# Substance Use Policy

(Insert Centre Name) is a drug free centre and is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all members of the centre community. An essential component of the implementation of our policy is co-operation between all members of the centre community.

## Rationale

This Youthreach drug policy was developed in conjunction with the Misuse of Drugs Act (1977), (1984) and amendment of the Act 2016 which defines not only the use of illegal drugs in general, but also the dangerous use of legal drugs, such as alcohol, tobacco, prescription medicines by exceeding the recommended dose or drinking and driving. The National Drugs Strategy, is now Government policy and it requires education centres to have a substance use policy in place and ensure everyone’s safety on the premises. In conjunction with The Education Act (1998) this centre provides students with an appropriate level of information and decision making skills to promote social and personal development and provide health education and general awareness of the dangers of both legal and illegal substances.

## Definition of a drug

‘Any substance, which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically and emotionally’ (W.H.O.) These include legal drugs such as, alcohol, solvents, tobacco, prescribed medication and illegal drugs of any description.

## Scope

This policy applies to

* Students and staff of the centre
* Centre premises (building and grounds) at all times
* All students and staff during scheduled programme times
* All students on work experience
* All activities provided by the centre including all outdoor activities
* All visitors and guests to the centre premises including any work experience personnel or contractors
* Students availing of any childcare facilities (if applicable)

This centre does not accept the possession, use or supply of drugs in the centre, or on intra or extracurricular activities by any member of the centre community. The only exception is for legitimate medicinal use and the centre has to be informed. Members of the centre community are not permitted to administer any medicines to a student unless authorised in writing by parents/guardians/doctor. Any medication on the premises must be stored safely and correctly.

If drugs are found on the premises, the Gardaí will be notified and drugs given to them for analysis. Anyone suspected of being under the influence of drugs must be reported to the Coordinator or a Resource Person. In the event where a student is suspected to be under the influence of a substance, staff will follow the procedures in this policy.

**Procedures to be followed by staff where a student is suspected of drug misuse**

* Enlist the assistance of a second staff member and jointly assess the situation.
* Report and note your concerns to the Coordinator/Resource Person.

The Coordinator or Resource Person may then take the following action if required:

* + Remove student from group.
	+ Contact parents/guardians if student is under 18 yrs.
	+ Notify Gardaí.
	+ Student removed from centre
	+ Note the incident & arrange de-briefing with relevant staff members.
* In the absence of parents/guardians an ambulance would be called and the ambulance service would act as loco parentis
* Coordinator will arrange a meeting with student and parent/guardian (if under 18 years) to address the consequences of the student’s behaviour.

## Procedures to be followed by staff where a student is known to be or suspected to be in possession of drugs with/without intent to supply/sell.

* Notify Coordinator or Resource Person immediately.
* Coordinator or Resource Person may then take the following action:
	+ Remove student from group.
	+ Contact parents/guardians.
	+ Notify Gardaí.
	+ Remove student from centre
	+ Note the incident.
	+ Arrange de-briefing with relevant staff members

Where a student is found to be in possession of drugs, the student may be terminated from the programme immediately or a meeting may be arranged by the Coordinator to discuss consequences of behaviour and they may be terminated from the programme.