

MILLTOWN GAA, WESTMEATH  
BAILE AN MHUILINN CLG, ÍARMHI  
SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

FEBRUARY 2024





# Baile an Mhuilinn Cumann Lúthchleas Gael Iarmhí

## Milltown GAA Westmeath Substance Abuse Policy

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## 1. Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all Milltown GAA members are kept safe from substance-related harm when involved in club activities.

### **Our objectives are:**

- To promote the health and wellbeing of all club members.
- To develop a consistent approach to drug-related issues to be adopted by all club members.
- To develop procedures and protocols that address drug-related issues in the club.
- To establish clear procedures for managing specific incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- To provide onward referral to specialist services for members presenting with substance related issues.

## 2. Scope & Limitations

Cumann Lúthchleas Gael is committed to discouraging the use of drugs and tobacco and the misuse of alcohol on the basis that such activity is incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity. It understands that such behaviours can have detrimental social and health consequences on the individuals involved, and on those to whom they are connected. Milltown GAA believes that we need to work towards creating a safe, healthy club environment where we can develop the skills and attitudes necessary to enjoy our health to the fullest. All club members, officials, coaches and volunteers as part of this club shall follow the law when it comes to illegal substances, tobacco and alcohol and shall display leadership and good example, particularly when dealing with underage members. This policy applies to all members as well as all users of the club's buildings and grounds. For practical purposes this policy has been kept as succinct as possible. It has been developed from a template provided by the GAA's Community & Health department (see [www.gaa.ie/community](http://www.gaa.ie/community) for more information on the topic of substance use). Representatives of the Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Forces in the ROI and the Drug & Alcohol Community Teams (DACTs) in NI were consulted in the development of this policy, and contact details for the local agency is found at the back end of this policy.



### 3. Definition of Drugs

For the purpose of this policy the term 'substance' shall be used to cover any chemical which alters how the body works, or how the person behaves or feels and may include all mood-altering substances, both legal and illegal. Examples include:

- Alcohol and Tobacco
- 'Over the counter' medicines that may be misused such as those containing codeine (e.g. Solpadeine), co-codomal, paracodal, cough medicines, antihistamines, laxatives, and paracetamol.
- Volatile substances such as aerosols, glues, petrol, cigarette lighter fuels etc.
- Products and substances sold online and in "headshops" that cause intoxication.
- Controlled drugs such as cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, magic mushrooms, cocaine, etc.
- Performance enhancing sports related drugs as outlined by the World Anti-Doping Agency, and covered under Rule 1.16 of the Official Guide Book (for more information, see <https://www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/players/anti-doping>).

### 4. List of Actions

The Chairperson and Executive of the club shall adopt and discharge actions from the following list in line with available resources and supports. Milltown GAA shall take the following actions:

- Club members, officials, coaches and volunteers shall not present themselves at official club activities while under the influence of alcohol or any other substances (unless previously declared and prescribed by a medical professional). Where alcohol is being served at an official club function it must be consumed responsibly.
- Coaches and Club Officials shall not smoke/vape, drink alcohol, or use any other substances (unless previously declared and prescribed by a medical professional) while representing their club at matches or training sessions.
- All efforts shall be made to ensure Under 18 players/members are not brought to public houses following matches, outings, or training sessions.
- Cigarettes/E-Cigarettes shall not be sold or distributed by any persons at the Milltown GAA grounds



- Milltown gym and community centre building currently operates under a separate GAA smokefree policy - see [Smoke-Free GAA Clubs](#) for more info, and in line with the Government of Ireland, we will aim to be a smoke free facility from 2025
- Illegal substances, tobacco and alcohol will not be permitted in changing rooms or at pitch-sides by club mentors before or during official club games.
- All persons associated with our club can help prevent substance-related harm from occurring during club activities and concerns about substance abuse during club events or official club functions can be reported to our club executive committee, see [Milltown GAA - Club Officers & Committee Members](#) for roles and contacts

## 5. Relevant roles and details on clubs substance misuse policy

In 2023, Milltown GAA were officially awarded 'Healthy Club Status' through the GAA National Healthy Club Coordinator, Brid O'Dwyer [brid.odwyer@gaa.ie](mailto:brid.odwyer@gaa.ie) Tel: +353-(0) 1 819 2954

Milltown GAA has a Healthy Club Committee to oversee running of our club gym, walking track and other facilities and to implement any revisions to our Healthy Club initiative and this policy.

Committee roles and responsibilities will evolve over time within the club, and club patrons, players, members and supporters can find up to date relevant details on our club website and on our social media and other communication platforms. Milltown GAA actively encourages new members to become involved in our Healthy Club and Executive Committees.

### 5.1 Members

Club Members should be aware of the details of and adhere to Milltown GAA Substance Use Policy which is available through a number of platforms for members



## 5.2 Parents and Guardians

Will support the club in the development and implementation of this policy including procedures for handling incidents of suspected substance use.

## 5.3 The Healthy Club Officer and Committee

Is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation and evaluation of this policy in conjunction with the Club Chairperson and Executive. Shall have good knowledge of the local alcohol, substance and health promotion services to assist in harm prevention and education activities and appropriate responses to incidents should such needs arise.

## 5.4 Coaches

Will be aware of the possibility of substance use among players and work with the Healthy Club Officer, Club Chairperson, and Executives with the aim of preventing harm.

## 5.5 Club Chairperson and Executive

All relevant information pertaining to a potential breach of this policy should be brought to the attention of the Club Chairperson who shall consult with the necessary parties, and, informed by this policy, decide on the appropriate action, if any. In the event of the Chairperson not being available to discharge these duties this responsibility will then fall to the Vice Chairperson or Secretary.

# 6. Education programme about drugs and alcohol

The Healthy Club Officer in conjunction with the Club Chairperson and Executive shall make arrangements with local drug, alcohol, youth or health promotion services to provide drug education for interested youths and adults associated with the club. More information can be found at [Substance Use in The GAA](#).



## 7. Protocol for dealing with incidents:

Milltown GAA shall endeavour to respond to all substance-related incidents in a firm but fair manner, with due respect for the safety and welfare of individuals involved, other members of the club and the wider community and shall also fulfill any legal obligations that might apply. The points below offer guidance to the club in handling incidents involving illicit drugs both during club activities and relating to members in a wider societal context.

## 8. Milltown GAA Position on Substance Abuse

The use of illicit drugs is viewed as unacceptable by Milltown GAA and may be dealt with by way of warnings, suspensions and expulsions as deemed appropriate by decision of the County Executive, on a case by case basis, with proportionality considered. It is also unacceptable for members or officials to present themselves for county duties while under the influence of a drug. (Suspension, if issued, will mean that the member involved cannot represent the club in any way during their term of suspension.) Considerations may be made for incidents involving members that occur outside official county activities of events.

### 8.1 Illegal drug activity

In a case where a club becomes aware that a member has been charged with the illegal supply of drugs the Club Executive will ask this individual to stand aside from club activities until the matter has been dealt with in the court of law, notwithstanding the individual's right of a presumption of innocence until proven guilty. (Where it is known that a club member is being charged with the illegal supply of drugs the matter must be brought to the attention of the Community & Health Department in Croke Park, who can give guidance on the appropriate response on a case by case basis.) In a case where consumption of illegal drugs are reported to the club Executive committee, further assessment will be completed by the Coiste before further action is taken.



## 8.2 Club engagement on an illegal drug taking incident

If approved by the Coiste, a select number of the Club Executive should mutually agree and arrange to meet with those involved in an incident with which this policy is concerned. Details recorded in critical incident forms should be discussed and appropriate support should be offered to those involved. The same members of the executive should also consider a separate meeting with the club member who has negatively impacted the club in relation to drug, alcohol or tobacco use. Consideration should be given to the health and wellbeing of the person, with signposting to appropriate drug, alcohol and psychological supports. (See [www.mrdatf.ie](http://www.mrdatf.ie) for appropriate support). It should be made clear to all parties involved that media requests should be handled by Croke Park Head Quarters.

## 8.3. Appeal and Review process

A suspended member will have the right of appeal to the Hearings Committee of the County Executive where a member of the Club Executive and the suspended member will have the right to be heard. Normal Standing orders will apply to such a meeting.

# 9. Reporting of Incidents

Alleged or confirmed incidents in breach of this policy shall be referred to the Club Chairperson and Healthy Club Officer. Matters relating to the supply of drugs MUST also be brought to the attention of the chair of the Westmeath County Board Health & Wellbeing Committee, who can give guidance on the appropriate response on a case by case basis.

## 9.1 Recording of Information

Information regarding alleged or confirmed incidents in breach of this policy shall be recorded in writing. The recording of factual information only is recommended, and all opinions shall be stated as such. Responses to cases shall also be recorded in this way. Only in confirmed cases shall names of individuals be recorded and all details recorded shall adhere to the requirements of the GDPR Regulations, further details available from [Data Protection and GDPR \(gaa.ie\)](http://Data Protection and GDPR (gaa.ie))





## 9.2 Confidentiality

While it is not possible to guarantee, every effort shall be made to respect confidentiality of each case or incident relevant to this policy document

## 9.3 Involving Parents/Guardians

Incidents involving any person under 18 years of age will require their parents/guardians to be informed. Parents/guardians shall be invited to discuss what has happened and shall be informed of any course of action to be taken by the club. The Club Chairperson shall nominate a person to inform parents/guardians in each case.

## 9.4 Garda Síochána/PSNI Involvement

Incidents that involve the illegal supply of drugs shall require Garda Síochána/PSNI involvement. In all other drug-related incidents, each case shall be considered on an individual basis and the decision shall rest with the Club Chairperson as to whether or not the Garda Síochána/PSNI is involved. As Milltown GAA will predominantly liaise with the Garda, it is not expected that engagement with the PSNI will be required.

## 9.5 Media guidelines

Any incident that attracts or has the potential to attract media interest or attention should be reported to Croke Park. The club should not engage in any discourse with the media, rather should signpost them to the Communications Department in Croke Park. Email: [communications@gaa.ie](mailto:communications@gaa.ie)

## 10. Club authority to search

The Club Chairperson retains the right to direct a search of any part of club property if there is reasonable cause to believe a substance in breach of this policy is contained therein. Two officials of the club shall conduct the search. Club officials are not allowed to search an individual or their personal property. Where there is reasonable cause to believe a person has in their possession a substance in breach of this policy, they shall be asked to



volunteer the substance. If they refuse, the *Garda Síochána* may be called in to conduct a search.

## 10.1 Disposing of suspected illegal substances

If a suspected illegal substance is found on club property it should be brought to the attention of the Club Chairperson. The substance should be stored securely, and the 6 Chairperson shall contact *Garda Síochána* to have it collected or to inform them who from the club will deliver it to them and when. Any movement of suspected illegal substances shall be recorded and witnessed by two club officials. At no time should a suspected illegal substance be removed from club property without the knowledge of the *Garda Síochána*.

## 11. Dealing with drug litter/paraphernalia

Drug paraphernalia, when it is not disposed of properly, is known as drug litter. Drug paraphernalia is any equipment or material that is used for making, using or carrying drugs. Some such materials can pose considerable health risks (especially syringes). To find out more about the proper disposal of such materials see: [www.drugs.ie](http://www.drugs.ie) for more information

## 12. Availability, use and storage of solvents and gases

Many solvent based products have the potential to be abused (e.g. deodorants, paints, thinners, cleaning fluids etc). All solvent based materials and gases shall be stored securely and safely away from public access.

## 13. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is in force at all times and during all activities conducted under the aegis of *Cumann Lúthchleas Gael*. This policy shall be evaluated annually and after every drug-related incident.



This policy shall come into effect on 7th February 2024 and shall be reviewed annually thereafter by the Healthy Club Officer in conjunction with the Club Chairperson and Executive.

## 14. Policy approval and authorisation

### 14.1 Members of the Healthy Club Committee

Print Name	Sign name	Role	Date
Paul Heduan	<i>Paul Heduan</i>	Healthy Club Committee	5th Feb 2024

### 14.2 Cathaoirleach

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Club Chairperson

Date \_\_\_\_ \ \_\_\_\_ \ \_\_\_\_