

# Substance Abuse Policy

## Development process

This policy was approved and adopted on 2016. The next major review will take place in 2019

The policy was drafted by a working group under the chairmanship of Lea Andries, Principal Education Advisor. Consultation took place with all major stakeholders including staff, students and parents.

## Location and dissemination

This policy is published on the school website and the APEEE website.

This policy applies to all staff, pupils, parents/carers, governors and partner agencies working with our school. It applies to all school premises.

## School policy

It is the aim of our school to help all pupils to be able to take their place safely in a world where a wide range of dangers exist, including substance abuse. Our position is that the use of illegal substances and abuse of illegal substances is not acceptable within the boundaries of school life.

In talking about substance abuse we refer to drugs such as alcohol, illegal narcotics, medicines and tobacco; in short, any substance that people take to change the way they think feel or behave.

We recognise that some drugs have beneficial effects, but also that every drug has potential to harm. For this reason, all drugs need appropriate and responsible care and management. In order to be able to make informed choices, staff and pupils need to understand the nature of drugs, their social and legal status, their uses and effects.

This guidance is not intended to focus on drug education. It covers broader behaviour and pastoral support, as well as managing incidents related to substance abuse that have an impact on the school.

## The purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the health & safety of the school population, to enable staff to manage incidents in the best interests of those involved and to clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities of the school

We achieve this by educating the school community about the dangers of substance abuse, ensuring support and training for staff, introduce age appropriate discussion of issues for students and by engaging with the whole school community

By formulating this policy we will raise awareness of the issues, identify who is responsible for what and set out our procedures.

## **Staff with key responsibility for substance abuse**

Every member of the school staff has his responsibilities and possibilities to sanction.

The Principal Education Advisor, together with the Guidance Team, has established relationships with local agencies to understand what support is available and to provide training for teachers.

Management ensures every year a budget for these trainings.

## **Staff support and training**

Our school recognises the need for staff to receive appropriate training to support their work in delivering the school programme of drug education and dealing appropriately with incidents should they arise. The Principal Education Advisor, together with the Guidance Team, will organise every 3 years training related to the identified needs of staff.

We will use guest speakers and trainers to support our planned teacher lead programme of education. The use of guest speakers and trainers is carefully structured so that their contribution fits our needs and they are clear how their input fits into our planned programme.

On occasions when guest speakers and trainers are working with students a member of staff is always present.

## **Education**

We believe that education about drugs is most effective as part of a wider personal, social and health education programme that should begin at primary school and continue into secondary school. We consider that the earlier that drug education begins and the more consistently it is made available at an age-appropriate level, the more effective it will be in enabling young people to grow up safely in a drug using world and achieve their full potential.

Our curriculum will/does include the following points:

- Raising awareness of substances that are used and abused;
- Designer images; understanding the impact of the media in relation to substance misuse and stereotypes it reinforces;
- The influence of peers, the messages received from friends and the media on alcohol;
- Understanding the effects and associated risk of using legal and illegal substances;
- Raising awareness of the types and groups of legal and illegal substances and the different effects, information and language;
- Making decisions about substances; making informed and considered choices; knowing the law and the rules
- Taking risks; identifying and exploring risky behaviour;
- Under the influence of peers; self-value and assertiveness;
- Exploring local and national support groups/organisations;
- Treatments of substance misuse.
- Immediate help for someone under the influence of a substance - ABC of first aid;
- Managing stress.

## Standard rules

Our school has a number of standard rules that provide a platform for our substance abuse policy; these are outlined below:

- **Medicines**  
Our school has a policy/procedure for the administration of medicines that must be followed for everyone's safety: **only the nurses** can provide medicine to the pupils.
- **Alcohol**  
Pupils are not allowed to bring in alcohol on the school. Pupils, parents, staff and visitors showing the effects of alcohol will be asked to leave the premises and return at a later date for the safety of the whole school;
- **Tobacco**  
Our school is a no smoking site - indoors and outdoors, including school vehicles - at all times.
- **Illegal narcotics**  
No illegal narcotics are permitted to be brought on to, or used on school premises.

## Drug Incidents

A drug related incident may include any of the following:

- A pupil who is suspected of being under the influence of a drug;
- Finding drugs, or related paraphernalia on school premises;
- Possession of drugs by an individual on school premises;
- Use of drugs by an individual on school premises;
- Supply of drugs on school premises;
- Individuals disclosing information about their drug use;
- Rumours of drug possession supply or drug use;
- Reports of drug possession supply or drug use.

## Drug Procedures

The first concern in managing substance abuse is the health and safety of the school's community and meeting the pastoral needs of pupils. If a pupil is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on school premises our first priority is the safety of the young person and those around them. If necessary such situations will be dealt with as a medical emergency, administering First Aid and summoning appropriate support. Depending on the circumstances, parents/carers or the police may need to be contacted. If the child is felt to be at risk social services may need to be contacted. Procedures for specific circumstances are outlined below:

- **Medical emergencies**  
If an individual is unconscious, is having trouble breathing, is seriously confused or disorientated, has taken a harmful toxic substance or is otherwise at immediate risk of immediate harm medical help will be sought and first aid given if required. The priority will be the pupil's safety;

- **Individuals in possession of drugs**

If any pupil or adult on school premises is found in possession of an unauthorised drug it will be confiscated. If the drug is suspected to be illegal, the school will contact the police and immediately hand over the drug. If the substance cannot be legally destroyed or disposed of it will be handed to the police as soon as possible and not stored for any longer than is necessary. Talking with an individual about a drug related incident will have as its purpose to confirm or reject suspicions or allegations, rather than to conduct a wider investigation. Parents of pupils will be informed and other professionals may be informed or consulted as appropriate.

- **Support for pupils**

Following actions to preserve immediate safety, the health and emotional needs of pupils will be considered. Support is available through the pastoral system to ensure a caring response to pupils in distress. Interventions will be considered if the school feels a pupil is showing signs which indicate particular risks of, or from, involvement with drugs, whether their own or that of their parent or carer. Such interventions may include consultation and subsequent referral;

- **Recording**

All incidents will be recorded within 24 hours in our My School System. The information is secure.

## **Sanctions**

The disciplinary measures can be found in the school regulations that are published on the school's website. The Principal Educational Advisor is responsible for coordinating the management of drug related incidents, offering sources of support and liaising with outside agencies. Our sanctions policy is based on the following:

- All incidents will be dealt with after an assessment of the situation has been made and will be reported to the Director and the Principal Educational Advisor;
- Appropriate support will be offered to those with substance misuse problems;
- Evidence of drug use or possession may result in exclusion;
- The school will always seek to respond appropriately to each individual case by selecting from a range of possible responses, that which is most appropriate.

Any response to drug-related incidents needs to balance the needs of the individual pupils concerned with the wider school community. In deciding what action to take, the School will follow our own sanction procedures.

Exclusion should not be the automatic response to a drug incident and permanent exclusion will only be used in serious cases.

Drug use can be a symptom of other problems and the School is ready to involve or refer pupils to youth and family support services when needed.

## **Management of drugs at school.**

In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected drugs we will:

- Ensure that a second adult witness is present throughout;
- Seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present;
- Store it in a secure location, such as a safe or other lockable container with access limited to senior members of staff;
- Notify the police without delay, who will collect it and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols.
- Record full details of the incident;
- Inform parents/carers, unless this is not in the best interests of the pupil;
- Identify any safeguarding concerns and develop a support and disciplinary response.

### **Police involvement**

- Name and contact of the school's liaison officer – Principal Educational Advisor

### **Confidentiality**

The school ensures that sensitive information is only disclosed internally or externally with careful attention to pupils' rights and needs.