

Substance Abuse Policy

Castlereas Community School is committed to protecting the health, safety, and well-being of its persons by assuring that a drug free environment is maintained and that both employees and students can perform their duties unimpaired by the effects of alcohol or drugs.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies Code of Behaviour, Health and Safety Policy, Student Suspension/Expulsion Policy and DES regulations. Castlereas Community School asserts its right to require certain standards of behaviour and to prohibit other behaviours in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

This policy applies to the entire school community, students, teachers, non-teaching staff and users of the school premises. It forms part of the general pastoral approach adapted by the school to ensure a healthy, caring and supportive learning community.

Rationale: The prevalence of tobacco, alcohol, solvents and drugs poses serious challenges for the entire community especially the school community.

Scope of this Policy

Castlereas Community School prohibits the possession, use, consumption, sale or distribution of alcohol, drugs, or drug paraphernalia or solvents during the school day including lunchtime, on the school premises, on school grounds or during school related activities. Students who fail to adhere to this policy will jeopardize their right to remain in school.

Definition of a Substance

A drug is defined as any chemical which changes the function of the human body either physically, mentally or emotionally.

- 1 Alcohol
2. Illegal substances such as cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy, etc.
3. Solvents
4. Growth enhancers which include illegal substances.
5. The abuse of Prescription Drug without a doctor's cert.

Misuse/Abuse: Substance mis-use is defined as use of a substance which damages any part of the user's life, their mental, physical or emotional health, their relationships or their ability to perform effectively.

Education

The school acknowledges its role as a partner with parents in providing alcohol and drug awareness and education, and in safeguarding young people. Fundamental to our beliefs is the principle of sharing responsibility with parents of the education of young people. Effective communication and co-operation with parents is essential for the successful implementation of this policy. We encourage persons experiencing difficulty with alcohol or drugs to seek appropriate help.

It is school policy to facilitate education/training programmes for staff relating to alcohol, drugs. The school may provide opportunities as appropriate for staff attendance at in-service training in relation to Substance Abuse. Castlerea Community School believes that as part of its duty of care it has a duty to inform and educate young people of the consequences of Substance Abuse. Education opportunities may also be extended to parents as appropriate.

Procedures/Protocol for dealing with Alcohol, Substance or Drug Related Incidents

When an incident of abuse is reported Castlerea Community School will strive to strike a balance between the welfare of the particular student/s and the welfare of the school community as a whole.

This policy sets out how instances of alcohol or drug use/abuse are investigated and dealt with. Established disciplinary protocols will be adhered to throughout the process.

1. The Principal is responsible for dealing with incidences of substance abuse.
2. All reports of abuse must be reported to the Principal.
3. The Principal makes all decisions regarding investigation of an incident, communicating with, liaising with and reporting to all relevant parties.

4. The Principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of documentation.
5. The Principal is responsible for the taking possession of any prohibited substances or drugs paraphernalia and deciding what course of action to take.

Conduct of the Investigation

1. The teacher/employee will report the incident to the Principal/Deputy Principal at the earliest opportunity.
2. The Principal will meet the student(s) and outline the allegations against the student and provide him/her with the opportunity to respond.
3. The Principal, in investigating the incident, may seek statements from all persons involved in, concerned with, or having any knowledge of the incident. The Principal may also seek the advice and support of the relevant school personnel.
4. Parents/Guardians will be informed and requested to attend a meeting.
5. The student may be asked to remain out of class/out of school until the matter is fully investigated.
6. A written record will be maintained at all stages of the investigation. Copies of all relevant records will be available to the student and his/her parents/guardians as appropriate so that they may have a reasonable opportunity to reply.
7. The Principal will confiscate any substance and alert the Guardia.
8. The Principal will keep the Chairperson of the Board of Management apprised at all stages.

Castlerea Community School recognizes the importance of limiting the number of people involved in investigating an incident of Substance Abuse. However, we ask both teachers and parents to accept the following:

1. The duty of care of teachers and staff precludes them from offering total confidentiality when they come in contact with an incident of Substance Abuse.
2. Castlerea Community School will try to ensure, in so far as possible, that appropriate pastoral supports are offered to the student(s) and parents involved.
3. The School may be required to contact outside agencies as Appropriate, Guardia, Health Board, Social Workers, and Probation Services etc.
4. In the case of the media interest the school will not comment on any individual matter/person under investigation other than to outline in broad strokes our policy for dealing with such incidents.

However, in the interest of Castlerea Community School's reputation the Principal and/or Board of Management may clarify the school's position once the investigation has been concluded.

The school may, at its own discretion, liaise with other appropriate agencies and seek advice and assistance as it deems appropriate.

Disciplinary Sanctions

Where an incident is verified the Principal may implement disciplinary sanctions including but not limited to:-

- An oral warning
- A written warning
- A suspension of three days duration
- A suspension of more than three days (in conjunction with the Board of Management)

- Internal Suspension
- In conjunction with their parents and with their consent a drug test may be required of students.
- Principal Recommends Expulsion

The School may postpone any or all sanctions to take account of mitigation circumstances. The School reserved the right to exercise an appropriate show of clemency.

In accordance with the Education Act 1998 (Section 28) the parents of a student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of eighteen years, the student, may appeal to the Board against a decision of a teacher or other member of staff of the school. The grievance of the student or the parent will be heard in accordance with established procedures.