



Cross & Passion College, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare
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Principal: Joe Leonard
Deputy Principals: Aisling Reigh, Sabrina Mills

Cross & Passion College Substance Use and Misuse Policy March 2026

Mission Statement

We, the community of Cross and Passion, acknowledge the central importance of caring relationships with each other, in the creation of a safe learning environment where all are encouraged to grow, with dignity, to their full potential.

The energy and spirit of our school community are reflected in our values. We believe that in caring relationships our students learn to respect self and others, appreciate and develop their talents, and grow in awareness of Christian values as they develop into young adults.

DOMINE NOVERIM TE!

1. Rationale

Cross and Passion College is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school community in relation to substance use education. The school provides a safe, caring learning environment and empowers students with knowledge and skills to make healthy choices.

The school prohibits possession, use, or supply of illegal drugs, alcohol, and other prohibited substances while acknowledging that incidents may occur. This policy balances the welfare of individual students with the safety of the school community, following a harm reduction approach.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the school community on school premises and when representing the school on trips, matches, or other activities. Parents/guardians of students taking prescribed medication must inform the school office in writing.

3. Legislative Framework

- Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977-2016
- Children First Act 2015
- Child Care Act 1991
- Education Act 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)
- Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010

- Public Health (Tobacco) Acts 2002-2015

National Guidance

- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Túsla, 2017)
- Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (Túsla, 2019)
- Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery: National Drugs Strategy 2017-2025
- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DES, 2018-2023)
- Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB, 2008)

4. Relevant Policies

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Anti-Bullying (Bí Cineálta) Policy
- School Trips Policy
- Data Protection Policy

5. Definition of Terms

- Drugs: Any substance that, when ingested, causes change in physical state, behaviour, or mood.
- Prescribed medication: Medication taken by the person for whom it is prescribed by a medical professional.
- Over-the-counter (OTC) medication: Medication sold without prescription (e.g., paracetamol).
- Illegal drugs: Controlled substances under Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977-2016, including cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy, and novel psychoactive substances ("legal highs").
- Other substances: Alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes/vapes, nicotine pouches, snus, solvents, and non-prescribed performance-enhancing substances.

6. Drug Education

Cross and Passion College provides age-appropriate education through SPHE, RSE, Wellbeing, CSPE, RE, and PE programmes, incorporating Oide resources and materials aligned with Junior Cycle Wellbeing.

The school on occasion engages external agencies and offers in-service training for staff through professional development services.

Parents are partners in education and will be informed of programmes. The Parents' Association may arrange awareness evenings.

School counselling services are available to students and parents.

7. Management of prescribed and OTC medications

Students taking prescribed medication should do so at home where possible. If medication is required during school hours:

- Parents/guardians submit medication in original packaging to the school office with written instructions and care plan
- Medication stored securely in locked cabinet in school office
- Students self-administer under staff supervision
- Brief courses of medication (e.g., antibiotics) submitted with pharmacist instructions

Emergency medications (EpiPens, inhalers) follow individual care plans in line with DES guidance on Managing Medicines in Schools.

8. Prohibited Behaviours

The following are unacceptable in school or at school events:

- Smoking cigarettes/tobacco or bringing them to school
- Using e-cigarettes/vapes or bringing vaping equipment to school
- Using snus, nicotine pouches, or bringing them to school
- Supplying OTC medication to other students
- Attending school under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other substances
- Possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, or other prohibited substances
- Supplying, or possession with intent to supply, any substances
- Possession of drug paraphernalia

9. Management of Substance Misuse Incidents

Immediate Response

When a student is suspected to be under the influence of substances:

- Student removed from class to safe location
- Senior staff member (Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head/Guidance Counsellor) to assess student
- Parents/guardians contacted immediately and required to collect student
- Medical attention sought if necessary
- Designated Liaison Person (DLP) notified to assess for child protection/welfare concerns

Investigation Procedures

- All incidents formally documented using Incident Report Form (Appendix 1)
- Investigation conducted with fair procedures: student given opportunity to respond, right to be accompanied by support person
- Parents/guardians invited to meeting
- Confidentiality maintained on "need to know" basis
- Records stored securely in line with GDPR and school Data Protection Policy

Searching Procedures

Searches may only be conducted where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion:

- Two staff members present (same gender as student where practicable)

- Parents/guardians contacted immediately before or after search
- Student's dignity and rights respected
- Search limited to bags, lockers, outer clothing
- Comprehensive written record made
- Items found secured and documented

External Agency Contact

An Garda Síochána: The school will contact Gardaí where:

- Illegal substances are found or suspected supply/dealing occurs
- There are immediate safety concerns for the school community
- The Juvenile Liaison Officer pathway may be appropriate

Minor incidents (e.g., single cigarette, personal vape) follow progressive discipline without automatic Garda involvement.

Túsla: Substance misuse incidents will be assessed through a child protection lens. The DLP will make a Túsla referral where substance misuse indicates possible neglect, abuse, or child welfare concerns under Children First Act 2015.

HSE/Support Services: School will signpost to appropriate supports including HSE addiction services, Jigsaw mental health services, and local support agencies.

Evidence Management

The school will take possession of prohibited substances and paraphernalia:

- Items recorded with date, time, description, witness signatures
- Stored securely pending Garda collection or investigation completion
- Chain of custody maintained

Sanctions

Disciplinary measures will be proportionate, fair, and consistent with the Code of Behaviour:

- First minor incident (e.g., vaping): Confiscation, parent contact, suspension
- Repeated incidents: Suspension (1-3 days), behaviour contract, counselling
- Serious incidents (illegal drugs, supply): Immediate suspension pending investigation, possible expulsion recommendation to Board of Management

All suspensions follow procedures in Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Students and parents have right of appeal to Board of Management and onward to Education Appeals Committee (Section 29, Education Act 1998).

Support and Reintegration

- Pastoral and counselling support offered to all students involved
- Conditions for return may include: engagement with external counselling, regular check-ins with

- Year Head/Guidance Counsellor, behaviour monitoring
- Reintegration meeting with student, parents, and staff
- Note: Any drug screening would be voluntary, with informed consent, and only following professional advice

Media

The Principal manages all media queries, respecting student confidentiality and GDPR requirements.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management: Overall policy governance and review

Principal: Policy implementation, serious incident management, external liaison

Deputy Principal/Year Heads: Day-to-day incident response

DLP: Child protection assessment and Túsła liaison

All staff: Vigilance, immediate response, reporting

Parents/Guardians: Partnership in education and support

11. Communication

This policy is published on the school website, circulated to all parents/guardians, and sent to all staff.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Management, with input from stakeholders, or sooner following significant incidents or legislative changes.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Marie O'Neill, Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Joe Leonard, Principal

Appendix 1

Incident report form: Substance misuse

Name of reporting teacher:	Date:	Name(s) of student(s) involved:
Please identify the location, date, and time of the incident:		
Please describe the behaviour/incident of concern:		
Please describe the immediate actions you took:		
Signed: _____		Date: _____
Received: _____ (Principal/Deputy)		Date: _____