 states that bullying can be defined as repeated aggression whether it is: verbal, psychological or physical that is conducted by an individual or group against others. Organisations working with children should have an anti-bullying policy. Always seek advice from Túsła if you have concerns of whether to report cases of bullying to Túsła.

Making a disclosure of abuse is a very difficult thing for a child or adult to do. If a child does disclose abuse to you, you should; react calmly, listen carefully, take the child seriously, reassure the child and do not ask leading questions.

Topic 3 Reporting

Reporting concerns about a child – You should always inform Túsła if you have **reasonable grounds** for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. You can report your concern in person, by phone or by writing/email.

Reasonable concerns

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about sexual abuse, a child saying or indicating that they have been abused

- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he/she has been abused
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed.

If you have any concerns about a child you must follow the schools reporting procedures. This involves: Talking to your DLP and recording your concerns. Your DLP will ensure that their organisation's reporting procedures are followed and will provide advice and support and ensure a **Túsła Child Protection and Welfare Report Form** is submitted to Túsła, where appropriate. If you have reasonable grounds for reporting a concern about a child:

- Never delay
- Keep a record
- If you think a child is in immediate danger and if you cannot contact Túsła, ring the Gardaí

The importance of confidentiality. While confidentiality is a very important issue for those working with children, the welfare of a child must always come first.

What happens when a report is made to Túsła? When Túsła receives a report, they first consider the immediate safety of the child and in some cases emergency action is taken. If a child is not in immediate danger, they check all reports and information, and based on that they assess which response pathway would best meet the needs of the child. The different pathways include:

- Early intervention
- Child welfare
- Child protection
- Alternative care

Topic 4. Learning in practice

- You must take immediate action to protect a child
- You have responsibilities to report Child Protection or welfare concerns about children if you see features of abuse, or hear or are told about them
- All workers and volunteers are responsible for reporting concerns about abuse. You cannot assume that someone else will make the report
- Some people are mandated under the Children First Act 2015 and legally must report concerns which reach the threshold specified in the Act
- Always follow your organisations reporting procedures referred to in the child safeguarding statement when you are concerned about the protection and welfare about a child
- If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a child and cannot contact the Túsła social worker, you should contact the local Garda station

Further information – www.tusla.ie