



Substance Use Policy

The school authority in Scoil Chormaic has a moral and legal obligation to ensure compliance with criminal law. The Substance Use Policy shall endeavour to ensure the welfare, care and protection of students in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Scope

The policy applies to students, teachers, special needs assistants, auxiliary staff members, childcare trainees under the sponsorship of TASN and visitors to the school premises.

It is applicable during school-time – including breaks and to all school related activities. It applies to the school building and grounds and to any area where a school related activity takes place, e.g. School tours/sporting trips outside of the school.

Relationship to our School Mission Statement

The characteristic spirit of Scoil Chormaic has been developed and agreed with our partners in education.

In line with our mission statement and ethos our Substance Use Policy aims to protect the welfare of all in our school community. It draws together the B.O.M., students, parents and guardians and all staff. It aims to empower and enlighten our students in relation to substance abuse matters in an age appropriate manner.

The Substance Use Policy is also interlinked with our school Code of Behaviour Policy and Health & Safety Policy.

Rationale

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges, which affect their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco, vaping and drugs is part of this reality. Schools need to reflect upon how they might provide for the needs of their student cohort and respond appropriately to what are sometimes sensitive and emotive issues.

The Education Act 1998 provides that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them. The National Drugs Strategy 'Building on Experience' is now government policy and it requires schools to have a substance use policy in place. The recent report from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled 'Drug Use Prevention' (November 2001) underlines the importance of schools developing substance use policies. The updated National Drugs Strategy Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017 to 2025 has also been taken into account.

Goals/Objectives

- ✧ To ensure the welfare, care and protection of every student in our school in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education Welfare Act 2000
- ✧ To create a positive learning environment that promotes health and well being.
- ✧ To develop awareness and knowledge among students and staff of the consequences of substance misuse.
- ✧ To ensure the safe learning and working environment for all in Scoil Chormaic

- ✧ To inform students, parents and all staff on our policy in relation to substance use and provide clear procedures to follow in relation to incidents of substance misuse.

Policy Content

The management and staff of Scoil Chormaic shall endeavour to ensure that our school premises and grounds are kept free of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs.

Smoking

The school is a smoke free area.

- ✧ Students are not permitted to smoke or possess cigarettes on school premises.
- ✧ Students found smoking on school premises/or at school activities or events will be suspended for 3 days.
- ✧ Staff or visitors to the school may only smoke in the designated areas.

Alcohol

The school buildings and school grounds are alcohol free areas, except for designated staff and parent functions where prior notice is given to the principal. Consumption of alcohol by students at any after school activities in the school will not be allowed.

- ✧ Students are not allowed bring alcohol on to our school grounds or to consume alcohol in school or on school grounds.
- ✧ Students are not allowed to consume alcohol on school trips or tours.
- ✧ Where a student comes to school under the influence of alcohol, his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted immediately and asked to take their child home.
- ✧ Students found drinking on school premises will be suspended.

Illicit Drugs and Solvents

Students are prohibited from being in possession or, or using, illicit drugs or solvents on the school premises.

- ✧ Illicit drugs found on school premises should be locked away and the Gardaí contacted to dispose of them.
- ✧ Parents are encouraged to inform the school authorities if they suspect their child of drug taking.
- ✧ Students suspected of drug taking outside school will be observed and every effort will be made to support them and to ensure they get appropriate help and counselling where necessary.
- ✧ Students found in possession of drugs for distribution will be excluded permanently from the school, subject to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act.

Incidents relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug use are also addresses in our school's Code of Behaviour and pupils may be suspended or expelled if involved in any drug related incident.

The schools shared understanding of a "drug related incident" is

- ✧ Any unusual or unbecoming behaviour resulting from intake or use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs.
- ✧ The sale or passing on of any illegal substances.
- ✧ The possession of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs on school grounds or at related activities.
- ✧ Disposal of drugs or related items e.g. Syringes, found on school property.

The reporting procedure for such incidents is:

Step 1: Witness to drug related incident informs teacher/staff member/principal.

Step 2: Principal informs parents/guardians.

Step 3: Principal informs Chairperson of Board of Management (Mrs.Monica Shannon)

Step 4: Gardaí informed depending on the seriousness of the incident.

Step 5: If necessary Area Health Board informed for disposal of items.

Management of Persons in the Workplace Under The Influence of Drugs And/or Alcohol

The Board of Management shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that pupils and other persons in the workplace are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare from persons under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The term “in the workplace”, in the preceding sentence includes all school related activities taking place under the supervision of a teacher, with the Board’s approval, and both within and away from the school premises.

Every school employee shall, while at work, ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant as required by Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that a staff member is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace, in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of the employee and others. In the case of employees who are at work under the influence of an intoxicant, disciplinary procedures may be implemented.

Should the Principal and/or Deputy Principal have reasonable grounds to believe that an employee of any contractor is unfit for work, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal shall ask the contractor to remove his/her employee from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe any person, other than a staff member or employee of a contractor, is unfit to be on the premises, due to being under the influence of an intoxicant, the staff member shall report his/her belief promptly to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal, who shall ask that person to remove him/herself from the workplace.

If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to believe that a parent or adult collecting a pupil from school or presenting themselves on the premises for another reason is unfit to be on the premises or to take care of the said pupil, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal will be informed and the duty of care will apply to the pupil. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the pupil and safeguard their best interests.

In the event that a staff member or any other person, referred to above, refuses a reasonable request to remove him/herself from the premises, the Principal and/or Deputy Principal may call the Gardaí to forcibly remove the person in question.

The Board of Management acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of teachers. An Employee Assistance Service (telephone: 1800 411 057 or e-mail: eam@vhics.ie) is available to teaching staff. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to contact the Employee Assistance Service.

The Board of Management also acknowledges its responsibility in promoting the welfare at work of all other staff members. In the event that substance abuse appears to be adversely affecting the performance and/or attendance pattern of any member of the non teaching staff, the Board of Management may request such staff member to seek counseling or other professional intervention.

All incidents, relating to the presence of persons at school, under the influence of an intoxicant, shall be recorded and reported as soon as possible to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management shall consider all such reports and decide on the appropriate action to be taken in the circumstances of each particular case.

Ratification of Policy.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on ___/___/_____ [date].

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Signed:

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: ___/___/_____

Date: ___/___/_____

Date of next review: September 2025

Appendix 1

Important Contact Numbers

-HSE South Tipperary Substance Misuse Service
South Tipperary General Hospital (052)6126533 /(052) 6177900.

-South Tipperary Drugs Outreach –Clonmel, Cahir, Carrick on Suir (086) 8561683.

-South Tipperary Alcohol and Addiction Treatment Service
Grounds of St. Luke’s Hospital Clonmel (Young People over 16)