

Sligo Grammar School



ILLICIT SUBSTANCES POLICY

Framework for this policy

Sligo Grammar School has a responsibility to educate, protect and where necessary discipline students in its care with regard to drugs and drug use. In keeping with the school's ethos, which aims to develop the student to their full potential within a supporting environment, we believe that the school must do all it can to ensure the young people within its care are in a safe environment. In a society where use of drugs is increasingly common parents, staff and pupils should work together to ensure that the school is a place which aims to be drug free.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe and secure environment for learning and for those who work within the school. It has been developed in accordance with the requirements 1998 Education Act, and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and the Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977 and 1984 and in line with the National Drugs Safety Strategy (2001-2008).

For the purposes of this document substances mean tobacco, alcohol, drugs, solvents and prescription drugs that can be abused.

This policy applies to students, teachers, parents and all users of the school building. It applies during school hours including break-times, travelling to and from school. It also applies to all activities which affect the life of the school including situations which arise as a result of use of substances prior to attending a school related activity which affects school performance or health and safety of the school and its community.

Acceptance of the school's Code of Behaviour is a condition of entry into the school. The Code of Behaviour which clearly states that the school prohibits the use of, possession of, supply of or the organisation of supply of illegal drugs or harmful substances by pupils. The Code of Behaviour also states that smoking or the consumption of alcohol or facilitating students to engage in these activities are also strictly forbidden and will be treated as a serious breach of this code. Sanctions apply up to and including suspension and expulsion.

Education in school concerning substance abuse

Sligo Grammar School recognises that education about alcohol, tobacco and drugs is most effective if provided in the broader context of a Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme. The school on the recommendations of the Department of Education and Skills has an SPHE programme in place in the Junior Cycle. Drugs education programme forms a significant part of this programme. This programme is developmental and is delivered in the context of a supportive whole school environment.

In addition, where appropriate, the school hosts visiting speakers.

Management of alcohol, tobacco and drugs related incidents guidelines

Incidents involving alcohol, tobacco and drugs use might include:

- Intoxication / unusual behaviour
- Disclosure about use
- Finding these substances and / or associated paraphernalia
- Possession and / or supply on the school premises or during a school-related activity
- Behaviour which indicates use of banned substances
- Suspicion of use of banned substances

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In all cases of misuse of substances, the school will respond in a planned and considered way. It may be necessary to seek legal advice. Due care will be taken to ensure consideration is given to a pastoral response as well as a disciplinary response.

Procedures

If a student is found under the influence of drugs or illegal drugs the first priority is the health of the student and medical advice must be sought as soon as possible.

In all incidents where a student or member of staff finds a student with drugs or in a drugs related situation they must report the incident to the Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster or Co-Ordinator. All unauthorised drugs will be confiscated and illegal substances given to the Gardaí.

Where interviews with students take place the Headmaster, or member/s of staff acting for him, must have another member of staff present whenever possible and notes of the interview will be taken and a written report made.

Where searching of students or of their property is carried out by the Headmaster, or member/s of staff acting for him, there must be another member of staff present.

Members of staff in charge of an off-campus activity assume these responsibilities.

A student found in the company of anyone using or attempting to supply drugs or illegal drugs will be given a formal warning and it will be brought to the attention of her/his parents/guardian.

1. Procedures relating specifically to Illegal Drugs

Drug use/abuse is not acceptable in school. The principle of the school rules on drugs is that students should not possess, use/abuse or supply them.

Sligo Grammar School is required to report to the Gardaí the possession of or the providing of others with illegal drugs. This applies whether on the school grounds or in a school related activity, travelling to and from school or when representing the school in any way.

If a student is found under the influence of drugs the first priority is the health of the student and medical advice must be sought as soon as possible.

Investigations of drug incidents:

This is the responsibility of the Headmaster and any investigation must be carried out by the Disciplinary Committee under his explicit instructions and following the school disciplinary procedure for a serious offence up to and including expulsion.

The parents/guardian will be required to come to school as a matter of urgency.

The school reserves the right to request the pupil to undergo drug screening.

The school reserves the right to hand over any drugs investigation to the Gardaí.

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The Headmaster makes a recommendation to the Board of Management in the light of the school's Disciplinary Committee's findings. The pattern and extent of any breach of the rules concerning drugs will be taken into consideration.

The school may seek the advice of the Gardaí or other outside professionals and may, in consultation with the parents/guardian, require the student to receive counselling and/or an assessment to ascertain the extent of the problem.

Depending on the assessment further counselling and/or treatment may also be required if the decision of the Board of Management is to re-admit the student after a period of suspension. Any student who is suspended will on returning to school meet with a member of the staff to ensure that appropriate help is offered and that the student has learned from the process. A code of behaviour will also apply.

Students found assisting or in the company of a student using drugs will also be sanctioned.

2. Procedures relating specifically to Tobacco/Vaping

It is illegal for any individual to smoke on the school premises. Sanctions may include a fine, detention, or other sanction as deemed appropriate by Headmaster or the investigating teacher.

The school reserves the right to sanctions up to and the right to suspend any student found smoking while on the school premises, while travelling to and from school or on a school related activity.

A letter will be sent to parents / guardians informing them of the incident.

Following the incident, the student will liaise with one of the Matrons in order to participate in a programme which assists individuals give up smoking. A code of behaviour will also apply.

Students found assisting or in the company of a student smoking will also be sanctioned.

3. Procedures relating specifically to Alcohol and abuse of Solvents

The aims of the school rules on alcohol are that students should not possess or drink alcohol or abuse solvents in school or on a school related activity. The student should not be in school or on a school related activity under the influence of alcohol or solvents. It is important that the school, staff and parents demonstrate responsible attitudes towards alcohol at any event where students are present.

Following investigation of the incident the Headmaster or his Deputy makes a decision in the light of the Disciplinary Committee's recommendation. In the more serious incidents the decision is made by the Board of Management. Parents / guardians will be informed by letter and sanctions include suspension and expulsion.

In some cases, the school may, in consultation with the parents/guardian, require the pupil to receive counselling and/or an assessment to ascertain the extent of the problem. Depending on the assessment further counselling and/or treatment may also be required. A code of behaviour will also apply.

Students found assisting or in the company of a student in possessing of or drinking alcohol or abusing solvents will also be sanctioned.

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Conclusion

Following sanctions Sligo Grammar School will endeavour to support and assist pupils who have breached this policy. The responsibility of the school is first of all to ensure a safe environment for the whole community and this is best achieved by adherence to the rules as outlined in school policies by pupils and their parents and to the fair implementation of procedures by the staff and management.

Re drafted 2014

Passed by BOM November 2014

Passed by BOM November 2016

Due for review: November 2018

Reviewed and ratified: _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Due for next review: _____