



MONAGHAN INSTITUTE
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
CAVAN AND MONAGHAN EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD
BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA AN CHABHÁIN AGUS MHUINEACHÁIN

SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board Colleges Substance Misuse Policy

1. Rationale

The central objective of our Substance Misuse Policy is the welfare, safety, care and protection of students in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare Act 2000) and, in the case of students over 18 years of age, in common law. This reflects the need for CMETB to assist students in dealing with the many challenges affecting their health and well-being. Exposure to alcohol, drugs, tobacco and other substances is part of this reality.

2. Characteristic Spirit

Monaghan Institute's mission is to deliver excellence in further education and training so that students, staff and the wider community can achieve their potential.

The underlying philosophy is one of concern and caring for students.

3. Scope of Policy

3.1. This policy applies to all colleges and centres for education established and maintained by Cavan and Monaghan Training Board (CMETB). The policy applies to the whole community of Monaghan Institute with the exclusion of staff who are governed by the CMETB Workplace Substance Abuse Policy. The policy will apply at all times during normal college hours and during times in which students and those who accompany them are involved in college-related activities.

3.2. This policy relates to any substance that changes the way the body functions mentally, physically and emotionally. A drug or substance (as used in the context of this policy) is any chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels. This includes illegal and prescription drugs, alcohol, tobacco, legal 'highs', medicines and solvents etc. which all come under the general heading of drugs.

3.3. Definition of College-Related Activities

The term 'college-related activities' applies to any activities on the college premises, on the way to and from college, lunchtime and breaks and during any college/centre related activities in any location outside the college/centre where students are deemed to be participating in college related activities, representing the college or working as part of a college programme.

4. Aims and Objectives of Policy

- To provide a safe and secure environment within which the educational development of every student can take place.
- To protect each student and staff member in the college, in an atmosphere of caring and concern, from the potentially harmful effects of alcohol and/or any substance defined as a drug.
- To provide clear guidelines in regard to the use of alcohol and/or other substances by students.
- To ensure that, other than possession of and use of prescribed drugs in accordance with the instructions of a medical practitioner, no student will have possession of, use, sell, supply or attempt to sell or supply to others on the college premises, on the way to or from college or on college-related activities as defined in this policy.

5. Relationship to other policies

This policy operates in conjunction with other Monaghan Institute and Cavan and Monaghan ETB policies:

- Monaghan Institute Student Code of Conduct
- Monaghan Institute Child Protection Policy

- CMETB Administration of Medications in Schools/Colleges Policy
- CMETB/Monaghan Institute Suspensions and Expulsions Policy
- Monaghan Institute Health and Safety Policy
- Monaghan Institute Critical Incident Management Policy

This list is not exhaustive and may be added to from time to time as the need arises.

6. Relevant Legislation

A range of legislation applies to the operation of this policy including:

- Health Act (1947)
- Poisons Act (1961)
- Medical Preparations Regulations (1970)
- Misuse of Drugs Act (1977, 1984)
- EU and other international regulations
- Criminal Justice Act (1994)
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Acts (2005-2012)

The Road Traffic Act (1961) prohibits the use of mechanical vehicles while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

7. Operation of the Policy

Part 1 – Alcohol and Drugs

7.1. Definition of Substance or Drug

A drug can be defined as any chemical that causes change in the way a person functions either mentally, physically or emotionally.

A drug or substance (as used in the context of this policy) is any chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels.

Drugs or substances may be addictive and illegal as well as potentially harmful for an individual. Misuse occurs when the use of the drug (legal or illegal) is harmful to the physical, mental or social wellbeing of an individual, group or society. Prescribed drugs, when taken other than as prescribed, can be harmful to the person for whom they have been prescribed or to other(s) for whom they have not.

It is generally accepted that tobacco and alcohol are the most widely abused

drugs. However, substances such as cannabis, ecstasy, magic mushrooms, solvents, cocaine, heroin as well as synthetic drugs such as Ecstasy, LSD, methamphetamine etc. are increasingly becoming a problem in our community. It has been recognised that drug use has serious negative effects on the educational experience, performance and attainment of students. There are many short-term and long-term effects of drug use.

7.2. Substance or Alcohol use or Personal Possession

- Possession or consumption of alcohol or other substances defined as a 'drug' in the policy, in college buildings, on the college premises or by students while they are engaged in any college-related activities is expressly forbidden.
- Students found with alcohol or another drug for their own consumption or suspected of being under the influence of any or either, will be disciplined under the College's Student Code of Conduct. Sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence.

7.3. Student possessing with intent to supply substances in college

- Following evidence of any student involved in selling or distributing illicit substances on college premises, his/her activities will be immediately reported to the Gardaí.
- The student will be suspended in accordance with the Code of Behaviour, including the Suspensions and Expulsions Policy and Procedures, pending a decision by the Board of Management.

7.4. A limited number of staff will be involved in the management of suspected or confirmed drug incidents. Staff will be informed on a "need to know" basis. The Director or Deputy Director will hold all written records confidentially. Parents/Guardians of students under 18 years of age will be informed sensitively, and support will be offered to them. In the case of illegal drugs, the Director or a Deputy Director will contact the Garda Liaison Officer, and the Gardaí will deal with any drugs or drug paraphernalia found in accordance with Criminal Law.

7.5. Pastoral support will be offered in response to all incidents. If a student has a problem with substance misuse, referral to outside agencies will be recommended.

7.6. Parents/Guardians of students under 18 years, staff and other students involved in the incident will be offered support. Confidentiality is a complex issue. It is important that the limits of confidentiality are discussed with students before any disclosure is made. The well-being and welfare of the student and teacher must be a primary focus.

7.7. The Director or a Deputy Director will handle all media enquiries. They will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the college policy and

procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.

7.8. Management of Students Suspected of being under the influence of a Drug (including alcohol)

- Should a member of staff suspect that a student is under the influence of a substance, they will ensure that the student is not left unaccompanied at any time.
- The assistance of another member of staff will be sought, if appropriate and practicable, so that the safety of all students involved is not compromised.
- Medical assistance will be sought, where necessary.
- If the student is aged under 18yrs, his or her parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible.
- If the parents/guardians of a student aged under 18yrs are not available, a staff member will accompany the student to hospital, if necessary.
- The student may be suspended from college.
- The college may require a medical certificate on return to college.
- The student should make an appointment with the Director or a Deputy Director to discuss any ongoing or follow-up treatment required, integration back into the college community and any supports recommended. In the case of a student aged under 18, the parent or guardian of that student will make the appointment and accompany the student to the meeting with the Director or Deputy Director.
- The duration of the absence will be determined by the nature of the substance taken; the level of dependency; recommendations from external professionals and arrangements with parents/guardians if the student is under 18yrs.

In the event of returning to college:

- The student will receive an appropriate caution/sanction under the College Code of Conduct.
- A letter confirming this will be sent to the student or to his/her parents/guardians if the student is under 18yrs of age.
- The Garda Liaison Officer may be notified if it is deemed a criminal offence has been committed.
- The college reserves the right to request that the student be screened for drug use on a periodic basis as part of an agreed return to college process. Where a student is under 18 years of age, the college will request the parent/guardian to arrange screening.
- A formal written report will be made by the member(s) of staff involved.

7.9. Disciplinary Procedures

- The protection and safety of students who have breached the College Code of Conduct in relation to the use of potentially harmful substances is a priority. However, the use of such substances cannot be condoned and students who offend will be disciplined in accordance with the relevant sections of the College's Code of Conduct.
- A programme of support will be recommended for the student. The college will insist that if the student is to remain in the college, they must participate in the agreed programme of support.
- A student who continues to misuse substances may be suspended or expelled from the college following due process.
- A student who supplies illegal/illicit substances to another person(s) in the college will be suspended or expelled from the college following due process. In the event that the incident is deemed a criminal offence, An Garda Síochána will be notified.
- Illicit substances confiscated in the college will be passed on to the appropriate authorities for identification purposes.

7.10. Medication

- Medication will not be issued by college staff. If a student becomes unwell at college, their emergency contacts - or parents/guardians in the case of a student aged under 18yrs - will be contacted and asked to take the student home.
- The CMETB Administration of Medication in Colleges Policy governs the administration of medicines in the case of students with on-going medical conditions.
- If a student needs to take medication on a regular basis during college hours, they or their parents/guardians (if the student is under 18 yrs) should inform the relevant course co-ordinator or the guidance counsellor.

Part 2. Smoking

7.11. The Board of Management is obliged to ensure that the terms of the Public Health Tobacco Act 2002 and the Public Health Tobacco Amendment Act 2004, are implemented in college.

- Smoking is expressly forbidden in the college building and on the college premises (except in the designated smoking area). Students found smoking on the college premises (except in the designated smoking area) will be cautioned and may be disciplined if the caution is unheeded or the behaviour persists.
- The use of electronic smoking devices 'vaping' is prohibited in all CMETB college premises

7.12. Disciplinary Action

- A student, who is found smoking by a member of staff in the college

building, will be cautioned and advised that smoking is only permissible in the designated smoking area. The incident will be reported to the Director and the behaviour monitored by course co-ordinators/tutors.

- If the behaviour persists, disciplinary action will be decided upon by the Director and/or Deputy Director in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. If the student is under 18yrs, their parents/guardians will be contacted.

8. Training & Development

8.1. Staff

- The College will facilitate training for relevant staff through agencies such as An Garda Síochána, Cavan and Monaghan Drugs and Alcohol Service or the HSE.
- Staff will be offered drug information and awareness training.
- Specific training will be made available to key staff in relation to managing drug-related incidents.
- First Aid training will be made available to staff.

8.2. Students

- The College provides Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug information and advice (leaflets, signs, informal briefing talks)
- Educational programmes from the community and visiting speakers may build on and enhance existing college information provided

9. Availability of Policy

This policy is available to staff, students and their parents/guardians (if student is under 18 yrs), as well as persons who work in the college on a part-time and/or temporary basis. It applies to all persons who encounter the college or its staff or students when engaged in college-related activities. New staff will be informed of the policy when they take up employment in the college. The policy will be published on the college website and it will be summarised in the student handbook

10. Review of Policy

- This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually on behalf of the Board of Management, by the Director. The practical application of the policy during the preceding year, its efficacy in preventing the use of drugs, alcohol or other substances and an assessment of the needs of students and staff in regard to education and awareness about use of these, will form part of the review process. Results of this review will be submitted to CMETB.

- The policy may be reviewed periodically by CMETB, in light of emerging legislation and circulated Guidelines from the Department of Education and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and advice received from other agencies such as Tusla, HSE, Cavan and Monaghan Drugs and Alcohol Service.

This policy was approved by the Board of Management of Monaghan Institute on 23 March 2021.