

Policy on the Management of Substance Abuse by Students at Dainfern College

Updated November 2018

“The Policy on the Management of Substance Abuse by Students at Dainfern College” is based on the National **“Policy Framework for the Management of Drug Abuse by Students in Schools and in Public Further Education & Training Institutions”**, which was published as a General Notice in the Government Gazette dated 13 December 2002 and clarified in Government Gazette dated 4 May 2007.

The Policy has been written in keeping with the current medical and psychological understanding of substance use and abuse by adolescent and pre-adolescent students.

1. Definitions

- “Dainfern College” is taken to include the Preparatory School and the High School.
- “The School” is taken to mean Dainfern College.
- “Substance” is taken to mean a chemical substance that produces a psychoactive effect. For the purpose of this policy it includes alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarette or vape liquids, herbal cigarettes, cannabis (marijuana, dagga), inhalants, pharmaceutical drugs, illicit drugs as well as image and performance enhancing substances.
- “Deputy Principal” refers to the High School Deputy Principal: Pastoral Care.
- “Staff” is taken to mean all individuals employed by the School.
- “Student” is taken to mean any child enrolled at Dainfern College.
- “Disciplinary Committee” refers to the committee of staff members tasked with dealing with serious misconduct as outlined in the Preparatory School’s Code of Conduct and the High School’s Code of Conduct.
- “Declaration” refers to the form, either digital or physical, that High School Students and their parents/guardians are asked to sign to acknowledge that they are familiar with this Policy, that the Student may be required to undergo Substance screening and that this screening is for the parents’ account.

2. Introduction

The School recognises that:

- A safe and disciplined learning environment is one of the critical elements to the successful delivery of quality education and acknowledges the role played by Substance use and abuse in undermining this.
- Available evidence indicates that school communities are particularly vulnerable and Substance use by students is on the increase in schools.
- There is a high correlation between Substance abuse and other antisocial and high-risk behaviour, including dishonesty, theft, violence and gangsterism.

- Purely punitive approaches to Substance abuse can only produce part of the solution.
- Substance abuse is detrimental to individuals on social, physical, emotional and psychological levels.

3. Aims of the Policy

The Policy aims:

- To help and support not only those Students who abuse Substances, but also the majority of Students and Staff who do not use Substances but who may be affected by the usage of Substances by others.
- Not to condemn Students who use Substances, but to ensure that appropriate support is provided to Students who require help for Substance-related problems.
- To outline the effective prevention, management and treatment plans for Substance use, misuse and dependency.
- To ensure a supportive environment, ever mindful of the rights of Students with Substance use, abuse or dependency problems, as well as other Students, Staff and members of the School community.

4. Guiding Principles of the Policy

In dealing with all incidents involving the use and/or abuse of Substances, the School shall endeavour to adhere to the following principles:

- The possession, use or distribution of illegal Substances, and the inappropriate possession, use or distribution of legal Substances, is not acceptable at Dainfern College. This message should be clearly and consistently communicated to the School community.
- Any action taken should be consistent with the Christian ethos of the School and of the School's desire to develop and maintain a safe and supportive environment that values forgiveness and human dignity.
- Intervention should be primarily aimed at providing support, restoring health, addressing underlying psychological issues and preventing relapse.
- All information relating to Substance use, misuse or dependency by a Student, should be treated sensitively and in accordance with the School's ethos and values.
- In cases of Substance use and/or abuse, parents/guardians of Students should be informed and involved at the earliest possible opportunity in all attempts to assist the Student.

5. Education and Prevention Measures

Education of students

The objective of preventive education is to reduce the likelihood of experimentation with Substances by providing information about the dangers of their use and misuse, as well as to reduce the stigma attached to Substance use, misuse and dependency. It is to encourage those who are experiencing problems to get the help they need.

Substance education should ensure that Students acquire age- and context-appropriate knowledge and skills in order for them to adopt and maintain life skills and behaviour that will protect them from Substance use, misuse and dependency.

Education of parents/guardians

Education and information on Substance use, misuse and dependency should be made available to all parents/guardians of Students, as well as Students themselves. Parents' and Students' attention should be brought to this Policy on the Management of Substance Abuse upon first enrolment at Dainfern College High School and whenever necessary thereafter.

Education of staff

Training should be provided for all Staff about Substance use, misuse and dependency management and support. Staff who teach, coach or mentor Students should also be trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of Substance use. The School should ensure that all Staff are aware of the contents of this Policy.

6. The School's High School Substance Screening Programme

Substance screening forms part of a structured intervention in the High School that aims to educate all High School Students and rehabilitate Students who are using and abusing Substances.

Substance screening will be implemented in an environment that safeguards personal rights relating to privacy, dignity and bodily integrity. The urine specimen for the five-panel Substance screen should be collected in such a way that the Student's dignity and privacy are maintained and the integrity of the sample is not compromised.

Blanket screening

The High School will carry out blanket Substance screening of High School Students throughout the year. An entire grade will be tested at a time. The screening will only be announced on the morning of the screening in order to ensure credible and effective results.

The blanket screening of a grade is aimed at creating a Substance-free culture within the High School and empowering Students to say "no" to Substances.

Substance screening of individual high school students

The Principal and/or his/her delegate has the right to administer a Substance screening test or arrange for a Substance screening test to be administered to a High School Student who is reasonably suspected of using Substances.

If a Substance screen of an individual Student is considered necessary, it should be carried out according to the following procedure:

- Any Staff that have reason to believe that a Student is using Substances should discuss this, in confidence, with the School Counsellor or Deputy Principal.
- The School Counsellor or Deputy Principal will be responsible for making contact with the Student, collecting relevant information and making an assessment of the situation.
- Where appropriate, the School Counsellor or Deputy Principal will ask the Principal for permission to proceed with the administration of a Substance screening test.
- The Principal, in conjunction with the School Counsellor or Deputy Principal, will decide in each case as to when and how the parents are informed. The School Counsellor/Deputy Principal should ensure that the Student's parents/guardians have signed the Declaration acknowledging that Substance screening tests may be conducted. If there is no such Declaration in place the Counsellor/ Deputy Principal must make contact with the parents in order to inform them.

Procedure following a positive substance screening

If a High School Student tests positive on a Substance screen test:

- The results of the Substance screening will be made known to the Principal, the School Counsellor/Deputy Principal, the Student and the parents/guardians of the Student.
- Together with the School Counsellor or Deputy Principal, the Student and the Student's parents/guardians will discuss an intervention that aims to address the reasons why the Student is using Substances and to put in place an appropriate management plan to ensure the Student is rehabilitated.

- Measures will be put in place to support the Student so that he or she does not continue to use Substances. This process may involve a referral for a complete psychological assessment and/or a formal Substance evaluation by a professional evaluator.
- Follow-up Substance screening will be part of this intervention.
- The Student will be cautioned that if he or she tests positive on a follow-up Substance screening, the Counsellor or Deputy Principal will have no option but to report the incident to the Principal, who may decide to refer this to the Disciplinary Committee.

7. The Possession, Trafficking, Supplying and Selling of Substances on Campus

The possession of Substances, trafficking of Substances, supplying Substances to other Students, offering Substances to other Students and the sale of substances to other Students on the College campus are serious offences because of the threat they provide to the safety of other Students in the School.

In the case of a Student being discovered in possession of a Substance the Principal will inform the parents and will immediately refer the Student to the Disciplinary Committee, who may make the recommendation to suspend or expel the Student and/or notify the relevant state authorities.

When a Disciplinary Committee finds a Student to be reasonably suspected of deliberately selling or supplying Substances on campus, the School has an obligation to report this to the relevant state authorities.

Substance searches

In instances where a member of Staff has reason to suspect that a High School Student has in their possession a Substance, he/she should approach the Principal to discuss the situation. If the Principal believes that there is reasonable suspicion that the Student is in possession of a Substance, permission will be given to proceed with a search in accordance with the procedure outlined below:

- The search must be carried out by a person of the same gender as the Student.
- The search should take place in the presence of the Student concerned, a person of their choice to support them and a second adult witness of the same gender as the Student.

In the case of a search finding a Student to be in possession of a Substance, the Principal will be informed. The Principal will then inform the parents, refer the matter to the Disciplinary Committee, who may make the recommendation to suspend or expel the Student and/or notify the relevant state authorities.

8. Disciplinary Intervention

On occasion, it may be necessary for the Principal to request the Disciplinary Committee to investigate instances of Substance abuse in the School. In such cases, an investigation will be conducted and further steps may be taken in accordance with the School's Disciplinary Policy. In deciding on the sanctions, the Disciplinary Committee will consider each case on its individual merits, taking into account:

- The nature of the incident.
- The Student's School and family history.
- The Student's cultural background.
- The Student's mental health.
- Any other relevant information.

The following sanctions will serve as guidelines for the Disciplinary Committee when deciding on how best to deal with incidents of Substance abuse:

1st Offence

- Referral for complete Substance and psychological assessment.
- Suspension from School for a period of up to one term.
- Follow-up Substance screening as part of a structured intervention to prevent continued use of Substances.
- A final warning for Substance abuse.

2nd Offence

- Expulsion.

Students who have experienced or are experiencing problems as a result of Substance use, misuse or dependency will be entitled to appropriate assistance, and will not be denied the opportunity to receive an education or the right to reintegration back into the School community. However, in cases where the Student does not wish to make use of such help offered to them, the School will have no choice but to take the necessary action, which will be expulsion.

9. The School's Amnesty Programme

The School will support any individual who voluntarily comes forward, is honest about their Substance use and shows a willingness to receive help with a Substance abuse problem.

A Student who approaches the School Counsellor or other member of Staff and asks for assistance with a Substance use or abuse problem will not be subjected to any disciplinary action. The matter will be treated as confidential, provided the Student agrees to the management plan outlined by the School Counsellor. This management plan will include:

- A contract to discontinue Substance use.
- Counselling to address underlying issues.
- Consent to follow-up Substance screening.

In cases where the Student does not comply with the management plan, the Counsellor will have no option but to bring the matter to the attention of the Student's parents and the Principal, who may decide to refer the matter to the Disciplinary Committee for further investigation.

10. Acknowledgement by High School parents/guardians

On admission to Dainfern College High School or at a later stage as necessary, High School parents/guardians and High School Students will be asked to sign a Declaration stating that:

- The cost of Substance screening of a Student is for the parent/guardian's account.