

## **The School Statement and Ethos**

It is a key aim of this College that Firhouse Community College be a safe and drug free place for all students.

### **Definition:**

**A drug is 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 the local community.

Firhouse Community College is committed to drugs education to meet the needs of students. It aims to prevent drug-use by students and offers support to those who use drugs to stop doing so. The College believes that the personal and social development of each member of the school community is important. We believe that students, teachers, parents need to work together on the issue of drugs education and that everyone's co-operation is essential to fulfil this policy.

## **The use of drugs in the College**

The possession, use or supply of drugs by any student in the College premises or environs, or on school trips is against the rules of this College. Drugs used properly for legitimate medicinal purposes are excepted provided the school is informed by the parent or guardians.

## **Drug Education Programmes**

The drugs Education Programme aims to:

- increase the self-esteem and confidence of the young people.
- Equip young people with personal and social skills.

- Enable young people to make informed, healthy and responsible choices.
- Provide honest and age appropriate information on drugs.
- Minimise the harm caused by drug-use by offering supportive interventions.
- Help all students learn to say no to drugs.

### **The School Approach- Counselling and Pastoral Care**

The pastoral care and counselling system is an important part of the College response to a drug incident. For some young people, their involvement with drugs may be masking some underlying difficulties and for others it may be a response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered.

In the case of a serious problem, referral to an appropriate service may be required. We acknowledge balance between the needs of the young person, the needs of the school community and the reputation of the school. In any incident involving the use of illegal drugs, parents will be informed by the College. It may also be necessary to inform the Gardai.

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

- Students found smoking on the school premises will be suspended for two days. Persistent offenders may incur a fine. Parents/guardians will be informed by letter.
- Students found in possession, using or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs will be removed from school immediately, accompanied by a parent or guardian. If the student is in obvious danger, medical personnel may be called to assist.
- Students found buying or selling any legal substance on the school premises will be removed from school immediately, accompanied by a parent or guardian. The Gardai may be informed.
- Students of the College involved in organising or facilitating the supply of alcohol or illegal substances to students of the College will be subjected to serious sanction. The Gardai may be informed.

- Any student involved in a drug related incident may be suspended from school and may only be allowed to return to school when a contract of future behaviour is negotiated and agreed by the student, parent/ guardians, Year Head and Principal.
- The student may be required to attend the school counsellor or other agreed counsellor.
- Disciplinary procedures will be followed if school rules are broken in respect of drugs up to and including expulsion.

### **Confidentiality**

The College will treat any information in confidence. Only those who need to know what occurred and what action has been taken will be informed. The well-being and welfare of the young person and the other students in the school will be the prime focus of the College.

### **The Healthy School**

The Healthy School flourishes in an environment where people feel valued and respected, and where there is genuine tolerance, fairness and support for those in difficulty. The Healthy School flourishes where parents and students support the aims of the College and work in harmony and respect with the teachers and management. Firhouse Community College aims to be such a school for its students.

### **The Student Journal**

The Student Journal is a valuable resource for both student and parents. It is a primary means of communication between parents and teachers. All student Journals must be kept in good condition and free from drawings, graffiti etc..Pages should never be removed from the journal. Failure to keep the Journal in good condition may result in the student being asked to replace it in the course of the school year, at their own cost.