

Drugs Policy

1. Introduction

In this context the term 'drugs' is used to include:

- (i) illegal substances
- (ii) substances which are legal but can be misused*

* some of these substances would not be acceptable for possession and use by pupils on school premises e.g. alcohol and tobacco

• other substances, for example, glue, solvents and the over-the-counter medicines, would be acceptable for possession and use on school premises, provided this is for their proper, intended purpose.

2. Aim

2.1 This school is committed to the health and safety of its children and staff and will take action to safeguard their well-being.

2.2 It will actively discourage the use of illegal substances and the misuse of glue, solvents, prescribed and over the counter medicines.

2.3 The head teacher is the member of staff responsible for the management of drugs education throughout the school. There is information about Drugs Education in the school containing details of support agencies. This is kept in the head teacher's office. Other literature is detailed at the end of this policy statement.

3. Medicines

3.1 Certain prescribed medicines are allowed into the school. If a child is on long or short-term medication a form of consent, for the administration of this medicine by the head teacher or senior teacher is needed.

Non-prescription medicines are allowed into school only if accompanied by a letter from parents.

4. Drug Education Programme

4.1 Aims:

- to enable children to become accurately informed on the effects, good or bad, of drugs on health and make healthy informed choices.
- to enable children to experience up to date coverage of the risks and legal aspects of drug taking.
- to give children the opportunity to develop their abilities to communicate their concerns and take responsible decisions.

4.2 It is felt that drug education should start at least two to three years before the likely age of experimentation.

4.3 Age 5 - 7 children should be introduced to ideas about how to keep healthy and the role of drugs as medicines.

4.4 Age 7 - 11 children should be introduced to the fact that while all medicines are drugs, not all drugs are medicines. They should also begin to be aware of the harmful effects on health of abuse of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.

Where planning permits, Drugs Education will also be taught at other times. We hope to ensure that drug issues are reinforced throughout the child's education, so matching their increasing understanding and maturity.

4.5 Outside agencies may be involved in the planning and teaching of the drug education programme and will be asked to adhere to our school policy.

4.6 The Drug Education programme will provide opportunities for pupils to:

- Explore attitudes and values around drug misuse
- Practise decision making skills
- Become aware of peer pressure
- Develop assertiveness skills
- Consider the consequences of risk taking
- Learn how to access sources of help and information
- Emphasise the benefits of a healthy lifestyle
- Evaluate media messages on drug use

5. Pastoral Support

5.1 The school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role and will support all concerned in ensuring the well being of all its pupils.

5.2 Parents will be encouraged to become involved as much as possible in order to achieve a successful drug education programme.

5.3 All incidents or concerns will be logged by the Head teacher or her representative. Parents will also be informed, unless lined to an abuse case, and provisions made for any outside professional help, such as police officers or health professionals.

5.4 Where illegal substances are involved these outside agencies will automatically be informed. There is a list of support agencies in the Head teacher's office.

5.5 If a pupil voluntarily discloses information about drug abuse it is important to:

- Not over re-act
- List to the pupil's point of view
- Not jump to conclusions

5.6 Staff should not guarantee confidentiality, as they may have to inform other staff or the police.

6. Managing Drug Related Incidents in School

'In school' is taken to mean on school premises, including buildings and grounds. The school premises also apply to off-site activities, visits and school trips. The policy will also relate to pupils' use of the premises and grounds beyond the school day.

7. Hearsay

Drug use is often discovered by hearsay. This should be passed onto the designated member of staff who should record the matter as hearsay evidence. This will enable a record to be compiled of teachers' concerns and where necessary help and support offered to the pupil. Where the hearsay evidence is not supported through further reports or incidents for one calendar year the evidence will be removed from the records.

8. Suspicious Behaviour

Behaviour that could indicate involvement with drugs should also be logged so that patterns of behaviour can be observed and concerns acted upon where necessary.

9. Finding Substances

9.1 If a harmful, illegal substance is discovered it should be removed to a place of safe keeping in the presence of a witness from the teaching staff. If the substance is known or suspected to be illegal the police must be informed.

9.2 If a substance is found on a pupil the above procedure should be followed and the incident recorded including:

- the date and time of the find or retrieval
- the size and appearance of the substance
- the names of those concerned
- the action taken

9.3 If any equipment associated with drug misuse is discovered the items should be handled with care. The incident should be recorded and in the case of items such as needles and syringes they should be placed in a Sharps container for collection by the relevant authorities. If these are found on pupils, the pupil's parents should be informed.

10. Searching

Storage areas within the school grounds are the property of the school. The head teacher or her representative may authorise a search of these if there is a reasonable suspicion. The search must be carried out in the presence of a witness and the named pupil if this applies. Staff should not search a pupil's property or person but should try to persuade the pupil to voluntarily produce the substance by asking him to turn out his/her pockets or bag. If it is absolutely necessary to search a pupil a police officer will be required and parents must be informed as soon as possible. The police officer will only be able to carry out a search if there are reasonable grounds to suspect the pupil is in possession of an illegal substance.

11. Finding Drug Misuse

11.1 If children are found in possession of tobacco, alcohol, glue, solvents or prescribed or over the counter medicines, parents will be informed and appropriate steps taken.

11.2 In an emergency arising from an incident involving abuse, the well being of the pupil is paramount, in all instances:

- separate the child involved from the rest of the group
- decide and implement the next best step in terms of the child's welfare
- inform parents

12. Supplying Illegal Substances

It is an offence to produce or supply any controlled drug on school premises. The police will be involved in such circumstances.

13. Returning Articles Which Have Been Confiscated

Articles confiscated that are not required by the police must be returned to parents. They will be informed in writing within 24 hours of articles confiscated and an explanation given as to why it is inappropriate to return the articles to the child. It will be made clear that there is a time limit of one week for the items to be recovered or they will be disposed of by the school.

14. Staff Development

14.1 All staff need to:

- understand and support the rationale and aims of drug education
- be aware of the legal implications and their responsibilities

14.2 It is hoped that, by staff, governors, parents and children themselves working together, we can safeguard the well being of all pupils in our care by educating them about the dangers of drug abuse.

The policy will be reviewed every year or sooner in the event of any changes in legislation.