

Coláiste na hInse



Substance Use Policy

Vision Statement

'Our vision for Coláiste na hInse is an outstanding progressive centre of teaching and learning, where the three cornerstones of our school bród (pride), uaimhian (ambition) and dearfach (positivity) are lived daily allowing personal growth and wellbeing and empowering us to aimigh ar realt eolais through positive relationships, respect, inclusivity, and encouragement'.

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1. RATIONALE

Coláiste na hInse is committed to providing a safe, caring and progressive centre of teaching and learning where **bród (pride)**, **uaillmhian (ambition)** and **dearfacht (positivity)** are lived daily.

Substance use undermines:

- Student wellbeing
- Teaching and learning
- Positive relationships
- School safety

This policy has been developed in line with:

- Department of Education guidelines on substance use in schools
- HSE Prevention and Education guidance
- Tusla Child Protection Procedures
- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- The school's Code of Positive Behaviour (2022)

2. RELATION TO SCHOOL VISION

Our vision calls us to:

‘aimsigh ar réalta eolais through positive relationships, respect, inclusivity and encouragement’.

This policy promotes:

- Personal growth and wellbeing
- Informed decision-making
- Accountability
- Restorative responses where appropriate
- A culture of care and early intervention

3. AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To promote a healthy, informed and drug-free school environment
- To outline clear procedures for managing substance-related incidents
- To provide education and prevention programmes
- To respond proportionately and restoratively where possible
- To ensure legal compliance
- To protect all members of our Clann

4. POLICY CONTENT

Section 1: Scope of the policy

This policy applies:

- On school grounds
- On school trips (national & international)
- During extracurricular activities
- When representing the school

Section 2: Definitions of Substances and Emerging Trends

For the purpose of this policy, substances include:

Illegal Substances

- Cannabis (including THC vapes and edibles)
- Cocaine
- MDMA
- Nitrous oxide
- Synthetic cannabinoids
- Any controlled drug under Irish law

Legal Substances (when used on school premises)

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Vapes / e-cigarettes
- Prescription medication (when not prescribed to the student)

- Over-the-counter medication (when misused)
- Solvents / aerosols

Emerging Trends Recognised

- THC-infused sweets and drinks
- Disposable nicotine vapes
- Online purchasing and social media distribution
- Misuse of ADHD medication
- Mixing alcohol with energy drinks
- Snus

Section 3: Preventative Education

Coláiste na hInse adopts a proactive approach through:

- SPHE and RSE programmes
- Wellbeing curriculum
- Guest speakers (Gardaí, HSE etc.)
- Guidance & Counselling support
- Dearfacht programme
- Pastoral care system
- Student voice initiatives

Education focuses on:

- Decision-making skills
- Peer pressure
- Online safety
- Impact on mental health
- Legal consequences

Section 4: Prohibited Behaviour

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Possession of prohibited substances
- Use of prohibited substances
- Sale, supply or distribution of prohibited substances

- Being under the influence of prohibited substances
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Vaping or smoking
- Distribution of medication
- Storing prohibited substances on school premises

Section 5: Procedures for Managing Incidents

5.1 Immediate Response

Where a substance-related incident is suspected:

1. Student escorted to senior management.
2. Parents/guardians contacted immediately.
3. Incident recorded (incident report form)
4. Medical assistance sought if required.

Where criminal activity is suspected:

- Gardaí may be contacted.
- Board of Management informed where necessary.

5.2 Investigation

- Conducted by Principal/Deputy Principal.
- Statements gathered.
- Procedures followed in accordance with the school's code of positive behaviour and LMETB's suspension and expulsion policy

5.3 Sanctions

Sanctions will align with the **Coláiste na hInse Code of Positive Behaviour and LMETB Suspension and Expulsion Policy**

and may include:

- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Restricted access to school activities
- Report to Gardaí (in cases of supply or serious breach)
- Other interventions as deemed appropriate by school management

Sale or distribution of drugs will result in severe sanction and likely Garda involvement.

Section 6: Restorative Approach and Supports & Intervention

Restorative Approach

Note: Restorative practice does not replace sanctions but complements accountability.

In line with our restorative practice model:

Where appropriate, students may:

- Participate in restorative meetings
- Reflect on harm caused
- Agree to behaviour contracts
- Engage in counselling support

Supports & Intervention

Coláiste na hInse recognises that substance misuse may signal underlying difficulties. The focus is early intervention and wellbeing.

Support may include:

- Referral to Guidance Counsellor
- Parental meetings
- HSE adolescent services
- Tusla (where welfare concerns arise)
- NEPS consultation (if relevant)
- Other external agencies where deemed appropriate

Section 7. Child Protection and Confidentiality

Information is shared on a need-to-know basis.

Child Protection procedures override confidentiality where:

- Risk of harm exists
- Welfare concerns arise

Section 8: Parents/Guardians Role

Partnership is central to prevention.

Parents are expected to:

- Support the policy
- Communicate concerns

- Attend meetings when requested
- Monitor online activity
- Reinforce school expectations

Section 9: Staff Training

Staff will receive:

- Information on emerging trends
- Training in recognising signs of substance misuse
- Updates from HSE/Gardaí
- Guidance on legal responsibilities

Section 10: Critical Incidents

Where a serious drug-related incident occurs:

- Critical Incident Plan activated
- Board of Management informed
- LMETB informed as required
- Outside agencies contacted (as appropriate)

5: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The successful implementation of this policy depends on the shared responsibility of the entire school community. In keeping with our vision of bród, uailmhian and dearfach, each member of our Clann has a role in promoting a safe and healthy environment.

1. Board of Management

The Board of Management will:

- Approve and ratify the Substance Use Policy.
- Ensure the policy complies with Department of Education, HSE and legal requirements.
- Support the Principal in implementing the policy.
- Consider serious breaches (e.g. supply of substances) where required.
- Monitor and review the policy at regular intervals.
- Ensure fair procedures and natural justice are upheld in serious disciplinary matters.

2. Principal

The Principal will:

- Oversee implementation of the policy.
- Ensure staff, students, parents and guardians are familiar with this policy and procedures.
- Lead investigations into serious substance-related incidents.
- Communicate with parents and guardians.
- Liaise with parents/guardians towards positive outcomes
- Liaise with LMETB, Gardaí, Tusla or other agencies where appropriate.
- Inform the Board of Management of serious incidents
- Ensure that prevention education is embedded within the school curriculum.
- Ensure fair procedures are applied.
- Maintain appropriate professional confidentiality in line with child protection guidelines.

3. Deputy Principals

Deputy Principals will:

- Support the Principal in managing incidents.
- Conduct investigations and maintain accurate records.
- Communicate with parents/guardians.
- Liaise with parents/guardians towards positive outcomes.
- Implement sanctions in line with the Code of Positive Behaviour.
- Coordinate restorative meetings where appropriate.
- Maintain appropriate professional confidentiality in line with child protection guidelines.

4. Year Heads / Réaltóirí

Réaltóirí will:

- Monitor patterns of behaviour and emerging concerns.

- Liaise with class teachers and Caomhnóirí.
- Meet with students and parents when concerns arise.
- Liaise with parents/guardians towards positive outcomes.
- Refer students to guidance or senior management when appropriate.
- Support behaviour contracts or intervention plans.
- Maintain appropriate professional confidentiality in line with child protection guidelines.

5. Teaching Staff

Teaching staff will:

- Promote a healthy, drug-free environment.
- Deliver substance education through SPHE/Wellbeing where appropriate.
- Remain vigilant for signs of substance misuse.
- Report concerns promptly to senior management.
- Avoid investigating incidents independently.
- Record factual observations only.
- Maintain appropriate professional confidentiality in line with child protection guidelines.

6. Guidance & Counselling Team

The Guidance Team will:

- Provide support to students experiencing difficulties.
- Facilitate preventative education programmes.
- Liaise with parents/guardians towards positive outcomes.
- Liaise with external agencies (with parental consent where appropriate).
- Support early intervention strategies.
- Maintain appropriate professional confidentiality in line with child protection guidelines.

7. Special Education / AEN Team

The AEN Team will:

- Support vulnerable students who may be at increased risk.

- Contribute to individualised support plans where required.
- Work collaboratively with parents and outside agencies.
- Maintain appropriate professional confidentiality in line with child protection guidelines.

8. Students (Daltaí)

Students are expected to:

- Refrain from possession, use, supply or being under the influence of prohibited substances.
- Respect the health and safety of others.
- Seek support if worried about themselves or a peer.
- Participate honestly in restorative processes if involved in an incident.
- Live the school values of bród, uaillmhian and dearfach.
- Students are encouraged to speak to a trusted adult if concerned about substance use.
- Adhere to this policy and the school's code of positive behaviour.

9. Parents / Guardians

Partnership between home and school is central to prevention and intervention.

Parents/Guardians will:

- Support the school's policy and expectations.
- Attend meetings when requested.
- Inform the school of relevant medical information (e.g. prescribed medication).
- Monitor and discuss substance-related risks with their child.
- Work collaboratively with the school in addressing concerns.

10. External Agencies

Where appropriate, the school may engage with:

- Gardaí
- HSE services
- Tusla
- NEPS

- Adolescent addiction services
- CAMHS
- Other external agencies as deemed appropriate

Engagement will be guided by legal obligations, child protection procedures and the best interests of the student.

5. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This policy will be:

- Reviewed every two years
- Reviewed earlier if legislation changes or is otherwise necessary
- Monitored by Board of Management
- Evaluated in consultation with students, parents/guardians and staff



6. RATIFICATION OF POLICY



lmetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Lú agus na Mí
Louth and Meath Education and Training Board

Policy for Resolution/Ratification by LMETB Board

School	Coláiste na hInse
Policy Title	Substance use.
Date of School Board of Management Meeting	24. 03. 26.
Please confirm if a quorum was present at the meeting (4)	Yes.
Please confirm if the completed Policy Consultation Record was presented at the meeting	Yes.
Policy Proposed By	Aisling Power.
Policy Seconded By	Cllr. Carol Lennon.
Signed	 Chairperson of Board of Management
Date	24-03-2026
Signed	 Principal
Date	24. 3. 26.