

CBS Roscommon 2016

Substance Abuse Policy

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges that affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is part of this reality. This policy attempts to clarify our approach to handling the abuse of any drug. A drug is any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The use, possession, sale or distribution (or facilitation of such use, possession, sale or distribution) of tobacco, alcohol or illegal substances will not be tolerated in the school. The School reserves the right to act on any information it may receive regarding the use, possession or distribution of illegal substances (or the facilitation of such use, possession or distribution of same). In all situations the School will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student(s) involved and the welfare of the school community and the reputation of the school.

(A) Mission Statement

CBS Roscommon is a voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST) for boys only.

The policy is informed by the ERST Charter and this charter has five key elements:

1. Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and gospel based values
2. Promoting partnership in the school community
3. Excelling in teaching and learning
4. Creating a caring school community
5. Inspiring transformational leadership

The capacity of the school is approx 360 students. Our policy is to enhance the educational growth of our students in their intellectual, spiritual, social, artistic, moral and sporting development. The policy is implemented within the context of our Mission Statement:

The mission of C.B.S. Roscommon is to prepare and nurture our students for life, career and as valued members of society in a caring and Christian environment.

We seek to work with the local community and agencies to foster the development of the individual and collective talents of all students and staff.

Scope of this Policy

For the purposes of this policy a banned or prohibited substance includes all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non-validated prescription medication, all alcohol and tobaccos used contrary to the law of the land. It also includes drug paraphernalia i.e. any items that may be deemed to be used in the taking of illicit substances.

This policy applies to the entire school community, including staff, students, parents/guardians, visitors and users of the school building. It also applies to those members of the school community when attending school functions or representing the school outside the school environment unless specifically exempt. This policy also applies to students outside the immediate school environment (i.e. before and after school and at lunchtime) who are wearing the school uniform and therefore deemed to be representative of the school.

School Ethos

At CBS Roscommon we strive to create a Christian, caring community of learning in which each member is encouraged to recognise his/her talents and abilities to the full, is respected as a unique human being and enjoys a sense of confidence and belonging. We believe that education flourishes in an environment where good relationships are encouraged, where people feel valued and respected and where there is genuine tolerance, fairness and support for those in difficulty. This philosophy is central to this policy document.

Our aim is to:

- Provide a safe and healthy environment
- Provide accurate information and increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of substance abuse to enable students to make informed choices
- Enable students to develop a range of skills appropriate for handling situations related to substance abuse

Education Programme on Substance Abuse

The school within the limited resources available to it will provide appropriate education programmes for all students in SPHE, CSPE, Science, Religion and PE.

The school encourages and welcomes ongoing consultation with parents, mainly through the Parents' Council in relation to the best use of whatever resources are available in the community to support the School in these programmes and this policy.

The School's Management & Investigation Procedure for an Abuse Incident

- (1) If there is an immediate danger to students or the school community the School reserves the right to take whatever action is deemed appropriate to remove the danger, pending a further and complete investigation.
- (2) An Abuse Incident Report Form will be completed.

- (3) The school will investigate and assess any Abuse Incident taking as much time as may be deemed necessary and appropriate to the completion of any such investigation.
- (4) The School will take immediate possession of any “banned or prohibited substances” or any “drug paraphernalia” found in connection with the incident(s) and will retain same pending the completion of this investigation, unless otherwise required by any relevant outside Agencies, or unless otherwise advised to part with possession of same by the said outside Agencies.
- (5) Where the School is to part with possession of said items, it will firstly take (and maintain) a record of all the items that came into its possession.
- (6) The School will immediately seek a statement or explanation from the student(s) or staff concerned and will carefully record same. The views of all or any other person concerned or having knowledge of the Abuse Incident(s) will be recorded.
- (7) At all stages of the investigation a written record should be kept, including the outcome of the investigation, any decisions taken and the reasons for same, any penalties or disciplinary procedures imposed at the conclusion of same and finally in the event of an Appeal the entire management of that appeal and the outcome of same.
- (8) The school will, at its own discretion in an appropriate case liaise with any appropriate outside authorities, such as relevant officers of the local Gardaí or Health Authority and may seek their advice or assistance as the school deems appropriate and necessary in the circumstances of the specific Abuse Incident(s) being dealt with.
- (9) Again the school will in an appropriate case at its sole and exclusive discretion, liaise with any appropriate outside authorities or experts on a confidential basis and may seek any professional or expert advice or assistance it deems appropriate and necessary to deal satisfactorily with the circumstances of the specific abuse incident.
- (10) If the circumstance merit (and the investigation is continuing) the School will then put the full particulars of the Abuse Incident(s) to the student(s) concerned and to their parents.
- (11) Copies of all records deemed relevant only to the student will be made available to that student and his parents at the appropriate stage, at the discretion of the School but in time to permit the student a reasonable and just opportunity to make his own reply to the matters at issue and any representations he would wish to make or have made on his own behalf.
- (12) The School will then allow the student(s) concerned and their parents reasonable and sufficient time to permit a response to the matters at issue but otherwise matters shall be dealt with in a reasonably expeditious and efficient manner. The School will take into account any response so made and if such should arise and require to be taken into account, any relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that it may be appropriate to take into account in the specific case.
- (13) The school shall shortly thereafter inform the student(s) and their parent(s) of its findings and their reasons for same, and if the School deems that the student(s) have been guilty of or has been involved or implicated in an Abuse Incident, it shall indicate the penalty or sanction(s) that it intends to impose in the circumstances.
- (14) The Board of Management as the circumstances of the matter may merit, may implement disciplinary actions or sanctions, including but not limited to any of the following:

- An oral warning
- A written warning
- A three day suspension
- A suspension of more than three days
- Other disciplinary action short of expulsion
- Expulsion

Sanctions up to and including expulsion may be invoked in an appropriate case. Where expulsion arises, the Board of Management will notify the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and will otherwise comply with the provisions of the Education Welfare Act 2000, subject to “and without prejudice to the right of the Board of Management to take such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the School and the safety of students is secured” in accordance with the law and the provisions of Section 24 of said Act.

This does not mean that the school is prohibited from taking any sensible or reasonable precautions in accordance with and for “the safety of students” etc as mentioned in Section 24. Parents and the School hereby acknowledge and agree that where such circumstances may be deemed by the School to arise, then independently of any sanction of expulsion or extended suspension, the School and its Principal may be obliged and compelled to take or continue measures as at (13) above, in the interest of good order and discipline in the School and the safety of students, pending completion of any engagement process with the EWO or other parties under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, concerning an imminent expulsion.

- (15) If the School considers that the Abuse Incident(s) to be of sufficient gravity then it may again at its sole discretion, postpone the question of penalty or sanction(s) if it considers it appropriate to do so in order to take account of any mitigating circumstances or representations that it may deem appropriate to receive and take account of prior to imposing any penalty or sanction(s) in the specific case.

General Guidelines

- (1) Notifying and communicating with parents and students:

If the school has reason to believe that a student(s) has been involved in an Abuse Incident, the School will notify the parent(s) and where there is concern about the health or welfare of the student(s) concerned, will share all relevant information the School has available to it that may be of assistance to the parents or necessary for them in order to attend to the health and welfare of their child.

- (2) Confidentiality when managing an Abuse Incident:

The school recognises that it is important in so far as is possible in the circumstances that only a limited number of people are involved in managing and investigating any Abuse Incident(s). The school’s Policy here is only to involve those properly concerned with the management and investigation of the incident(s) in question. The students and their parents acknowledge that, again in an appropriate case, the School may be obliged under Statute or regulations or Department Guidelines to notify other persons

concerning either the Abuse Incident(s) or the outcome of any investigation concerning same, such as for example, an EWO under the terms of the Education Welfare Act 2000, or a Juvenile Liaison Officer under the provision of the Children's Act 2001.

Ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on Thursday September 1st 2016.

Review Date: May 2017

Signed: _____ Chairperson