



RCS

**Substance  
Use  
Policy**

2018

Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty, and fairness in which all in the school community can achieve their full potential.

**Ramsgrange  
Community  
School**

**Under the Joint Patronage:  
Le Cheile Schools Trust CLG & Waterford & Wexford ETB**

## **THE SCHOOL POSITION**

Ramsgrange Community School is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs. It is necessary that all involved work together to implement this policy. It is vital that parents/guardians actively work with the school to implement this policy to ensure their children's health and safety. In this policy "Drug" is defined as ***any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally.*** The School recognises that drugs both legal and illegal are available in the local community and that the School, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents.

## **THE SCHOOL ETHOS**

As stated in the School's mission statement, Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty, and fairness in which all in the school community can achieve their full potential. It also is committed to fostering the development of personal responsibility. This is the ethos which guides the Schools Substance Use Policy.

- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of drugs, as defined above, in the school, or during any school related activity by any member of the school community.
- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco (including E-Cigarettes, 'Vaping' or equivalent) in the school or on school activities by any student.
- The School does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances.
- Students may only have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use accompanied with written permission from parents/guardians. (see Appendix 1)
- Students who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school long term must inform school management in writing. (All medical forms to be completed in Appendix 1 and returned to the Principal)
- The School management must be informed in writing if a student has a medical condition and relevant teacher, e.g. P.E. teacher must be informed also.
- A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine.

- Chemicals in school laboratories will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher's supervision.

The policy is focused in four key areas:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.
2. Managing Drug Related Incidents.
3. Training and Staff Development.
4. The Role of the Parents

### **1. Alcohol, Tobacco ( including E-Cigarettes/Vapes or equivalent thereof) and Drug Education Programmes.**

The School is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programme for all students. Our educational aims 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:

1. Teachers are offered Drug Awareness training, through SPHE, and other relevant in-service courses. Resource materials are also available to staff regarding drug awareness.
2. Outside speakers are used where appropriate to reinforce the work done in class.
3. Parents/Guardians will be consulted on the need for drug education and will be informed of what is happening in the School. Drug information and drug awareness sessions are organised for parents.
4. Student Drug Education will be achieved through:
  - SPHE, LCA and TY Programmes
  - Outside speakers when/ where appropriate.

## **2. Assessing and Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, 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 school community, the reputation of the school and legal considerations.

**Assessing a drug incident:** If a drug incident (incidents involving, student use or possession of licit and illicit drugs at school or during school activities) is brought to the attention of a staff member, it is important to:

- Take time to listen and assess before responding.
- Separate fact from rumour.
- In situations of suspected use, possession or supply all details must be recorded and reported to School Management immediately.
- School Management must then complete a drug incident report.

### **Managing a drug incident**

1. Incidents will be reported to the Principal.
2. In the event of a drug incident, the school will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student or students involved and the welfare of the school community as a whole.
3. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed by the Principal.
4. The school reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school any student involved in a suspected drug incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident. Furthermore, the principles of the school's Code of Behaviour apply and following due investigation it may be necessary for the Board of Management to exclude such a student in very serious circumstances.
5. The Principal will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any drug incident and will take whatever time is deemed necessary to do this.
6. The Principal will inform the Gardai if any incident involves illegal activity.

7. The school recognises the importance in limiting, as far as is practicable, the number of people involved in investigating and managing an drug incident. It is the aim of the school to involve only those directly concerned with the student. In addition to the Principal, these may include the Deputy Principal, the Year Head, the Guidance Counsellor and specific staff directly involved with the incident.
8. The Principal, in the presence of a staff member, will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances and drugs paraphernalia associated with a drug incident, carefully recording all such items. All items will be handed to the Gardai.
9. The Principal, Deputy Principal or relevant Year Head will seek statements from all persons involved in, concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident and will record these statements.
10. The Principal will liaise with any appropriate outside authority, if necessary, and seek advice or assistance as is deemed appropriate in relation to the investigation of the incident. A record will be kept of all communications with outside agencies.
11. On completion of the preliminary investigation and in the event of an investigation continuing, the school will put the full particulars of the incident to the students concerned and their parents/guardians in the following manner:
  - a. Copies of all records deemed relevant to the position of the student concerned and to the nature of the complaints or allegations that a student is facing will be made available to the student and his/ her parent(s)/guardian(s). A student will be given an opportunity to make his/ her reply to the matters at issue and any representations that she/ he would wish to make or have made on his/ her behalf.
  - b. The school will allow the student concerned reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue and will take into account any response so made and any other relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.

12. The Principal shall inform the student and his/ her parents/ guardians of the school's findings by registered letter. If the investigation finds that the student is guilty of, or involved or implicated in, an incident, the Principal will indicate the penalty or sanctions imposed
13. The matter may be referred to the Board of Management for further consideration. The student/parent(s)/guardian(s) will again be given an opportunity to make a reply to the matters at issue. The decision of the Board will be conveyed by registered letter outlining where necessary procedures for appeal.
14. The school can, at its sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstances or representations that it considers should be taken into account.
15. The school will ensure that pastoral supports are offered to those affected by an incident of substance abuse.
16. The Principal or Deputy Principal will handle all media enquiries. They will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.

Note: Where the contents of this policy relate to the school's Code of Behaviour, the tenets of the Code will apply.

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. These will be consistent with the Code of Behaviour, where drug related incidents are regarded as gross misbehaviour and will be dealt with accordingly.

### **3. Training & Development:**

#### **Staff and Board of Management**

The School will facilitate drug information and awareness training for staff and Board of Management.

#### **Parents/Guardians**

The School will provide opportunities to attend drug workshops and information evenings. The School Substance Use Policy is available to all parents/guardians from the school and on the school website [www.ramsgrangecommunityschool.ie](http://www.ramsgrangecommunityschool.ie)

#### **Students**

The School will offer all students programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug education within the context of the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes.

### **4. Role of the Parents**

The school acknowledges the central role of parent(s)/guardian(s) in the implementation of this policy. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked:

- To acknowledge the importance of these programmes.
- To recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse.
- To assist and co-operate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

#### **Monitoring, Reviewing and Evaluating**

The school will monitor, review and evaluate the policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practice.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1

Prescription medication can only be stored/ administered in the school following a written request for the parents/guardians to the Principal.

This letter should request the Board of Management to authorise teachers to administer the medication. In doing so, the Board of Management must determine if the medication is such that a non-medical person may administer/supervise administration.

Please note that the Board of Management cannot require teachers to administer medication. However the Board of Management will request appropriate teachers to volunteer, authorise them to administer the medication and arrange training if required.

The Board of Management reserves the right, after due consideration, to refuse the request to administer medication.

### ***Request for Administration of Medication – Information and Consent***

This form includes the child's name, date of birth, weight, name of medication, condition for which medication is required, other medication the child takes regularly outside school, allergies, medication dosage, circumstances under which it should be administered, ability of child to self-administer the medication as well as emergency contact information.

Consent for information concerning the need for medication administration to be shared with school staff is also included. This information may be required if medical assistance is required for the child. Parents will also be asked to provide **a signed indemnity form.**



Where a child may require medication, ideally a minimum of two staff members who are willing to administer this will be identified to ensure cover during sick leave, course days, etc.. Parents will be informed of staff members who have agreed to administer the medication in question.

In the event that staff members willing to administer the particular medication cannot be identified, the Principal will discuss alternative options with the child's parents/guardians.

The Board of Management reserves the right to request written confirmation of medical advice from the child's doctor, including confirmation of the medication dose and circumstances when it should be given.

If the Board agrees that the medication can be stored and administered in school it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure that an adequate supply of medication is in stock, and that the medication has not passed its expiry date. In the event that medication passes its expiry date without being used, the child's parents/guardians will take responsibility for its safe disposal (usually by returning to the pharmacy).

Where possible medication should be self-administered by the pupil under adult supervision.

Verbal clarification by parents/guardians of how and when to administer the medication is also required.

Medication will usually be stored in a locked cupboard in the school office. However, where this should pose a hazard (e.g.: inhalers or adrenaline auto-injector which may be required urgently) medication will be stored in a sealed, transparent, unbreakable container labeled with the child's name.

The Principal must be informed immediately of any change in medication and/or dosage in writing. A change in dosage of the same medication does not require notification of the Board of Management. However, a change in medication will require a new notification of the Board of Management as outlined in paragraph 3. In either case the ***“Request for Administration of Medication – Information and Consent” form will need to be updated. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENTS/ GUARDIANS TO ENSURE THAT THE DOSAGE NOTED ON THE CONTAINER IN WHICH THEIR CHILD’S MEDICATION IS STORED IS ALSO AMENDED.***

A written record of all medication administered in the school will be maintained in the school. When medication is administered by staff to treat an emergency (allergic reaction, asthma attack, seizure, hypoglycemia, etc), parents will be notified by telephone. When administration is routine (e.g.: bronchodilator pre-PE in a child with exercise-induced asthma) a note will be placed in the child's homework notebook. It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to check for such a record.

Under certain circumstances, it may be appropriate for an older child to retain medication in their own possession, and take responsibility for self-administration (e.g.: an older child who would normally carry and use their own inhaler). A written request to the Board of Management together with documentation outlined in paragraph 3 is still required. Under these circumstances the school will not maintain a record of medication use. Because there is no record of the administration of such medication and because it is in possession of the child, staff cannot be held responsible if it is lost or misused.

Prescribed medication will only be administered to the child for whom it has been prescribed, in line with current legislation.

Arrangements for administration of medication to each pupil will be reviewed.

# Request for Administration of Medication

## Information & Consent

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of medication: \_\_\_\_\_

Dosage: \_\_\_\_\_

Condition for which medication required: \_\_\_\_\_

Under what circumstances medication should be given: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other medication being taken: \_\_\_\_\_

My child **CAN / CAN NOT** self-administer this medication. (Please circle the relevant answer)

GP name: \_\_\_\_\_ GP Phone no: \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> Emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile no: \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> Emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile no: \_\_\_\_\_

I consent for staff members in the school to administer/supervise administration of \_\_\_\_\_, in dosage of \_\_\_\_\_ to my child under the circumstances outlined above.

I understand that information about my child’s medical condition and treatment will be shared with school staff, and in the event of an emergency with the GP or other medical personnel.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return this form and the Indemnity below to:**

**The Principal**

**Ramsgrange Community School**

**Ramsgrange**

**New Ross**

**Co. Wexford.**

# ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINES IN SCHOOLS

## INDEMNITY

THIS INDEMNITY made the \_\_\_\_\_ day of 20\_\_\_\_\_

BETWEEN \_\_\_\_\_ -

lawful father and mother) of \_\_\_\_\_

(Hereinafter called 'the parents' of the One Part AND for and on behalf of the Board of Management of Ramsgrange Community school (hereinafter called 'the Board') of the Other Part.

### WHEREAS:

1. The parents are respectively the lawful father and mother of \_\_\_\_\_ a pupil of the above school
2. The pupil suffers on an ongoing basis from the condition known as \_\_\_\_\_
3. The pupil may, while attending the said school, require in emergency circumstances, the administration of medication, viz.
4. The parents have agreed that the said medication may, in emergency circumstances, be administered by the said pupil's classroom teacher and/or such other member of staff of the said school as may be designated from time to time by the Board.

NOW IT IS HEREBY AGREED by and between the parents hereto as follows:

In consideration of the Board entering into the within Agreement, the parents, as the lawful father and mother respectively of the said pupil HEREBY AGREE to indemnify and keep indemnified the board, its servants and agents including without prejudice to the generality the Principal of the said school from and against all claims, both present and future, arising from the administration or failure to administer the said medicines.

## **Administration of Medications – Detailed Information for staff**

### **General record keeping**

All forms and letters concerning administration of medication will be stored in each pupil's confidential file. These records are stored in compliance with relevant data protection legislation.

When a letter regarding a change in dosage or an updated "Request for Administration of Medication – Information and Consent" form is received, this will be stapled to the FRONT of the existing form, to ensure that the updated information is not overlooked.

Any handwritten notes made on a "Request for Administration of Medication – Information and Consent" form to update it in line with written information provided by parents/guardians will be initialled and dated.

When an updated "Request for Administration of Medication – Information and Consent" form is received, the original will be retained, but will have a line drawn through it, to indicate that it is now superseded.

### **Record of Medication Administration**

A duplicate book will be maintained in the office where medication is maintained. When medication is administered an entry will be made (one entry per page). Each entry will include the date and time, name of child, medication and dose administered, reason for administration and the signature of the person administering it.

To facilitate compliance with documentation requirements the Principal will ensure that each duplicate book is labeled as the Medication book, together with a list of information which must be recorded with each entry.

When an entry is made in the medication book, the top copy is to be removed and stapled in the child's homework notebook.

## APPENDIX 2

# RECORD OF A DRUG RELATED INCIDENT



# LIMITED ACCESS ONLY





1. Name of Pupil	DOB
Address	Class
2. Date of Incident	Time of Incident
Location of Incident	
Reported by	
3. First Aid Given Yes/No	Administered by
Ambulance/Doctor Called Yes/ No	Time of call
Drug Involved ( if known)	Sample found Yes/No
4. Parent Informed Yes/No	
Date	Time
By Whom	
5. Were Samples Retained Yes/No	
Or Date & Time sample destroyed	
Witnessed by	
6. Gardai Informed Yes/ No	
Date	Time
By	Name of Station/ Garda
7. Form Completed by	
Date	Time
Position	
Countersigned by Principal / Board member	
Dated	