

Coláiste Pobail na Mainistreach

Bóthar na Mainistreach, An Pórt Mór, Port Láirge

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Important Information from the Department of Education

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland has asked the Department to assist in sending out a message through school communities to parents. Please see below its warning about the danger associated with eating edible products, such as jelly sweets, containing cannabis components.

Secondly, in conjunction with the network of drug and alcohol taskforces throughout the country, the attached information leaflet has been prepared specifically for schools. It provides information on the range of supports that drug and alcohol taskforces can provide to schools, parents and students to prevent and tackle drug and alcohol use and to strengthen communications between local schools and drug and alcohol task forces. As well as the contact details for each of the drug and alcohol task forces, it provides information on a range of valuable resources for schools and parents relating to drug and alcohol use.

Warning regarding jelly sweets containing cannabis (THC)

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) is urging parents and guardians to be extremely vigilant to the dangers of their children getting access to and eating confectionary, particularly jelly sweets, containing significant amounts of the psychoactive cannabis component called tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). This warning comes amid the ongoing seizures of these illegal food products by the Gardaí and Customs services, and a number of serious medical incidents whereby these THC-containing jelly sweets resulted in teenagers and young children suffering serious adverse health effects requiring hospitalisation. These jelly sweets are packaged to look like popular brands of jellies and have been found to contain toxic amounts of THC (up to 50mg/jelly). Depending on the concentration of THC, eating one of these jellies can mean an equivalent intake of THC that is 5-10 times higher than that inhaled from a single cannabis cigarette. Also, unlike the almost immediate effects of inhaling THC (smoking or vaping), ingesting THC through these jellies can take up to 30 minutes for any effects to be felt. However, while waiting for those effects, those who have eaten these products may overdose in the mistaken belief that they need to eat more sweets in order to feel the effects. Of particular concern to the FSAI is the inadvertent consumption of these jelly sweets by small children who may somehow gain access to what looks and possibly tastes like ordinary sweets. Unfortunately, given access to a bag of these jellies, children will rarely eat just one and therefore, overdosing is a very likely outcome as witnessed by the hospitalisation of a number of seriously ill young children in the early part of 2021.

The FSAI has become aware of reports about the availability of THC-containing jelly sweets in schools in Ireland and therefore, parents and guardians are asked to speak with their teenagers alerting them to the dangers if they eat them or if their younger siblings get access to them and subsequently suffer the serious consequences of consuming a toxic substance.

Regional and Local Drug & Alcohol Task Force Contacts

DUBLIN SOUTH:

Ballyfermot Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force – 087 330 9024 / www.ballyfermotdatf.ie
Canal Communities Local Drug & Alcohol Task Force – 086 384 5542 www.ccdatf.ie
Clondalkin Drug and Alcohol Task Force – 01 457 9445 / www.clondalkindrugtaskforce.ie
Dublin 12 Local Drugs & Alcohol Task Force – 07669 56657 / www.d12datf.ie
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Drugs Taskforce – 087 649 4922 / www.dlrdatf.ie
South Inner City Drug & Alcohol Task Force – sicdatf@gmail.com / www.facebook.com/sicdatf
Tallaght Drug and Alcohol Task Force – 01 464 9303 / www.tallaghtdatf.ie

DUBLIN NORTH:

Ballymun Local Drugs Taskforce – 01 883 2142 / www.ballymunlocaldrugtaskforce.ie
Blanchardstown Local Drug & Alcohol Task Force – 01 824 9590 / www.blanchardstowndrugtaskforce.ie
Dublin North East Drugs & Alcohol Task Force – 01 846 5070 / www.dnetaskforce.ie
Finglas/Cabra Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force – 01 830 7440 / www.finglascabraidatf.ie
North Dublin Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force – 01 223 3493 / www.ndublinrdatf.ie
which includes Balbriggan, Swords and other towns, rural and coastal areas across North County Dublin.
North Inner City Drugs and Alcohol Task Force – 01 836 6592 / www.nicdatf.ie

SOUTH WESTERN: Kildare, West Wicklow

South Western Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force – 045 875111 / www.swrdatf.ie

EAST COAST: East Wicklow, Sth East Dublin

East Coast Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force – 01 2744132 [Web:www.ecrdatf.ie/](http://www.ecrdatf.ie/)
Bray Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force – brayldtf@gmail.com / www.braytaskforce.com

MIDLANDS: Laois, Longford, Offaly & Westmeath

Midland Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force – 09064 83195 / www.mrdatf.ie

WESTERN: Galway, Mayo & Roscommon

Western Region Drugs & Alcohol Task Force – 091 480 044 / www.wrdatf.ie

MID-WESTERN : Clare, Limerick, Limerick City & Tipperary North

Mid-West Regional Drugs and Alcohol Forum – 061 607 242 / www.mwrdtf.ie

NORTH EAST: East Cavan, Louth, Meath & Monaghan

North Eastern Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force – 042 9248630 / www.nedrugtaskforce.ie

NORTH WEST: Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo & West Cavan

Northwest Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force – 071 919 4556 / www.nwdrugtaskforce.ie
Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim, and the North Western portion of County Cavan.

SOUTH EASTERN: Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary Sth, Waterford, Wexford

South East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force – 051 848863 / www.serdatf.ie

SOUTHERN: Cork & Kerry

Southern Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force – 021 493 0100 / www.srdatf.ie
Cork Local Drug & Alcohol Task Force – 021 493 0100 / www.corkdrugandalcohol.ie

Information for Schools on the National Network of Drug and Alcohol Task Forces (DATFs)

*Resources for schools to prevent drug and alcohol
use at a young age from the national network of drug and alcohol task forces*



Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery

A health-led response to drug
and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025

The national drug strategy seeks to prevent drug and alcohol use at a young age by enhancing communications between schools and drug and alcohol task forces (DATFs). This resource provides information on the supports that DATFs offer to schools, parents and students on drug and alcohol use.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Mindful of the need for substance use education and the Department of Education circular 0043/2018 relating to external facilitators, DATFS offer various levels of supports for schools.

The levels of intensity depends on their respective strategies and ranges from low intensity (information leaflets, web links etc.) to high intensity (bespoke training, in-school workshops for parents etc.). The Covid-19 response has reduced the capacity of some DATFs because of redeployment and Covid-19 related restrictions. It is therefore suggested that direct contact is made by your school with the relevant DATF to establish the level of support that is available to you. A summary of the range of options is presented below.

Support 1: Capacity Building for Teachers

- Level 1: bespoke training for teachers
- Level 2: short in-school training provision/modules
- Level 3: dissemination of evidence-based resources, advice, meetings, e-learning
- Level 4: email and print information & advice

Support 2: Capacity Building for Parents

- Level 1: family support services and bespoke workshops
- Level 2: once-off school workshops for parents
- Level 3: dissemination of evidence-based resources & advice via phone, meetings, e-learning
- Level 4: email and print information & advice

Support 3: Substance Use Policy assistance

- Level 1: workshops with school management to develop bespoke policy in line with national guidance
- Level 2: meeting & e-advice re development of policy including templates
- Level 3: email and print information and advice

Support 4: Signposting & supports

- Level 1: direct referrals into services for students struggling with substance use
- Level 2: contact numbers for referrals and information on process
- Level 3: email and print information & advice

It is recommended that you contact your nearest DATF directly to find out which of the supports outlined above are provided.

Other Key Resources for Schools and Parents

Know the Score – An alcohol and drugs resource for senior cycle students

Know the Score is the first national evidence-based resource on alcohol and drugs for senior cycle students (15-18yrs), and is developed in partnership between public health and education professionals. The resource is aimed at engaging young people in topics including exploring risks associated with alcohol and drugs. It includes teachers' manual, videos and other resources.

<https://www.hse.ie/knowthescore>

Alcohol and Drugs: A Parent's Guide

Evidence-based resource offers practical advice to help parents engage with teenagers about alcohol & drugs

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/alcohol/practical-advice-to-help-you-communicate-with-your-child-about-alcohol-and-other-drugs.pdf>

Department of Education Circular No. 0043/2018

Best practice guidance for post-primary schools in the use of programmes and/or external facilitators in promoting wellbeing consistent with the Department's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice. <https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/88ca5c44bb1d45e09c2ac3152ea5bcb0/>

Drugs.ie website: National information resource on drugs and alcohol

HSE-managed website providing information on drugs and services for anyone who needs it including schools, parents and young people

www.drugs.ie

HSE National Drug and Alcohol Helpline

HSE helpline that provides information, advice and signposting in relation to drugs and alcohol.

Call 1800 459 459 or email helpline@hse.ie

European best practice in prevention and education in schools

This policy and practice briefing provides an overview of the key issues, response options, evidence and implications for policy and practice in European countries.

https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/policy-and-practice-briefings/schools-and-colleges_en

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