



BORRISOKANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



SUBSTANCE USE POLICY



Policy Area	Schools
Document Reference Number	BCC/SUB/042/1
Version No.	2
Document Drafted by	Borrisokane Community College
Date previous version: adopted by SLT noted by TETB	14 June 2022 6 September 2022
Date Reviewed /Amended by School	December 2025
Date Reviewed / Approved by BOM	30 April 2026
Date Noted / to be Noted by TETB	26 May 2026
Document Review Date	To be reviewed on an on-going basis
Date of Withdrawal of Obsolete Document	30 April 2026 Document Ref. No. BCC/SUB/042/0 Version No. 2

1. Scope of Policy

Except where otherwise stated, this policy applies to all students, staff and other users of the school premises, including parents, visitors, and auxiliary staff members. It is in force during normal school hours including school break time and lunch time. It is also applicable going to or coming from school. The policy applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place. e.g., School Tour.

All drug related incidents to be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal, as appropriate at the time, who will inform the management team and other staff as appropriate.

2. Relationship to the Schools Mission Statement

“We seek to promote a caring and committed school community which will facilitate the education of our students and where each individual is valued as a unique human being.”

“Is ar scáth a chéile a mhairimid”

3. Rationale for Substance Use Policy

This policy has been formulated to protect all the students and staff in the school. In a society where drugs, legal & illegal, are widely available, it is important for schools to develop policies and procedures in advance of drug-related issues coming to attention. No school or parent can afford to be complacent or think that their children are not at risk. As a result, Borrisokane Community College has updated our Substance Use Policy.

Rationale

- The Education Act (1998) provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.
- The Social Personal and Health Education curriculum, of which substance misuse prevention education is an integral part, is a mandatory subject on the junior cycle curriculum and must be taught to all junior students.
- The National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 requires every school to have a substance use policy in place.
- Action 21 of the National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009-2016 mandates the Department of Education to monitor the implementation of substance use policies in schools through the whole school evaluation process as operated by the Inspectorate. It is also mandated to ensure that best practice is disseminated to all schools.
- The 2003 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (E.S.P.A.D.) report highlighted the seriousness of the problem among 16-year-olds in Ireland, as compared to the other 34 E.S.P.A.D. countries surveyed. Alcohol was identified as being the

dominant drug of misuse in Ireland, with girls ranking higher than boys in terms of regular alcohol use. In terms of drug use in Ireland, there was a notable increase in lifetime use of any illicit drug between 1999 (32%) and 2003 (40%), up eight per cent.

4. Goals

This policy aims to:

- Provide a comprehensive programme of prevention education for all pupils in substance misuse in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in the school community.
- To equip the school to deal with issues relating to substance use in a planned and considered way and in accordance with its statutory responsibilities.
- To manage incidents of substance misuse in a clear and consistent manner.
- To support parents and pupils and staff in understanding and addressing substance misuse.
- To minimise the dangers caused to young people by substance misuse within schools/communities.

5. Policy Content

Education concerning substance misuse:

The educational aims of Borrisokane Community College in relation to substance use are:

- To enable students to make informed, healthy and responsible choices
- To provide honest and age-appropriate information on substance use
- To increase the self-esteem and confidence of students
- To equip students with social and personal skills
- To minimise harm by offering supportive and appropriate interventions

At Junior Level students will receive Drug Education through SPHE class and through the Let's Learn About Alcohol and Drugs Together (LLADAT), when available. The dangers of alcohol, nicotine and vaping are covered in SPHE & Wellbeing modules in 1st, 2nd & 3rd year.

At Senior Level students will receive Drug Education through SPHE and R.E. class. Drug Education will be supported by teaching staff in other subject areas. It is supplemented with talks and workshops by visiting speakers.

Pastoral and Support Services:

- Guidance Counsellors, Year Heads and Student Support Team
- Wellbeing Team/student support team/mentoring team responsible for planning awareness initiatives
- Referrals to outside agencies
- Training programmes for students as they become available and are considered appropriate
- Guest Speakers from outside agencies (Where outside speakers or agencies are used, it will be planned and integrated into the programme and compliment the school's approach. A teacher will be present with the group during the presentation and follow up/evaluation will be carried out. The suitability and organisation of these speakers is managed by the Student Support Team in consultation with the principal.)

Parental Involvement: Parents and guardians have the most influence on the lives of children, and are, therefore, crucial in any prevention issues that arise, so as, to complement all programmes.

Managing Incidents:

The Involvement and Roles of Various Parties in an Incident Investigation:

The school should respond to incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use in a planned and considered way. In certain cases, it may be necessary to seek legal advice. Due care will be important in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response. An appropriate pastoral response to an incident involving alcohol, tobacco and drug use may include referral to a support agency. It should be stressed that the ultimate sanction of expulsion can have the effect of alienating a student from mainstream sources of help and may result in this student becoming more involved in the culture of drug misuse. Where a member of staff requires support, schools may consider facilitating links with an Employee Assistance Scheme.

The Principal, the Deputy Principal or nominated staff member is the person responsible for all matters in this area.

The principal or nominated person will have the following duties and responsibilities:

1. The principal is responsible for dealing with abuse incidents arising at the school.
2. All reports of abuse or suspected incidents must be reported to the principal.
3. The principal makes all decisions regarding investigation of an incident: communication with, liaison with and reporting to relevant parties; and disclosure of information regarding an investigation.
4. The principal is responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed regarding investigation documents.
5. The principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any written documentation and records associated with an incident.

6. The principal is responsible for taking possession of any banned or prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia and deciding what should be done with same upon appropriate advice.
7. The principal may seek the assistance of the deputy principal, year head, and or school guidance counsellor in conducting an incident investigation.
8. The principal will decide on the appropriate sanction in line with the Code of Behaviour. Incidents of a serious nature may be referred to the Board of Management.

Duty of Staff:

The school requires all staff to report immediately, any incidents where pupils/employees/visitors:

- Encounter the use/suspected use of alcohol/drugs on the school premises, in the school grounds or during a school related activity
- Exhibit symptoms/behaviour that may suggest the use of alcohol/drugs
- Make an open disclosure of use
- Are involved or suspected of being involved in the distribution, purchase or use of alcohol/drugs
- Discover suspect substances /paraphernalia in the school

The school personnel will seek to establish the facts and to be clear about the nature of the incident before deciding on a course of action. The student should not be confronted openly before his/her peers. There should be no assumption of guilt regarding substance misuse/abuse, as there are a variety of conditions, which might mimic the suspected misuse of substances. The teacher is entitled to request the surrender of a suspicious substance or paraphernalia. This should be handed over without fuss. The teacher should not seek to search the pupil or his/her possessions. Where there is a refusal to co-operate, the pupil should be brought to the principal/deputy principal whose responsibility it is to proceed with the matter.

On Health and Safety grounds the Principal/Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender the suspicious substance and to co-operate in revealing the contents of bags, clothing and personal possessions if necessary.

In the case of lack of co-operation from the student, the parents should be informed of the situation and that the Gardaí may also have to be notified. The student's bags, and personal property should be isolated until the parents/Gardaí arrive.

Borrisokane Community College reserves the right to search school property including lockers at any time.

The Principal/Deputy Principal will recognise that the Health and Safety and the wellbeing of the student/students are paramount and will seek medical aid if deemed necessary. The student will be provided with the appropriate guidance and support they need.

A student may be asked to provide a medical certificate to indicate they are drugs free and are not a threat to Health and Safety before they return to school.

Additional School Supports:

The relevant support systems of the school will be available: Guidance Counsellors, Year Head Tutor, Class teachers, SPHE coordinator, Student Support Teams and internal additional supports. It is the responsibility of the Principal/Deputy Principal to request the intervention of such persons as may be helpful to the issue.

Types of Incidents:

Prescribed medication

Parents of students taking prescribed medication should inform the school in writing of that fact. Staff are not personally obliged to administer medicines. It is recognised that children with long term recurring health problems such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes etc. be accommodated within the school. However, proper procedures for the administration of such medicines must be made. Parents/guardians are to be encouraged to provide maximum support and assistance in helping the school accommodate such students. 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.

In the case of medical emergencies where staff have been given medication to administer, only the smallest dose possible to ensure recovery, until a medical expert can take over, should be provided for administration. Confirmation of this should be obtained from the GP responsible for the child in question before the school would agree to hold such life-saving medication in its care. No member of staff has the authority to administer any other medication or over the shelf painkillers to a student without parental approval and permission from the principal.

Tobacco and Smoking Devices

Smoking/vaping and nicotine products are prohibited on the school premises both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time. It applies to all those using the premises. Students are also governed by this policy when:

- representing the school or involved in any school activity both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time
- going to and coming from school
- when wearing the school uniform and wherever our school Code of Behaviour applies.

Alcohol and Drugs

Where a student:

- a) Is suspected of taking a drug type substance
- b) Displays the apparent effects of alcohol or drugs
- c) Brings an illegal substance or alcohol on to the school premises or is found in possession of same
- d) Is suspected of supplying illegal substances or alcohol to other students

The parents of children under 18 will be informed. Where found to be true or where circumstantial evidence indicates same, the Gardaí and social services may be informed. The sanction for an alcohol or drugs offence will be in line with the Code of Behaviour and will be dealt with in the Major Offence category.

On Health and Safety grounds the Principal/Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender the suspicious substance/paraphernalia and to co-operate in revealing the contents of bags, lockers, clothing and personal possessions and request the support of the parents if necessary. Any substances/paraphernalia etc. found will be confiscated, sealed in a container in the presence of a witness and handed over to the Gardaí or destroyed.

Where a student is found promoting or glorifying a drugs culture in word or deed or the use of drug paraphernalia the matter must be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal. The student will be interviewed and advised. The parents will be informed. The students may be referred for counselling. Sanctions may be applied in line with the school Code of Behaviour.

Borrisokane Community College reserves the right to determine that a said behaviour or action is in breach of our policy and has the right to apply sanctions that are fair and in keeping with the gravity of the offence.

Adults

A staff member presenting under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be allowed take part in his/her normal duties. The matter will be reported to the principal. Such an incident would be regarded as professional misconduct and a disciplinary matter. The matter will be reported to Tipperary Education & Training Board who will decide on the course of action.

The school operates a NO SMOKING POLICY in accordance with the present national legislation. Staff should not smoke in view of students or on outside activities including sporting events and school tours.

6. Provision for Training and Staff Development

Staff will be made aware of training available through Oide and Education Centres.

7. Review

Borrisokane Community College will monitor, review and evaluate this policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practises.

Borrisokane Community College reserves the right to alter this policy document in the light of any new developments before a full review takes place.