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Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim
Education and Training Board

NORTH CONNAUGHT COLLEGE of FURTHER EDUCATION SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

NORTH CONNAUGHT COLLEGE of FURTHER EDUCATION

SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

This Policy relates to alcohol, tobacco and drug use - and any such substance that may be deemed a risk to the person or others.

Introduction

The Board of Management of North Connaught College is publishing this document as the official substance misuse policy. MSLETB as patron of the College has approved this publication. The policy has been drawn up and accepted by the Principal, Staff, Board of Management and Students. It is necessary that all involved work together to implement this policy. It is vital that all stakeholders actively work with the college to implement this policy to ensure students' health and safety. In this policy "drug" means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The College recognises that drugs both legal and illegal are available in society in general, and that the College has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents.

College Mission Statement

North Connaught College of Further Education is a College where students are encouraged to actively participate in a Learning Environment, where each individual is supported, respected as unique and where every effort is made to develop knowledge and skills appropriate to their needs.

The Substance Misuse Policy helps to set the standards that the College community aspires to; students and staff work together to continue to develop the College and maintain an atmosphere in which all individuals feel safe.

College Position - Rationale

- The College does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the College, or in the case of college related activities by any member of the college community.
- The College does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances.
- Students may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only.
- Students whose medical condition requires them to take long term medication during college time are advised to inform the college in the interests of health and safety. Medication that must be stored on the premises must be clearly labelled and guidelines for correct use attached to the packaging.
- A student or tutor may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter "medicine unless in a medical emergency.
- Specialist chemicals/treatments will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under tutor supervision.

This policy is focused in four key areas:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education/Information.
2. Training and Staff Development.
3. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug related incidents.
4. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation.

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes

North Connaught College of Further Education's educational aims in relation to alcohol, tobacco and drug education are:

- To increase the self-esteem and confidence of our students.
- To equip our students with personal and social skills.
- To enable our students to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions.
- To provide clear and age appropriate information on drugs.
- To minimise the harm caused by drug abuse by offering supportive interventions.
- These aims will be achieved by:
 - Staff, students and Board working as a 'health aware' community
 - Outside speakers are used where appropriate.
 - Student Drug Education will be achieved through:
 - This policy document
 - Ongoing advice and information sessions.

2. Training & Development

Staff

- Staff will be informed of the policy and it will be reviewed by staff on a regular basis.
- All staff will be offered drug information and awareness training regularly. Specific training will be made available to key staff in relation to managing drug related incidents.
- First Aid training will be made available to all staff regularly.

Students

- The policy will be made available for viewing on the College website.
- Information regarding the policy will be carried out during induction week in September.

Board of Management

- The College will provide opportunities to attend information evenings and workshops in relation to substance misuse.
- The Board will be consulted and kept informed of the policy and will be involved in the review process of the policy.

3. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug related incidents

We acknowledge that in all situations involving drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the student, the needs of the College community, the reputation of the College and legal considerations.

A critical incident management group will be established to investigate suspected cases of substance misuse. This will be made up of Senior and Middle management.

Steps to be taken by a teacher if an alcohol or a drug related incident arises –

- Take steps to secure the health and safety of the group and the individuals involved in the incident.
- Make contact with and if possible, send for the Principal, Deputy Principal or Class Tutor(s): whichever is available at the particular time.
- Ask for, collect and secure any substances or paraphernalia associated with the incident if such are in evidence (remember only the Gardai have the authority to search an individual)
- Complete a full report of the incident and give it to the Principal.

Investigating Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs Related Incidents -

The following steps will be taken in managing and investigating a substance misuse incident.

- Take time to listen and assess before responding.
- Separate fact from rumour.
- When it is apparent that there is an immediate danger to students or the school community, the College reserve the right to suspend or to remove temporarily from the College any student involved in a suspected incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident.
- All incidents involving the use of drugs will be investigated immediately or as soon as practicable and a report will be completed. All written records/reports will be held confidentially by the Principal or Deputy Principal and/or Critical Incident Management Group.
- All steps required to fully investigate and assess any misuse incident will be taken in whatever time is deemed necessary by the College.
- Statements will be sought from all persons involved, concerned with and having knowledge of the incident and these statements will be recorded. All written records will be held confidentially in line with GDPR by the Principal.

- The College will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation, including all communications and documents associated with the incident.
- The College will take possession of any banned or prohibited substance and drug paraphernalia associated with a misuse incident, carefully recording such items and holding them pending completion of the investigation. Any drugs/substances which are found or confiscated will be dealt with by the Gardai.
- In the case of illegal drugs the Principal or Deputy Principal will contact the Gardai.
- The College may liaise with any appropriate outside authority and seek advice and assistance, as it is deemed appropriate.

The involvement and role of various parties in the incident investigation

The Principal is the person responsible for all matters relating to this area. She/he may nominate the Deputy Principal, or other nominated staff to act on his/her behalf in the investigation of the substance misuse incident. The Critical Incident Management Group will also be involved.

Support

In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered. If a student has a problem then referral will be recommended – contact with the local HSE will be advised. 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 wellbeing and welfare of the student and staff must be a primary focus.

Media Enquiries

The Principal/Senior management will handle all media enquiries. It is the policy that media enquiries involving a substance misuse incident will be handled as follows:

- The College will not comment on any individual matter when an investigation is in progress other than to outline its policy and procedures for managing incidents.
- In the interest of the College's reputation the BOM may clarify the College's position regarding an incident after the investigation has been concluded.

Disciplinary Procedures

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the college rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. These will be consistent with college rules (see Attendance and Participation Guidelines)

4. Monitoring the Policy, Review and Evaluation

Monitoring

The Policy will be monitored regularly to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the College. The areas of:

- Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents

will be reviewed.

Evaluation

Staff, students and the Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for one year. Again the two specified areas above will be evaluated.

Dissemination of Policy

Copies of this policy are available on the college website.

Copies will be given to all new students as part of their induction to the College.

As a condition of enrolment students are required to sign the agreement which will be copied and maintained in the College records. This agreement is part of induction week where policies and procedures workshops are conducted for all students. A separate sheet is available for any students who are under 18 upon registration (parental consent).

Signed: _____Dara Mulvey_____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____9th November 2022_____

Review Date: November 2024