

# ESF Drug Policy

## **ESF Secondary Schools' Drugs Policy Mission Statement:**

We believe in the promotion of a healthy environment and responsible lifestyles for all members of the schools' communities.

### Aims:

- To provide a framework to facilitate consistency of policy and practice in managing drug issues across ESF secondary schools.
- To review and develop a programme of education designed to discourage substance misuse.
- To encourage the involvement of the whole school community in implementing a common drug policy.
- To provide clear and consistent guidelines for managing drug related incidents and issues.

### Duty of Care

**All staff have the legal responsibility to provide duty of care to all students in the school. We are considered to be 'in loco parentis' or having the duty to provide the type of care expected of parents. The priority is the safety of students.**

### **Student Entitlement**

Students are entitled to

- a safe and drug free environment
- have access to and an understanding of the ESF drug policy
- an appropriate health and drugs education programme
- a supportive and caring system for dealing with drug related problems

### **A. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality should be based upon the sharing of knowledge and assumes trust in each others' professionalism

1. Parents should be contacted at an early stage and it is hoped that Parents would contact the school if they have any concerns.
2. Form tutors should always be kept informed and fully involved in the process.
3. Where suspicions arise, teaching staff should be asked to monitor the behaviour of the student but do not always need to be made fully aware of the individual circumstances of the student. A standard pro-forma with a check-list of signs & symptoms to observe is useful. (See Appendix C)
4. Information should be passed on through the appropriate line management channels to the principal.
5. When a student has been positively identified as being involved in drug abuse, all subject teachers are kept fully informed and are part of the monitoring procedure.  
Other key personnel, such as the school nurse, should also be informed and involved.

6. If a student is withdrawn from school, all teaching staff are informed of the situation by the principal.
7. After a student is excluded from school, it is desirable that the student's form group discuss the issue in an appropriate way with the form tutor and/or the pastoral head. It may be appropriate for the pastoral head to discuss the issue with the whole year group.

## **B. Testing**

Drug testing forms a fundamental part of schools' procedure.

### **General points**

1. The decision to test is taken through consultation between pastoral head, his/her line manager, the Principal and the form tutor.
2. Parents should be informed by the school once the decision to test has been made.
3. Costs associated with testing should be borne by parents.
4. If testing is done in school, the school nurse should ensure that correct testing equipment is in place.
5. Schools must regularly remind parents of all school policies, including the drugs policy and seek their written agreement to these. It is suggested that this should be done on admission and again at the beginning of year 9 and year 12. We should consider translating these into other languages and displaying them on school websites.
6. Although random testing is probably not appropriate for our schools at present, we should investigate the idea for future consideration.

### **Procedure**

1. The decision to test is taken through consultation.
2. Parents are informed by the pastoral head that we would like to proceed with a drugs test. The student is then informed. In the case where parents cannot be contacted, the school could continue with the testing process.
3. In the case of a urine test, the pastoral head accompanies the student to the school nurse, who oversees the collection of the urine sample and the sample is taken to path lab by a secure method of delivery.
4. Alternatively, the pastoral head makes arrangements for the secure collection of a sample at the chosen path lab or hospital.
5. It is important that adequate safeguards are taken to ensure that the sample is taken in a secure way. It is therefore preferable for collection to take place in school.
6. After the results are received, the pastoral head should inform the student and his/her parents and discuss possible strategies.

### **C. Search Rights**

Students will only be searched in the case of reasonable suspicion. The school should aim to preserve the student's right to privacy; the student should not feel their rights are being infringed. Therefore the situation needs to be managed sensitively.

#### 1. What constitutes reasonable suspicion?

- Types of behaviour
- Association with those known to be at risk
- Seen to be involved in specific behaviour with money being exchanged
- Has been under observation for some time and classic symptoms of misuse have been noted ( see Appendix A )
- Information Received
- Has been named by other parties as being at risk or in possession of drugs

#### 2. Who has search rights?

- The pastoral head has the right to make a decision to search the student. The line manager, form tutor and parents should be consulted, beforehand if possible, and kept informed of proceedings.

#### 3. Conduct of the search

- The search should be conducted quietly in a private room in the presence of a witness.
- It is never appropriate to do a manual body search (ie pockets)
- If the student is not willing to empty bags or pockets, the pastoral head will contact the Principal and parents.

### **D. Procedures in case of Possession**

Procedure will vary depending on whether the student is trafficking drugs or not. Trafficking is defined as giving, but not necessarily selling, drugs to others. It can be established by the amount of drugs on the person, by the confession of the student themselves or by the allegations of others.

#### 1. If a student is found in possession of a quantity of suspicious substances:

- The Principal is informed and from thereon is responsible for the safe keeping of the substance(s).
- The Pastoral Head endeavours to establish whether the drugs found are for trafficking.
- The Principal makes a decision as to whether the police are informed.
- Parents are informed of the situation and asked to come into school.
- The Principal, Pastoral Head and Parents discuss the situation and the Principal decides on a course of action.

NB: In the case of students bringing illegal substances onto the school premises: parents will be asked to withdraw their child from the school.

#### 2. If the school is convinced that trafficking is not involved. The following actions could be taken (dependent upon the previous drug history of the student) :

- Student is suspended from school for a negotiated period of time.
- A drug test is taken.
- The pattern of drug use for that student is established,

- A drug counselling and rehabilitation programme is organised by Pastoral Head. This may involve outside agencies recommended by the school.
- Further action is outlined in the section on Support Networks & Aftercare.
- Regardless of what action is taken, Parents will be informed at an early stage.

3. If the school establishes that trafficking is involved :

- Parents will be informed immediately.
- The Principal inform the police and ask parents to withdraw the student from school.
- The school will offer the same support as outlined in 2d) & e) above.
- The school will not refer the student to another ESF school.

### **E. Support and Aftercare**

1. When a drug test proves positive, the following action may be taken:

- . The pattern of drug abuse is established with the student.
- . An interview is arranged with parents and an agreement made as to further action.
- . The principal, in consultation with pastoral head, will decide whether it is appropriate for the student to remain in school or to go home temporarily for a period of time.
- . An appropriate contract is negotiated between the student, school and parents which should include the following :

- Counselling from an expert recommended by the school (see appendix B )
- Follow up testing
- Classroom monitoring
- Medical Examination
- In-school counselling
- Sharing of information between all members of the support team, respecting confidentiality
- Appropriate support to ensure continued academic progress
- Time Scale for review (4 - 6 weeks )

- . At review the contract may be extended or changed. It may be appropriate at this point to ask the parents to withdraw the student from school. The Parents will be given information about help agencies and counselling regarding other schools.
- . Communication with other schools :

- There must be full disclosure of information between Pastoral Heads, if a child is referred to another ESF school. This should be in the form of a letter or phone call outlining the reasons for transfer.
- If a child goes to a non ESF school and references are required, recent problems should be alluded to sensitively. An opportunity to discuss with the student verbally should be offered.

2. When the test proves negative:

- The parents are invited to discuss the situation and the concerns that the Pastoral
- Head has for the student.
- The following strategies are negotiated and agreed upon:

- on-going monitoring by classroom teachers
- regular counselling in or outside school
- medical examination
- further testing

- A review is carried out by the Pastoral Head after 6 weeks. Parents and student are invited to evaluate the situation.