



## POLICY ON THE MISUSE OF DRUGS

### 1. PREAMBLE

Clongowes Wood College SJ is a Catholic school in the Jesuit tradition. Clongowes strives to support students in their growth towards a greater understanding and awareness of their faith and the part that this plays in their lives.

This policy aims to comply with the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 which was made mandatory for schools in Circular 18/02.

The scope of this policy includes all school buildings, grounds, play areas and other areas where the students may visit in the course of school-related business during term time.

Clongowes Wood College SJ (hereafter Clongowes) recognises that drugs-- both legal and illegal-- are accessible to members of the College community and that any incident, or suspected incident, of illegal usage needs to be handled in a consistent and sensitive way. Teachers, prefects, and other relevant staff, students, parents/guardians, and the Board of Management, share the responsibility of ensuring this policy is accepted and implemented.

The College acknowledges that it has an important role to play in drugs education.

### 2. PURPOSE

This policy aims to

- set out the school's policy on the use of drugs;
- define the purpose and scope of the school's drugs education programme;
- clarify the school's responses to situations where the use of illegal drugs by a student is either proven or reasonably suspected.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

Drugs are 'any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally' and include alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, performance enhancing drugs and solvents and controlled drugs such as cannabis, ecstasy,

amphetamines, heroin, crack/cocaine, LSD, ketamine, khat, etc. as well as synthetic cannabinoids in any form, so called 'legal highs' and any other 'mind altering' substances.

Within the scope of this policy 'drug use' refers to the possession, use and supply of all banned or prohibited substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act (Amended 2016), or substances intended to resemble drugs, or drug-associated paraphernalia. It also refers to the use of performance enhancing substances, anabolic steroids, glue and other substances held or supplied for the purpose of misuse. It also concerns itself with the misuse of prescription drugs.

Drug misuse / abuse is drug-taking which leads a person to experience social, psychological, physical or legal problems related to intoxication or regular excessive consumption and/or dependence. It may be part of a wider spectrum of problematic or harmful behaviour and require specific interventions, including treatment.

## 4. POLICY

The central aim of this policy is to keep drug use out of Clongowes. We aim to do so by educating our students, staff and parents, providing pastoral care, constant vigilance, the detection of users and, as a last resort, severe sanctions.

- Clongowes prohibits the unlawful manufacture, possession, use or supply of illegal substances, or being under the influence of illegal drugs in the College, on College trips or while engaged in co-curricular activities, by our students.

Clongowes prohibits the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs by any member of the teaching or perfecting staff or by any employee of the College while on College property or engaged in College-related business.

- In the case of drugs for legitimate medicinal use, the College medical authorities and Prefects must be informed in writing by parents or guardians. *"Students on prescribed medication must inform the infirmary and their Prefect. All medication prescription and non-prescription must be administered through the school infirmary. Students are not permitted to have non-prescribed medications or performance enhancing substances including food supplements in their possession. Non-prescription medication must be given to the Prefect or infirmary for safekeeping"* (School Rule 2.5). Therefore parents or guardians are not to supply students with non-prescription drugs but must give them to the infirmary.
- In the event of a breach of College rules regarding drugs by students, sanctions and punishments will be implemented in accordance with the College's Code of Behaviour.

## 5. DRUG EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Clongowes is committed to providing a comprehensive drugs education programme for all students which will form part of the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme. In addition, staff will be encouraged to deal with the topic during classes and as part of the Transition Year Programme.

The aim of this programme is to give students the information, guidance and support they need to help them steer their own course and exercise their own judgement as far as drug misuse is concerned, both now and in the future.

- a. The drugs education programme aims are to:
- increase the self-esteem and confidence of students.
  - provide honest and age appropriate information about drugs.
  - seek to discourage experimentation with and/or the use of illegal drugs by improving our students' understanding of the health and social risks, both in the short and long term, of drug and substance abuse.
  - instil an understanding of the importance of complying with the law, as the use of illegal drugs is a criminal offence.
  - inform our students of the courses of action open to them if they, or people they know, become or might become involved in drug related activity.
  - inform students about the support and resources available within the school and outside school.
- (b) These aims will be supported through the following actions:
- classroom teaching will be complemented by discussions with and talks from outside agencies and experts.
  - teachers and prefects will be offered drug awareness information and drug awareness training, through in-service training.
  - whilst trained teachers and prefects are in the best position to carry out drug education, it may sometimes be appropriate to use an outside speaker to supplement or reinforce the work done in the class.
  - parents will be informed of what is happening in the College with regard to drug education, and information made available.
- (c) Parents/Guardians are asked to:
- promote a responsible attitude to legal and illegal substances.
  - acknowledge the importance of education programmes relating to legal and illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco by attending information events and by emphasising the importance of education in this area to their sons.
  - recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance use and misuse.
  - assist and cooperate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents of breach of policy that may arise.

## 6. MANAGING INCIDENTS RELATING TO ILLEGAL DRUGS.

*"The possession, use or sale of illegal drugs by students while under the care of the College is absolutely forbidden, and may result in expulsion. Disregard for this regulation, particularly in the form of promoting or selling drugs will make the offender liable to immediate expulsion with referral to the appropriate authorities. (School Rule 1.6)*

(a) What happens if misuse of drugs is suspected?

It is our hope and belief that in most instances, the strong pastoral structures and nature of the rapport that exists between the students and staff at Clongowes, will alert us to any instances of drug misuse among our students.

In the event that school rules are broken, disciplinary procedures will be followed and the College reserves the right to suspend or expel a student for drug-related incidents.

Specific incidents relating to drugs will be dealt with through the procedures outlined below:

- The Headmaster, Prefect, Counsellor/s, Academic Year Head and person/s directly involved in the case will be informed and any written documentation will be held in confidence by the Headmaster.
- In most cases, the College will talk directly to the student concerned and very probably also involve their parents/guardians
- It may also involve a search of the student's cubicle/room and/or personal possessions. Care will be taken to ensure that this is conducted fairly and with openness towards the student in question.
- The College will at all times discharge its moral and legal obligations to report matters to the relevant authorities as appropriate and necessary.
- Any illegal substances found on the premises will be confiscated, following which they will be dealt with by the appropriate authorities.

#### (b) Drug incidents

The following are examples of a drug incident:

- emergencies-- when a person may be found unconscious
- intoxication/unusual behaviour
- suspicion/rumour of drug possession, use or dealing
- disclosure of information by another person
- possession of unauthorised legal or illegal substances on the College premises or on a College related activity
- selling or supplying legal/illegal drugs or substances
- College grounds being used for drug activity
- Drug-associated paraphernalia found on College property

#### (c) Procedures when dealing with an illegal drug incident

- In cases where there is no immediate danger to the young person/s, it is important to take the time to assess and where necessary, investigate the situation before responding. All staff members need to be aware of the signs of drug use and be alert for changes in behaviour. Rumour should not be taken as evidence of drug use
- In all cases involving drug use, the staff member concerned should complete a written report
- In situations of confirmed possession, use or supply, all the details will be recorded and reported to the appropriate authorities. 'Supply' includes retailing drugs on the premises, communicating with a drug dealer on behalf of another student, introducing fellow students to a drug dealer, and any other instance of procuring drugs for himself or other students. 'Supply' includes supplying for money or free-of-charge

#### (d) Testing for illegal substances

- With regard to a suspected drugs-related incident, at the discretion of the Headmaster, and in consultation with parents/guardians, the College may require an individual or a group of individuals to undergo appropriate medical testing.
- If, because of information or a complaint received or because of a student's behaviour, there is reason to suspect that a student has been involved with drugs or substances, he may be asked to supply, under medical supervision, a sample for analysis. This will be done to identify users, to eliminate those who have been wrongly suspected and deter the use of drugs and substances.
- A written recording procedure will be used by those investigating. This procedure will ensure that a fair process of dealing with the student's behaviour is in place.

#### (d) Counselling/Pastoral Care

- In response to all incidents, students will be supported through the College Pastoral Care system.
- Any drug-related incident will be reviewed by the Headmaster and Senior Management Team, and other colleagues as necessary, to ensure that this Drug Misuse Policy has been followed.

#### (e) Confidentiality

- Clongowes recognises that the issue of confidentiality is complex. It is important that confidentiality and its limits are discussed with students during the drugs education programmes.
- Teachers, prefects, or other colleagues, cannot offer total confidentiality to a student involved in a drug-related incident.
- Adults in receipt of information must be careful not to break trust.
- Information must remain private and only be disclosed on a strict 'need to know' basis.
- The parents/guardians and student(s) involved must be informed about what is happening and why.
- The well-being and welfare of the student and the staff member must remain the priority.

#### (f) Media

The Headmaster or a nominated spokesperson will handle all media queries. The College will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the College policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.

## 7. TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- The College will ensure that staff involved in delivering Social Personal and Health Education Programmes receive appropriate training.
- All staff will be offered drug information and awareness training.
- Detailed and specific training will be made available to the Care Team in relation to managing drug related incidents.
- The College will provide opportunities to parents to attend talks on issues relating to drugs.

## 8. MONITORING OF THE POLICY

The following three areas should receive priority when the Policy is being monitored:

1. Drug education programmes
2. Managing drug related incidents
3. Training and staff development

## 9. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed once in the lifetime of each Board.

## 10. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

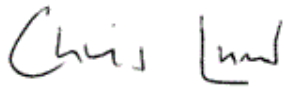
Copies of the policy will be available to all the College community online.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021



Mr Peter Gray  
Chair of the Board of Management

17<sup>th</sup> December 2020



Mr Chris Lumb  
Headmaster/Secretary to the Board

17<sup>th</sup> December 2020