



Oatlands College Substance Misuse Policy

Introduction

This policy applies to all students, staff, parents/guardians and users of the school building and grounds. It applies during school time, including break times, during all school activities inside and outside the school and anytime a student is in uniform and identifiable as a member of Oatlands College. This policy has been developed with the co-operation and agreement of the whole school community, namely teachers, students and parents/guardians. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour.

Relationship to the Oatlands College Ethos

Oatlands College is part of the Edmund Rice School's Trust, and is a community composed of students, staff, parents/guardians and management. The College seeks to create an atmosphere of Christian care and concern in which students can grow to maturity. All members of the school community are expected to promote, in word and in deed, the welfare of the school community.

Rationale for this Policy

The central objective of the school's substance misuse policy is the welfare, care and protection of every young person in line with the Education Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. The school policy also aims to co-operate fully with the strategic plan adopted by the government under the National Drugs Strategy Plan 2017 – 2025.

Oatlands College aims to provide a healthy and safe learning environment, which gives support and encouragement to all members of the school community.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Educate all members of the school community about substance misuse, recognising the symptoms of substance misuse and its prevention.
- Provide support for those who misuse substances.
- Provide clear guidelines for a consistent, fair and sensitive response to incidents of substance misuse with a view to the protection of the person(s) involved and the maintenance of a safe environment for the broader school community.

Education about Substance Misuse

Parents/Guardians

Oatlands College sees parents/guardians as central to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse and will assist parents/guardians in their role by:

- Keeping them informed of initiatives and programmes in the school which relate to the area of substance abuse.
- Encouraging them to discuss the risks of smoking/vaping with their children.
- Providing relevant sources of information and support on the school website. (Links are provided at the end of this document).
- Informing all parents/guardians of all incoming students of the school's policy on substance misuse which will be available on the school website.
- Welcoming suggestions on the best use of available resources in the community to support the school in its substance misuse programme and policy implementation.

Staff Education

Oatlands College will ensure training for relevant staff (teachers of SPHE, RE etc.) in delivering educational programmes relating to substance abuse by informing and facilitating them in attending in-service courses.

All resources provided to schools will be distributed to staff for use in the classroom. Links are provided at the end of this document.

Will ensure all members of staff are informed of our substance misuse policy and procedures for dealing with a substance misuse incident.

Student Education

All students will be offered programmes relating to drug and alcohol education.

This programme of education will be age-appropriate and will seek to build on and complement the existing programmes already being taught in the school such as SPHE, RE and CSPE.

Visiting speakers will be used to supplement and reinforce work done in class, where appropriate and available.

Students will be informed of supports available to them.

The educational aims will be:

- To increase the self-confidence and well-being of our students.
- To educate and encourage our students to make informed, healthy and responsible choices.
- To provide honest, age-appropriate information on drugs, alcohol and other substances.
- To enable students to identify sources of support and intervention.

Smoking & Vaping

Smoking and vaping are strictly forbidden during school time, and on the way to and from school, during all school activities inside and outside the school and anytime a student is in uniform and identifiable as a member of Oatlands College. Students are not permitted to have e-cigarettes or vaping paraphernalia.

If student is found to be smoking/vaping will be reported immediately and sanctioned in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

Procedures for Substance Misuse Incidents

The substances covered by this policy include any agent (legal or illegal) that alters the way the body functions – mentally, physically or emotionally. This includes all drugs, alcohol, solvents, mind-altering substances and inappropriate use of prescription medication, headshop drugs, opioids, etc.

The use of prescribed drugs by students is covered in the Administration of Medicines Policy.

The following are examples of what would be deemed a substance misuse incident:

- Intoxication/suspicious behaviour.
- Use or suspected use of alcohol, illegal drugs on the school premises or during a school-related activity.
- Possession of illegal substances or associated paraphernalia on the school premises or during a school-related activity.
- Rumours of drug use, possession or dealing.
- Disclosure of substance misuse by a student.
- Students possessing any written or printed material promoting the use of illicit substances.

The following procedures will apply in the event of a substance misuse incident:

1. Seek assistance from another member(s) of staff to ensure the safety of the student(s) involved and all other students and staff present.
2. Where possible, bring the student(s) involved to a secure area together with their belongings.
3. Medical assistance will be sought, if necessary.
4. The parents/guardians of the student(s) concerned will be contacted as soon as possible.
5. Any drug or alcohol-related incident will be reported immediately to the Year Head, Principal, Deputy Principal and/or the Guidance Counsellor.
6. The staff involved will complete a formal written report of the incident as soon as possible, this report will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.
7. The appropriate use of Psychological Support Services, Gardaí and Social Services will be sought, where necessary.
8. In certain cases it may be necessary to seek legal advice.
9. A thorough investigation into the incident will take place which may include interviewing student(s) who may have been involved/be able to provide information and the searching of any area where it has reason to suspect that harmful substances may have been used/stored, including the locker of the individual concerned. Lockers remain property of the school. The school reserves the right to search lockers if they have good reason to do so and will inform the student of the reason for the search. 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 receiving appropriate advice.

Sanctions:

The protection and safety of students who have used harmful substances is a priority.

However, the use of such substances cannot be condoned and students who offend will be disciplined in accordance with the schools Code of Behaviour.

Due care will be important in deciding on the balance between a pastoral and a disciplinary response.

Oatlands College recognises that the aim of any procedures undertaken is the successful re-integration of the individual into the school community.

Nevertheless, the ability of the school to continue to serve the greater good of the whole community will be taken into consideration in determining the best course of action for all concerned.

Oatlands College anticipates and expects the full co-operation and active assistance of parents/guardians in facilitating a thorough investigation of any such incidents involving their children and in any subsequent therapeutic intervention required for their successful re-integration into the school community.

Supports

In response to any substance misuse incident pastoral support will be offered. This may include a meeting with the Guidance Counsellor, Year Head, mentor and/or a meeting with a psychotherapist, as appropriate. If the student has serious drug or alcohol problems, then referral to an appropriate service will be recommended.

Confidentiality

To maintain confidentiality, the school will limit the number of people involved in investigating and managing substance abuse incidents. Any information received concerning a substance misuse incident will be treated sensitively and discreetly.

Media Enquiries

The school's priority in dealing with any substance misuse incident is the protection and rehabilitation of the person(s) involved and the protection of the whole school community. It does not believe that the involvement of the media would assist in any way in these goals. However, should it become necessary to respond to media enquiries, the approach of the school will be as follows:

- It will not comment on any individual matter when an investigation is in progress, other than to outline its policy and procedures for managing incidents.
- If it is necessary, the Board of Management may clarify the school's position regarding an incident after the investigation has been concluded.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 19th September 2023.

List of Support Services.

To talk to someone

HSE Drugs and alcohol helpline 1800 459 459

Parenting Support Project, Dun Laoghaire (Barnardos) Ph. 2842323

Hanley Centre Dun Laoghaire Ph. 2809795

Links to information and resources

www.drugs.ie (HSE drugs and alcohol information site)

www.hse.ie/knowthescore

[know-the-score-substance-use-resource-materials-sphe.pdf](http://www.hse.ie/knowthescore/know-the-score-substance-use-resource-materials-sphe.pdf) ([drugsandalcohol.ie](http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie))

www.askaboutalcohol.ie

<https://spunout.ie/>

www.jigsaw.ie

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/tobaccocontrol/resources/e-cigarette-resources.html>