



Rationale:

The world in which we live presents young people with many challenges that affect their health and wellbeing. Exposure to alcohol, tobacco, solvents and legal/illegal drugs is part of their reality. Our Lady's College Galway is committed to enabling students to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, cultural and physical potential.

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, 2001-2008 sets out a detailed programme of action to be implemented by Government Department and Agencies to combat the very serious problem of drug misuse in our society. The strategy, which is Government policy, highlights the important contribution that schools can make in the area of education and prevention, and requires them to have substance use policies in place.
- Section IV of the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools states that all schools should be actively engaged in the process of developing and agreeing a Substance Use Policy in line with Action 43 of the National Drugs strategy and Circular.

Relation of Policy to School's Mission:

In keeping with its mission to foster and develop the unique potential of each student through the provision of a broad based educational experience in the Catholic tradition.

In welcoming all, our focus is on educational excellence delivered in a safe and caring environment. Mutual respect, responsibility and belonging permeate all that we do enabling the holistic development of every student in its care.

SECTION 1 Aims and Objectives of the Policy

Our Lady's College Galway asserts the right to require certain standards of behaviour and to prohibit certain practices. The College's policy on Substance Use is part of a general pastoral approach to ensure a healthy, caring and supportive learning environment and to offer a formal programme of Drugs Education both in terms of prevention and offering support to those who use drugs.

The school endeavours to promote the wellbeing of individuals by:



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- a) Providing a policy with fair and transparent procedures for dealing with substance use issues and complying with our statutory requirements.
 - b) Facilitating a safe and healthy environment
 - c) Promoting positive health behaviours through:
 - i. Increasing knowledge about health
 - ii. Promoting the self-esteem of individuals
 - iii. Working with parents, students, and teachers and outside agencies.
 - d) Supporting students and their families who are affected by substance use, referral of students and their families to external agencies etc
- Our Lady's College does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the school, or on outside activities or in non-school time by any member of the school community.
 - Our Lady's College does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco in the school or on school activities by any student.
 - Our Lady's College does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances. Students may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only and use in accordance with the schools' Medication Policy.¹
 - Students who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school long term must inform the school (refer to the Schools' Medication Policy).
 - The School must be informed if a student has a medical condition and relevant teachers, e.g. P.E. teacher must be informed also.
 - A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine.
 - Chemicals in school laboratories will be only those that are required by the DES for the delivery of the revised Science Curriculum at Junior Cycle and the Chemistry/Biology/Physics Curricula at Senior Cycle and will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher's supervision.

¹ See OLCG Medication Policy



SECTION 2 Substance Use Education

The aim of the Student Substance Use Education Programme:

SPHE for Junior Cycle / RSE / RE for Senior Cycle

The aim of this programme is to give young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes to appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and relate these to their choices about substance use, both now and in their future lives.

(a) Parents

The school recognises that parents are the primary carers and educators of their children, and it is essential that parents support any prevention strategy. The Parents Association may invite appropriate guest lecturers on substance education meetings annually as deemed appropriate, in consultation with school management.

Visiting Speakers: Speakers may be invited to support the programme from time to time. Any visits from external speakers should be properly planned and part of overall SPHE programme². Visiting Speakers are expected to work within the norms and ethos of Our Lady's College.

(b) Staff

- Teachers involved in SPHE will be given the opportunity to avail of training in group facilitation skills and personal development.
- While trained teachers are in the best position to carry out illegal substance use education, it may sometimes be appropriate to use an outside speaker to supplement or reinforce the work done in class.

(c) Students

- Junior Cycle students receive Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) which includes a Substance Use module. A minimum of 4 class periods per year will be dedicated to issues of substance use for Junior Cycle students
- Where opportunities arise to examine Substance Use issues by teachers teaching other subjects (e.g. Religion, Science subjects, P.E., Home Economics

² See the OLCG SPHE Policy



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etc) are invited to use these opportunities to support the Drug Education Programme in OLCG and to reinforce the core elements of this policy with the students.

- In Senior Cycle, Religious Education, Science and Health Education teachers will deliver the Substance Use Education module.

SECTION 3 School Rules

Our Lady's College does not accept or tolerate the possession of banned or controlled substances or the misuse of non-controlled substances. Cases involving substance misuse or supply on the premises are considered to be very serious infringements of the College's regulations as well as being an offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1977, which is a criminal offence.

Smoking:

- a. The legal right of all to a smoke free environment is affirmed by the College in accordance with the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002-2015.
- b. Smoking is prohibited at all times in the school, on the school premises, on school activities or during any school related activity, in the vicinity of the school and while in school uniform.

Alcohol:

The possession, sale and consumption of alcohol by students in the school, on the school premises, on school activities or during any school related activity and while in school uniform is STRICTLY prohibited at any time.

Illegal Substances:

The possession, use and the supply of illegal drugs or any drug paraphernalia etc, either in the school, on the school premises, on school activities, during any school related activity and while in school uniform, by members of the school community is STRICTLY prohibited³.

OLCG expressly bans the use or possession of Aerosols on the school grounds, on the school property or in any other place where the school activities are being organised.

³ See OLCG Suspension & Expulsions Policy



SECTION 4 Sanctions for Substance Use

The Board of Management has the right to sanction students in accordance to with the college's Code of Behaviour and within the guidelines set down in the Suspensions & Expulsions Policies.

The Principal will fully investigate the incident.

At the discretion of the Principal, the school will liaise with any appropriate outside authority and seek advice or assistance as it deems appropriate to its investigation.

A written record of the investigation will be kept.

On completion of the investigation, disciplinary action and / or sanctions will be implemented which may include an oral warning, a written warning, suspension and expulsion.

If a student is suspended from school, procedures as outlined in the College's Code of Behaviour and Suspensions Policy will be followed. When the student is returning from Suspension, the student and her parent(s) will be met by the Principal/Deputy Principal to discuss the conditions of her return to the school and must provide evidence from a qualified professional to verify that they are drugs free prior to being permitted to return to school.

If a student is expelled from the College, the school will comply with the procedure as outlined in the Education Act (1998) and in the Education Welfare Act (2000) and will inform the EWO.

The Board of Management reserves the right to investigate if other interventions and supports might be deemed necessary from time to time up to and including the use of the Drugs Squad, Sniffer Dogs and random Drugs Testing to ensure the Health & Safety of the full school community is protected fully.

SECTION 5



The involvement and roles of various parties in an incident investigation

1. Informing Parents/Guardians

In the event of formal allegations being brought against students, the parents/guardians will be entitled to copies of all documentation related to the incident. In the event of suspension/expulsion the parents/guardians will be entitled to the reason for the schools decision and will be informed of their right of appeal the Board of Managements' decision under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998).

2. Informing Gardaí

All incidents of the breach of the Code of Behaviour will be notified to the Garda Síochána.

3. Searches

The school has a legal obligation to keep its property drug free and therefore retains the right to search any part of school property if there is reasonable cause to believe a substance in breach of this policy may be obtained therein. Two members of staff must be present during any form of search. Students will be given the option to handover any substance prior to a search. Garda may be called to conduct a search of any school member should illegal activity be suspected.

4. Dissemination

- Initially, all parents/guardians will receive a copy of the policy. They are encouraged to discuss the policy with their daughter.
- The policy will be added to the list of those policies available for parents/guardians on request.
- Students will be made aware of the policy through the substance use education programme.
- Parents of incoming students will be given a copy of the policy on registration.
- Staff will be aware of the policy through staff meetings and thereafter through the staff handbook.
- The Substance Use Policy will be available on Our Lady's College Galway website

SECTION 6 Procedure for Review, Monitoring and Evaluation



The school will monitor, review and evaluate the policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices. This review will be consistent with the whole school planning process.

SECTION 8 Implementation

This policy is operational from: Date of Ratification

SECTION 9 Review

Annual review

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Reporting a Substance Misuse Incident

APPENDIX 2: The National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008

APPENDIX 3: DES Circulars pertaining to Substance Use Policies