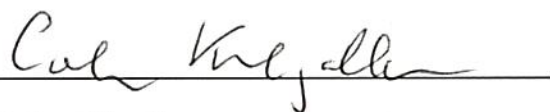


# **SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY**

## **2024-26**

**Ardgillan College**

**Date for review: October 2026**



Colm Kilgallon

Chairperson

Board of Management

  
Date ratified by the Board of Management

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Ardgillan Community College promotes a happy and caring community where students are encouraged and supported to reach their full potential. Teamwork, respect and the pursuit of excellence form cornerstones of the college philosophy. The ethos of the college is based on respect, tolerance and understanding while appreciating the diversity of our changing world. The college aims to provide a broad education for all students and to nurture their individual abilities and talents.

Ardgillan College's motto is 'Mol an Óige agus Tíocfaidh Sí' (Praise the young and they will flourish).

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ardgillan College delivers a six-year cycle from first year to sixth year. Ardgillan College is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safeguard their wellbeing. As a result, Ardgillan College sees the need for the formulation and implementation of a structured and comprehensive substance abuse policy. This policy applies to pupils, teachers, parents and ancillary staff and all users of the school grounds. It is applicable any time the school is in operation and to all school related activities. This policy has been formulated by representatives of the whole school community in accordance with guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills and the National Drug Strategy 2017 – 2025.

## **DEFINITION**

A Drug is any substance which changes the way the body functions mentally, physically or emotionally. This includes, but is not limited to, illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and smokeless tobacco/nicotine products such as snus. The supply, use, possession, sale or distribution of tobacco, snus, alcohol or illegal/prohibited substances will not be tolerated in the college, on school tours and outings, or during any college related activity. The college reserves the right to act on any information it may receive regarding the use, possession or distribution of illegal/prohibited substances.

Prescribed medication may be taken in the college if approved by the Principal and on receipt of consent from parents/guardians.

This policy aims to:

1. Provide a safe, healthy and caring environment free from the adverse effects of substance abuse.
2. To provide educational programs to enable the whole school community to make informed, healthy and responsible choices.

3. Provide clear structures and procedures for managing substance abuse incidents.

The policy will focus on

- Strategies for prevention of substance abuse.
- Procedures for managing drug and alcohol related incidents.
- Training and development for the school community.

## **PREVENTION EDUCATION AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES**

Ardgillan College will provide appropriate education programmes for all its students.

This programme will be age-appropriate and will seek to build on and complement existing programmes already being taught in the school – SPHE, PE, Science, Religion and CSPE.

Parents are asked / expected to:

- Acknowledge the importance of these programmes.
- Recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse.
- Assist and co-operate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

To assist the parents in their role the college will:

- Provide them with information on what is happening in the college regarding education programmes (e.g. SPHE etc).
- Encourage and welcome consultation with parents on the best use of available, resources in community to support the school in its programmes and policy implementation.

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

- The college will support staff in the delivery of substance use education by providing resource materials and by facilitating in-service training.
- The college will endeavour to provide any training necessary for the continued development of the SPHE programme by involving outside agencies to provide appropriate training.
- The college will support parents by making them aware of the programmes organised throughout the year.

## **PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, DRUG RELATED OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE INCIDENTS**

In the event of a substance abuse incident, the college will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student or students involved and the welfare of the college community as a whole and the reputation of the college.

- All suspected incidents shall be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal by any member of the school community.
- The college will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances and drug paraphernalia associated with a substance abuse incident, carefully recording all such items and retaining them securely pending completion of the investigation unless otherwise instructed by appropriate outside agencies.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall be informed by the Principal/Deputy Principal of the incident.
- In the event of a medical emergency the school will seek appropriate medical assistance. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be contacted and informed that medical assistance has been sought.
- The Principal shall investigate, or instigate an investigation into, any suspected substance abuse incident. The Principal may contact other agencies and seek their assistance. Statements will be sought from all those involved, concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident. These statements will be recorded and may be passed to the Gardaí.
- The college authorities reserve the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the college any student(s) involved or suspected to be involved in a substance abuse incident while an investigation is being carried out.
- Those involved, or suspected to be involved, will be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations made against them.
- In the event that the investigation concludes that a student or students are in breach of the Substance Abuse Policy or Code of Positive Behaviour, sanctions will be put in place. The following college disciplinary actions or sanctions may be implemented including: warning, fine, suspension and exclusion.
- The school will liaise with any appropriate outside authority and seek advice or assistance as it deems appropriate in relation to its investigation of an incident. The school will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of an incident.

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- The Principal/Deputy Principal, DDLETB head office or a nominated spokesperson will handle all media queries. The school will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.
  - The school will endeavour to provide pastoral supports to the student(s) and parent(s) affected by an incident of substance abuse.

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## **Support Services**

### **Medical**

Medical Emergency	112
Poisons information services Beaumont Hospital	01-8092566 / 8379966
Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda	041-9837601
St Vincent's Hospital	01-2694533
St James Hospital	01-4103000

### **Gardaí**

Balbriggan Garda Station	01-8412202 / 01-8020510
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### **Health Board Services**

Free phone Drugs / HIV helpline	1800 459459
Health Promotion Department	01-6707987 / 6707992

### **Counselling**

Drug Advisory & treatment Centre	01-6771122 / 6488600
Rutland Centre Limited	01-4946358
North Dublin Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force	01-813 1786