



Drugs Education (Alcohol, Tobacco and Volatile Substances) Policy

Aims

Broadly, this policy aims to cover four areas relating to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco and the school. It applies to staff, pupils, parent and carers, governors and partner agencies working within the school and at all times to the school premises, school transport as well as school visits/fieldwork/residentials etc...

- The school's values and ethos on drugs
- The content and delivery of the school's drugs education programme
- The school's rules around drugs
- Drug incident management within the school and health and safety issues

Definitions

"Drugs" are taken here to mean those that are legal, such as alcohol, tobacco and solvents, over the counter and prescribed drugs and illegal drugs such as cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, heroin, crack/cocaine, LSD etc (all those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971.) The school believes that the possession and or use of such drugs in school, during the school day or while travelling to/from school is inappropriate. The drugs/substances covered by this policy are not to be bought, sold or otherwise exchanged or brought onto school premises during the school day, *or* while pupils are on school visits. Individual exceptions may be made for pupils who require prescription medicines where appropriate.

Drug Education

We regard drugs education as a whole-school issue and we believe that opportunities to teach about the importance of a healthy lifestyle occur naturally throughout the curriculum.

We aim to provide pupils with an education to:

- Enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices
- Promote positive attitudes to healthy lifestyles
- Provide accurate information about substances
- Increase understanding about the implications and possible consequences of use and misuse
- Widen understanding about related health and social issues
- Enable young people to identify sources of appropriate advice and personal support

Teaching about drugs will begin in Key Stage 1, when pupils are taught about seeing the doctor, visiting the chemist, and the importance of medicines and their safe handling.

In Key Stage 2 pupils will learn that alcohol is the most widely used drug, and that its dangers can be overlooked. We will ensure that our pupils are aware of the risks associated with drinking. We teach pupils that smoking is a minority habit, and encourage them to consider its effects and risks. We also teach pupils about the dangers of volatile-substance abuse, because of the high risk of accidental death, especially for first-time and occasional abusers.

When planning, consideration will be given to pupil's diversity of race and experience, those who are on regular medication and children with Special Educational Needs. On the whole, it will be

teachers who will deliver drug education, but where appropriate outside visitors, such as a school nurse or other healthcare professionals may make a contribution.

Drugs at school

Pupils may not bring prescribed medication into school. Parents may visit the school in the lunch break to bring and administer prescribed medication themselves, by prior arrangement or bring a letter and medication to the office staff asking them to administer the medication. No medication will be given without parental/carer's permission.

Where children have medical needs, parents must give us details of the child's condition and medication. Parents will bring the medication to school in a secure, labelled container. Records will be kept of all medication received and given. Emergency medication may be stored securely in the classroom (for anaphylaxis or asthma); other drugs will be stored securely in the office.

Solvents and other hazardous chemicals must be stored securely, to prevent inappropriate access, or use by pupils. Teachers are cautious with older, solvent-based Tippex, with aerosols, with glues and with board-cleaning fluids.

Legal drugs are legitimately in school only when authorised by the Principal. Members of staff who smoke must keep their tobacco and matches or lighters secure. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the school site.

Alcohol to be consumed at community or parents' events will be stored securely beforehand. To sell alcohol we must be licensed under the Licensing (Occasional Permissions) Act, 1983. Occasionally, members of staff may consume limited amounts of alcoholic drinks in the staff room.

Implementation of policy

Implementation of the policy: In incidents involving substance misuse or supply on the premises/during the school day, and following discussion with the pupil and staff, action will proceed as follows: It should be noted here that, when dealing with drug-related incidents, all staff, parents/carers and pupils will be reminded of these procedures on an annual basis.

An incident involving unauthorised drugs in school is most likely to involve alcohol, tobacco or volatile substances, rather than illegal drugs.

The first priority is safety and first aid, i.e. calling the emergency services and placing unconscious people in the recovery position. An intoxicated pupil does not represent a medical emergency, unless unconscious.

Pupils suspected of being intoxicated from inhaling a volatile substance will be kept calm; chasing can place intolerable strain on the heart, thus precipitating sudden death. Any drug suspected of being illegal will be confiscated and stored securely, awaiting disposal; these precautions must be witnessed and recorded. Staff should not taste unknown or confiscated substances.

The role of the Principal

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that staff and parents are informed about this drugs education policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively. It is also the Principal's role to ensure that staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity.

The Principal will liaise with external agencies regarding the school drugs education programme and ensure that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy and work within this framework.

When incidents, involving unauthorised drugs, occur in school the Principal will make a record of the incident. An investigation will be conducted into the nature and seriousness of the incident to determine the appropriate response. The Principal will decide if the police need to be called or whether the school will manage the incident internally.

The role of governors

The governors have the responsibility of setting down these general guidelines on drugs education. The governors will support the Principal in following these guidelines. The governing body will be involved in drug-related incidents and the Principal will inform them of any incidents.

The school is well aware that the primary role in children's drugs education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents/carers of our pupils, through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. To promote this objective we will:

- inform parents/carers about the school drugs policy by sharing on the website;
- answer any questions parents/carers may have about the drugs education their child receives in school;
- take seriously any issue which parents/carers raise with teachers or governors about this policy, or about arrangements for drugs education in the school;
- inform parents/carers about the best practice known with regard to drugs education, so that the parents/carers can support the key messages being given to children at school.
- When an incident concerning unauthorised drugs has occurred in school, and a pupil is involved, we will inform the parents/carers, and explain how we intend to respond to the incident.

Staff will be cautious about discharging a pupil to the care of an intoxicated parent/carer, particularly when the parent/carer intends driving the pupil home. Senior Staff will suggest an alternative arrangement. The focus will be the pupil's welfare and safety. Where the behaviour of an intoxicated parent/carer repeatedly places a child at risk, or the parent/carer becomes abusive or violent, designated staff should consider whether the circumstances of the case are serious enough to invoke child protection procedures, and possibly the involvement of the police.