



Policy on Substance Misuse

[Mission Statement](#) - [Rationale for the Policy](#) - [Educational provision](#) - [A code of behaviour to promote health](#) - [Dealing with drug-related incidents within the school](#) - [Pastoral supports for students at risk](#) - [Third party disclosures](#) - [Record keeping](#) - [Issues of confidentiality](#) - [Support and Training for Staff](#) - [Review of the Policy](#)

Mission Statement

Chanel College is a voluntary, Catholic secondary school, under the trusteeship of the Marist Fathers. We endeavour to create a Christian community, in an atmosphere of respect for the dignity of all. With the co-operation of parents, students and the community, we will work to foster the academic and personal development of the students, by creating a caring, safe and ordered environment, where all are encouraged to become responsible persons, striving to reach their full potential.

Rationale for the Policy

This policy has been put in place out of a concern to:

- Promote the health and welfare of the whole school community.
- Provide the protection necessary to all members of the school community.
- Outline procedures to be followed in the event of a drug-related incident in the school.

The policy was commissioned by the Board of Management and drawn up in consultation with all the partners: staff, students, parents and the relevant community groups both voluntary and statutory.

For the purposes of this policy, a drug is understood to be a chemical substance which changes how the body functions:

- ▪ physically - behaviour
- ▪ mentally - thinking
- ▪ emotionally – feeling.

The policy aims to address the following areas of drug use:

- Tobacco
- Alcohol

- Solvents (including all forms of solvent-based glue)
- Illegal substances
- Over the counter medicines and
- Prescribed medication.

both at the level of educational provision and approaches to any specific drug-related incidents that may occur in the school.

Educational provision:

Chanel College recognises that the most effective education in this area aims at enhancing self-esteem and developing social competence, as well as providing information.

We aim to provide a developmental drugs education programme for all students in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). The programme attempts to implement best practice in the field of SPHE and to address, insofar as possible, the current situation in the community. The teachers involved, in consultation with the relevant bodies, will review the programme's effectiveness on an on-going basis.

To facilitate such a programme, educational resources are made available through the SPHE library.

It is envisaged that the team of form teachers in each year group will be the primary resource in programme delivery. Every effort will be made to support their work by:

- assessing training needs on a regular basis and
- providing, within available time and resources, training opportunities which will help to equip teachers for this work.

Such training will draw on the resources of the SPHE support service as well as personnel from the Local Drugs Task Force.

The Home School Community Liaison teacher, in partnership with parents, will arrange such educational events for parents as may be deemed necessary or appropriate from time to time.

A code of behaviour to promote health:

Chanel College aims to encourage a healthy lifestyle for every member of the school community. For this reason, the school's code of behaviour specifies that:

- students are not allowed to smoke on the premises or while in uniform,
- substance misuse, in all forms, is of course forbidden and

- Aerosols – with the exception of prescribed medication – must not be brought to school. This includes hairsprays and aerosol deodorants.

While the school's code of behaviour forbids certain substances on school premises, students are also asked not to carry over-the-counter medicines or prescribed medicines (with the exception of inhalers and insulin). In situations where a student needs to take any form of medication, this should be given to one of the office staff, along with written instructions relating to the medication. The medicines will be held by the office staff and should be collected by the student at the appropriate time. It will remain the responsibility of the student to ensure that this is done.

Dealing with drug-related incidents within the school:

In the event that any student is found to be:

- in possession of prohibited substances or of drug related equipment on the premises;
- under the influence of prohibited substances on the premises;
- using prohibited substances on the premises;
- supplying prohibited substances on the premises;

The first priority will be to address the immediate health issues. In case of an emergency the principal or deputy principal will be informed immediately. Parents will also be contacted and a doctor/ambulance will be called if this is deemed necessary.

In all cases, parents will be informed and, depending on the seriousness of the situation, may be asked to attend at the school immediately.

Any drugs found on the school premises will be confiscated and 'controlled' substances handed over to the Gardai.

In instances where there are grounds for suspecting possession or use of substances that are forbidden in school, and out of a concern for the safety of all, we reserve the right to conduct a search of students' bags or lockers. Parents will be informed as soon as possible should such a course of action prove necessary.

The school reserves the right to inform the Gardai of any incidents which arise. It is our aim to establish and maintain good working relationships with the local Gardai, particularly the Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) and any incidents that arise will be addressed in the first instance to the JLO.

For the protection of other students, any student suspected of, or found to be using or supplying controlled substances will not be allowed to return to class, but will be placed under the supervision of the Principal, Deputy Principal or another nominated person. In this case, parents will be asked to attend at the school immediately to take the student home.

If substances are found on the premises, which cannot be linked to any one person these will be destroyed or handed over to the local Gardai or pharmacist for destruction.

The school's Code of Behaviour specifies that where a student is in possession of, using or supplying prohibited substances on the premises, the school may refer such cases to the Board of Management with a recommendation of sanctions up to and including exclusion.

Pastoral supports for students at risk:

In line with the school's traditional pastoral concern, Chanel College will attempt to ensure that students who are known to be at risk from substance misuse will be offered counselling, within available resources, and referral to outside agencies where appropriate. In this context, the role of the counsellors is pivotal and includes:

- dealing with incidents as they arise,
- acting as support to staff members who are dealing with incidents
- liaising with parents
- liaising with Principal, Deputy Principal, Form Teachers and Year Heads
- arranging referrals to outside agencies as appropriate.

Third party disclosures:

In the event of a third party disclosure, which may be from a student, parent or member of the community, the staff member to whom the disclosure is made should:

- address the issue of confidentiality with the person who has made the allegation, since the school must act in the best interests of all and a student's reputation is at issue here;
- inform the Principal, Deputy Principal or one of the counsellors who undertake to follow the agreed procedures:
- inform parents as a matter of urgency
- investigate the allegation and take appropriate action
- ensure that the person who has made the disclosure is supported and affirmed in their action.

Record keeping:

It is vital that records are kept at all stages of dealing with a drug related incident within the school, as this offers essential protection to all involved.

Issues of confidentiality:

It is important for the whole school community to realise that there are strict limits to the level of confidentiality we can offer students. In this context, the school undertakes to respect the confidence of students unless and until what they disclose poses a danger to themselves or others