

# Substance abuse policy

EEB2 aims to offer a high-quality contemporary education provided in a safe, healthy, intellectually and socially stimulating environment.

We focus on a global approach to students. The well-being of our students is the fundamental idea behind our 8 life skills program<sup>1</sup>. Our aim is for young people to discover and acquire values, norms, skills and good habits.

Our substance abuse policy helps us implement these tasks. Our aim is to prevent the negative impact of drugs on the well-being of students<sup>2</sup> and their environment. We offer students support and opportunities so that drugs do not damage their development and well-being. Prevention and education is a shared responsibility between school & parents.

This policy involves:

- ✓ Education and prevention
- ✓ Environmental conditions
- ✓ Applying clear rules and procedures
- ✓ Professional in-service training for teachers and staff
- ✓ Info sessions for parents

This Substance Abuse policy is in line with the Framework for Well-being<sup>3</sup>. Belgian law sets the base for our substance abuse policy<sup>4</sup>.

This policy applies to all staff, pupils, parents and partner agencies working with our school. It is up for evaluation every three years and is done by all stakeholders in our school including our medical services (nurses and school doctor Mr Dooms) and our prevention officer Mr Vande Capelle.

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<sup>1</sup> 8 Life Skills program

<sup>2</sup> When we refer to a student, we may use he, she or their.

<sup>3</sup> Pupils' well-being policy framework of the European schools: <https://www.eurisc.eu/BasicTexts/2022-01-D-6-en-2.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> More info: [https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/country-drug-reports/2018/belgium\\_en](https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/country-drug-reports/2018/belgium_en)

## Education and prevention

We believe that drug education is most effective as part of a wider personal, social, subject education (ethics, biology, etc.) and health education program that should be age-appropriate, begin at primary school and continue into secondary school. Guest speakers, workshops and trainings are carefully chosen to suit the needs of our school community.

The program includes the following:

- ✓ Raise awareness on substance abuse and drugs
- ✓ Understand the impact of the media in relation to substance misuse and the stereotypes it reinforces
- ✓ Raise awareness on the influence of peers regarding drugs
- ✓ Raise awareness on the various types of legal and illegal substances and their effects
- ✓ Make informed choices
- ✓ Get to know Belgian & European law concerning legal & illegal substances
- ✓ Stimulate self-value and assertiveness
- ✓ ABC of first aid to someone under the influence of a substance
- ✓ Manage stress
- ✓ Identify risky behavior
- ✓ Get to know local and national support organizations

As indicated in our introduction, prevention and education is a shared responsibility between school & parents. We stimulate a safe and open environment for staff, students and parents to share their concerns.

## Environmental conditions

We aim to create a healthy and safe environment for all our students. To do so, we work on two areas: infrastructure and school climate.

### A. Infrastructure<sup>5</sup>

We aim to provide an infrastructure which stimulates students to make healthy choices. We maintain a clean playground, we provide sports activities and equipment, we offer healthy warm meals and salads, most school areas are cleaned daily, etc. We do our best to cover all school areas are supervised by our staff and/or teachers.

### B. Positive school climate

A positive school climate fosters youth development (self-image, identity, motivation, etc.), reduces problems (aggression, exclusion, class skipping, etc.) and has a positive effect on the prevention of drug abuse<sup>6</sup>.

By involving our students in various initiatives and clubs and by establishing the 8 Life Skill program, we strongly believe to empower students in creating a positive school climate.

Students may for example be involved in the projects such as: playgrounds, study rooms & chill zones, a well-functioning Pupils' Committee, anti-bullying workshops, sports activities during breaks, organizing talent shows, cleaning up school areas, welcoming new students, etc. There is a large variety of clubs where students can freely subscribe to.

Parents are also involved through a well-functioning Parents' Association or APEEE (e.g. healthy warm meals, offering range of sport/art after-school activities), their participation in parents' evenings, etc.

All staff work towards positive and supportive relationships with all the students. They model and nurture attitudes that emphasize norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe. They are accessible and responsive, even for drug-related questions.

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<sup>5</sup> Anno 2023, the secondary school is 89% overpopulated. Safety & well-being comes with significant & serious restrictions for our staff and students. We are limited in our professional and pedagogical possibilities.

<sup>6</sup> Fletcher, A., Bonell, C. & Hargreaves, J. "School effects on young people's drug use: a systematic review of intervention and observational studies". *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 2008, 42.

## Rules and procedures

### General rule<sup>7</sup>

Possession<sup>8</sup>, (mis)use, dealing, sharing and being under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine<sup>9</sup>, CBD, energy drinks, misused medicines<sup>10</sup> and illegal substances<sup>11</sup> is forbidden within the school premises and in the immediate vicinity of the school.

Incitement to use of drugs (verbal, written, via dress code and/or via imagery) can automatically trigger a meeting with the concerned student and the parents.

If the general rule is violated or if there is a suspected violation of this general rule all members of the school community are obliged to react immediately.

- 1) Our first concern is the health and safety of the person and those around him/her. Medical help will be sought and first aid given if the pupil is unconscious, is having trouble breathing, is seriously confused or disoriented, has taken a harmful toxic substance or is otherwise at immediate risk of harm.
- 2) If there is a suspicion of use, possession of an unauthorized substance and/or associated paraphernalia described in the general rule, the person is asked in presence of minimum 1 educational staff member and 1 security officer, to empty their bags, locker, pockets or jackets. If the person refuses, the parents will be asked for permission. If parents & student refuse, the police can be informed and asked to perform a scanning.
- 3) If a substance and/or drug-related items<sup>12</sup> are found, it is confiscated.
  - 3.1 The sample is sealed in a plastic bag (details of time and place included).
  - 3.2 The sample is stored in a secure location with limited access.
  - 3.3 If the drug is suspected to be illegal, the school will hand over the sample to the police.
  - 3.4 Possession or keeping track of illegal substances automatically triggers a disciplinary council.

<sup>7</sup> Additional rules can be applied to school trips, extra activities, etc.

<sup>8</sup> This offense refers to the possession of drugs with the intention of supplying them to others, including holding drugs on behalf of someone else.

<sup>9</sup> Nicotine vaping, tobacco, etc.

<sup>10</sup> Only the nurses can provide medicines to pupils. Specific mandatory procedures for the administration of medicines are put in place for everyone's safety.

<sup>11</sup> Illegal drugs in Belgium (<https://www.vad.be/themas>) or (<https://www.druglijn.be/drugs-abc/talen/english>)

<sup>12</sup> For example: vapor, cruncher, storage box or bag, etc.



- 4) If we suspect the student is under the influence of a substance, we will ask the student to perform a urine test at our medical services. Our medical staff will perform this test.
  - 4.1 If the student agrees to this test, both parents will be informed. A parent will be asked to agree in written by mail to consent the urine test. A parent can demand to be present during the test.
    - 4.1.1 If the test is negative, the student can resume school the following day.
    - 4.1.2 If the test is positive, the student is automatically suspended from the school for 7 days. On the 8<sup>th</sup> day, the student must perform again a second urine test at our infirmary. If the test is negative, the student can resume school that same day. If the test is positive, the student is automatically suspended for an additional 7 days. On the 15<sup>th</sup> day, the student must perform again a third urine test at our infirmary. If the test is negative, the student can resume school that same day. If this third test is positive, the medical team (nurses and school doctor) in cooperation with the director of the school will decide on further terms<sup>13</sup> under which the student can resume school.
  - 4.2 If the student or both parents refuses to perform a urine test at our infirmary, the student will be automatically suspended for 14 days.
- 5) Talking with a pupil or an adult about a drug-related incident is intended to confirm or reject suspicions or allegations, rather than to conduct a wider investigation.
- 6) Parent(s)/guardians will be informed and other professionals (nurses, police, social services, school psychologists) may be consulted as appropriate<sup>14</sup>.

The school ensures that sensitive information is only disclosed internally and/or externally with careful attention to pupils' rights and needs. A disciplinary issue remains in the students file for 3 years.

All drug-related incidents are also reported to our Director, Deputy Director and Assistant to the Deputy Director of the Secondary. The latest is responsible for coordinating the school's response towards the drug-related incident. All incidents will be dealt with after an assessment of the situation has been made. The response is always twofold: disciplinary measures and guidance measures. A director can decide on legal proceedings for endangering the welfare of students and/or staff.

### **Response to incidences: Disciplinary measures & Guidance**

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<sup>13</sup> Part of these terms could state for example that proof of professional, medical follow-up is given to the student concerning the abuse of substance(s).

<sup>14</sup> Parents/Guardians who have an 18+ year-old student living at home will be informed and other professionals may be consulted as appropriate.

Possible disciplinary measures are stated in the school regulations. We respond appropriately to each individual case by selecting from a range of possible sanctions. Possession and/or dealing of illegal substances always triggers a disciplinary counsel.

Drugs is (mostly) a symptom of other problems. We ensure a caring response to the pupils in distress through our internal experts and teachers. Class teachers, school psychologists, educational advisers, nurses and members of the guidance team<sup>15</sup> are at your disposal.

We are ready to involve or refer pupils to youth and family support services, outpatient drug programs and clinics. Even if a pupil needs a long-term drug program, we as a school take our responsibility to provide education (if advisable by medical staff).

### Helplines

Information concerning (il)legal substance and support services in Belgium:

[www.vad.be](http://www.vad.be) (NL)

[www.druglijn.be](http://www.druglijn.be) (NL)

<https://infordrogues.be/> (FR)

<https://www.talktofrank.com/> (EN)

The school planner and our website also provide our students, parents and staff up-to-date helplines on where they can seek help.

### Professional in-service training for teachers and staff

Every member of the school staff has the responsibility to be vigilant and react appropriately to drug-related incidents. We train our school staff on a regular basis. We offer teachers and staff members a training regarding the basics in drug education. Some receive a more intensive training than others (ex. educational advisers, invigilance staff, infirmary, etc.).

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<sup>15</sup> The guidance team consists of certain teachers, educational advisers and a school psychologist who are trained to provide care and guidance to students and colleagues.

## References

### A. Aims of the European Schools

*“to provide Education for Sustainable Development with a cross-curriculum approach in line with European and international documents.”*

*(...) “to cultivate pupils’ personal, social and academic development and to prepare them for the next stage of education.”*

Source: <https://www.eurisc.eu/en/European-Schools/principles>

### B. Pupils’ Well-being policy framework for European Schools

Part VI | Anti Substance (ab)use

Source: <https://www.eurisc.eu/BasicTexts/2022-01-D-6-en-2.pdf>

### C. Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

*“Personal, social and learning to learn competence.*

*Personal, social and learning to learn competence is the ability to reflect upon oneself, effectively manage time and information, work with others in a constructive way, remain resilient and manage one’s own learning and career. It includes the ability to cope with uncertainty and complexity, learn to learn, support one’s physical and emotional well-being, to maintain physical and mental health, and to be able to lead a health-conscious, future-oriented life, empathize and manage conflict in an inclusive and supportive context.”*

Source: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8299-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

### D. Guide towards a drug policy at school

Source: De Paepe, Nina ‘Gids voor een drugbeleid op school. Hoe gaat de school op de beste manier om met alcohol, illegale drugs, genotsmiddelen, psychoactieve medicatie, gokken en problematisch gamen?’ (2018).

### E. Legal Guidance on the use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs at school

*(Juridische handvaten voor het gebruik en misbruik van alcohol en andere drugs op school)*

Source: Vereniging voor Alcohol- en andere Drugproblemen vzw. Kristof Veekmans (jurist onderwijsrecht) en Tessa Gombeer (Vakgroep Strafrecht UGent) Herziene versie 2020.

### Action points (2023-2025)

- ✓ Put up a basic training in drug education for certain teachers & staff
- ✓ Regular parent's information meeting concerning (ab)use of drugs in Belgium and at our school
- ✓ Next update of this policy: school year 2026-2027

