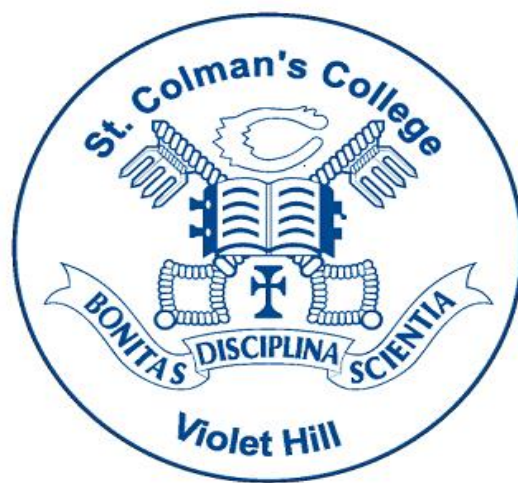


***ST. COLMAN'S COLLEGE  
VIOLET HILL***



***DRUGS POLICY***

*Date of Policy: September 2016*

*Last Reviewed: C McKinney*

*Reviewed by:*

*Next Review: September 2018*

## Rationale

For the purpose of this document the term 'drugs' includes tobacco, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs. St. Colman's College will not tolerate the use of drugs but recognises that there has been a considerable increase in the abuse of drugs in recent years in Northern Ireland. Drug misuse appears to be affecting an ever-younger population and the so-called "recreational" use of drugs can lead to a dangerous acceptance of illegal and harmful drug misuse as part of everyday life. We believe that St. Colman's College has a vital preventative role to play in combating the misuse of drugs by young people and we therefore include a Drug Education programme in our curriculum.

We want our pupils to make informed and responsible decisions about not taking drugs by increasing their knowledge and by developing in them appropriate values, attitudes and skills. However, we recognise that drug misuse is a whole-community issue and that schools alone cannot solve the drugs problem; the school is only one of a number of groups and agencies which must play a part in the education of young people and we make use of their expertise where possible in the delivery of the programme.

*"There is a public perception that drug misuse is mainly an issue in disadvantaged inner city areas ..... Drug misuse is just as much an issue in rural areas and affluent communities: it extends across socioeconomic, geographical and cultural boundaries. Educationally successful young people are just as likely to put themselves at risk as low attainers."*  
(DENI 1996/16)

- **St. Colman's College sees its role as that of a caring community committed to the physical, mental, social, emotional, moral and spiritual health, safety and well being of all our pupils and staff.**
- **To this end, St. Colman's College needs to be a drug-free environment.**
- **We refer you to the sanctions in relation to drugs outlined in the **Positive Behavior Policy** and in the Homework Diary and wish it noted that these will be strictly enforced and adhered to.**

## Definitions

For the purpose of this document and in line with the guidance issued to all schools by the Department of Education (**NEW CIRCULAR**) (1996/16) **drugs will include any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way the body works or the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks.**

As well as everyday substances such as tea and coffee, drugs include:

- alcohol and tobacco;
- **e-cigarettes;**
- "over-the-counter" medicines, such as paracetamol;
- prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics, tranquillisers, inhalers and Ritalin;
- volatile substances, such as correcting fluids/thinners, gas lighter fuel, aerosols, glues and petrol;

- controlled drugs, such as cannabis, LSD, Ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms (processed), heroin and cocaine; and
- other substances such as amyl/butyl nitrite ('poppers') and unprocessed magic mushrooms.

***This list is not exhaustive.***

### **Aims and Objectives**

- To have a clear and agreed understanding among everyone in the school community about the implications and possible consequences of drug use/misuse including the personal and disciplinary consequences of the use of drugs.
- To provide all staff (teaching and non-teaching) with adequate training and support to enable them to deal effectively and confidently with incidents of suspected drug misuse, and to ensure that the procedures are sensitively and consistently applied in all situations.
- To empower teaching staff through appropriate training and support to develop and deliver an effective drug education programme.
- To provide a drug education programme which
  - develops pupils' self esteem and promotes positive attitudes in their relationships with others
  - gives pupils opportunities to develop the values, skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to make informed and responsible decisions about the use/misuse of drugs including tobacco, alcohol and volatile substances, within the context of a healthy lifestyle; and
  - helps pupils to develop the skills necessary to assert themselves confidently and resist negative pressures and influences.
- To inform parents of the content of this policy and the disciplinary procedures that will be implemented in the management of incidents of suspected drugs use/ misuse.
- **To establish an environment in which the school is free from the use of all drugs for the benefit/health and safety of the whole-school community.**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Pupils**

- Be aware of, and strictly adhere to school rules in relation to drugs use/misuse.

#### **All staff (teaching and non-teaching)**

- Be alert to the possibility of drugs use.
- Be familiar with the school's procedures in the handling of suspected drug-related incidents.
- It is not the responsibility of the individual staff member to investigate the circumstances surrounding an incident, however he/she should deal with any emergency procedures if necessary.
- Any information, substance or paraphernalia received should be forwarded to the designated teacher for drugs who may have to take immediate action.

### **Teachers delivering the Drug Education programme**

In addition to the above:

- Deliver the school's drug education programme.

- Try to create an atmosphere in the classroom in which pupils can freely contribute to discussion, safe in the knowledge that the comments, ideas and feelings of the group are valued.
- Liaise with the designated teacher for drugs regarding any aspect of the programme/policy, as necessary.

#### **The Designated Teacher for Drugs: Mr Michael Doyle**

- Ensure that all staff and parents are aware of and have received a copy of the policy.
- Have oversight and co-ordination of the planning of curricular provision in compliance with the statutory requirements including periodic update and review of the policy.
- Liaise with staff responsible in coordinating the delivery of the drug education programme.
- Co-ordinate training and induction of all staff in the procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Be responsible for co-ordinating the school's procedures for dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- Determine the circumstances surrounding the incident
- Complete a suspected incident report form and forward to principal.
- Act as the point of contact for outside agencies working with the school.

#### **The Principal**

- Ensure that members of the Board of Governors have been consulted on, and have ratified the policy.

#### **In the case of incidents of suspected drug use/misuse:**

- Ensure that the following people are informed (where relevant):
  - \* Parents/Guardians
  - \* PSNI - preferably the Community and Schools Involvement Officer (CSIO)
  - \* Board of Governors
  - \* Designated Officer in SELB
  - \* Members of staff
  - \* Other pupils and parents informed within the confines of confidentiality
- Agree, in consultation with the Board of Governors, appropriate disciplinary procedures in relation to the incident.
- Retain written records of the incident and ensure a copy of the reports is submitted to Board of Governors, SELB as appropriate.

#### **The Board of Governors**

- Examine and approve the completed policy
- Ensure the policy is received by every parent at the beginning of the academic year.
- Agree in consultation with the Principal appropriate disciplinary procedures in relation to suspected drug related incidents.
- There is a designated Governor for drugs.

#### **Parents/Guardians**

- Support the school in the development and implementation of this policy, including the school's procedures for handling incidents of suspected drugs use/misuse and the drug education programme.

## The Caretakers

- Be vigilant around and conduct regular checks of school grounds for drug-related paraphernalia. Inform the designated teacher for drugs should any be found.
- Ensure the safe storage, handling and disposal of potentially harmful substances such as solvents and cleaning fluids.

## Procedures for dealing with suspected drug related incidents on the school premises

- The member of staff assesses the situation
- The situation is made safe for all pupils.
- The Student Welfare Officer is called, if necessary.
- First aid is given and an ambulance is called, if necessary.
- The Principal/Designated Teacher is informed.
- The Principal/Designated Teacher decides action and ensures that the following are informed:
  - (a) Police
  - (b) Parents
  - (c) Board of Governors
  - (d) Relevant Officer in SELB
  - (e) Specialist Drugs Support Agency as appropriate
- The Principal invokes disciplinary procedures, if appropriate in conjunction with the Board if Governors. (See Positive Behaviour Policy)

Fundamental to dealing with incidents of suspected drug misuse is the principle of *'in loco parentis'*, and St. Colman's College will always take the steps that would reasonably be expected of any parent to safeguard the well being and safety of all the pupils in their charge. It is important that staff respond appropriately;

- Stay calm.
- If a pupil is suspected of concealing drugs on his person/in his personal belongings, send for the Designated Teacher (Mr Michael Doyle). He will send for his Parents / Guardians. In the presence of his Parents / Guardians and another member of staff, He will ask him to turn out his pockets. **PHYSICAL SEARCHES SHOULD NEVER BE MADE BY A MEMBER OF STAFF.** (In the absence of Mr Doyle, send for any of the Deputy Designated Teachers, Mrs Helen Doherty, Mr Kevin Franklin, Dr Patrick Collins or Mr Ciaran O'Hare or the Principal, Mr Cormac McKinney.
- If the pupil is detained, the teacher should avoid being alone in the room with him.
- The teacher should take the suspect drug or equipment as soon as possible to the Principal who arranges for its safe storage until it is handed over to the police.
- Upon discovery of any controlled substance, the Principal **MUST** inform the local police and should contact the parents as well.
- The teacher should record the time, place, date and circumstances of removal/confiscation of the suspected controlled drug.

The school will at all times give careful consideration as to how any information relating to an incident of suspected/confirmed drug use/misuse is communicated to staff, pupils and parents/guardians.

**As a matter of good practice, the school will make a referral to the appropriate counselling services. Notwithstanding this, the school is committed to ensuring a totally drugs-free environment for the benefit of the whole- school community and the disciplinary policy will be fully implemented on all occasions.**

## Dealing with the Media

If the school receives an enquiry from the media the caller will only be referred to the Principal or, in the absence of the Principal, a designated nominee.  
When responding to the media the privacy of the pupil(s), his family and/or any staff members will be respected at all times.

Confidentiality is of paramount importance in drug related incidents and subsequent outcomes

## DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

1. Any pupil will be automatically suspended **to assess any risks involved** if suspected of involvement with drugs in the following circumstances/situations:

- In the school building
- In the school grounds
- Wearing the school uniform in a public place
- On the way to or from school
- On a school trip
- Representing the school at a function, competition, sporting event etc.

*(The list is not exhaustive)*

2. If following the necessary investigations and consultation process, the use/possession/purchase/**distribution** or sale/handling of drugs is confirmed, the pupil will be **expelled** by the Board of Governors.

## **CHECKLIST FOR HANDLING SUSPECTED DRUG RELATED INCIDENTS IN SCHOOLS**

This is a guide on the key procedures to undertake when a drug incident occurs in schools.

### **1. Ensure the safety of the individual pupil involved, of other pupils, yourself and other staff.**

#### **On finding a situation with a suspected substance:-**

- Get help immediately from another adult.
- Assess situation, to see if this is a life-threatening situation or not.

#### **If an emergency:-**

- If necessary contact an ambulance.
- Put person under the influence of the drugs in the recovery position.
- Ensure airways are cleared.
- Remove any other bystanders from the immediate vicinity.

#### **Then in all cases:-**

- Carefully gather up any drugs / paraphernalia / evidence lying around and keep safely.
- Ascertain which substances / drugs have been taken and how much.
- Secure all drugs and paraphernalia and give to the Principal / Designated teacher immediately, and lock them away.
- Contact the parents as soon as possible.

### **2. Ensure all incidents are properly investigated and recorded:-**

- Never accuse pupils of drug dealing/possession. These are alleged illicit substances until substantiated by the PSNI.
- Conduct search procedures according to school policy. (Never search personal belongings without permission. It is okay to search school property such as cupboards or desks)
- Ensure all drugs are safely and securely stored or destroyed, making sure that this is witnessed by another adult and recorded.
- Gather details and data from all the eye-witnesses at the scene.
- All statements and phone calls should be recorded, signed and dated.
- Record all information and sign and date, or ensure accurate details are given to whoever is writing the form and co-sign.
- Ensure the SELB incident form is filled in and returned to the Advisor for Pastoral Care.
- Ensure that you follow all the procedures in your Schools Drugs Policy.

### **3. Ensure appropriate individuals and agencies are informed and contacted as needed:-**

- Principal and Designated drug teacher.
- Parents / Guardians
- PSNI (CSIO or Uniform Branch)
- SELB Pastoral Care Advisor.
- Chairperson initially and subsequently the Board of Governors.
- The Education Welfare Officer.
- No media statements, only the Principal should do this.
- Other pupils, parents and staff are only told on a need-to-know basis.

