

Nazareth House Primary School

School policy on drugs education and dealing with drug-related incidents

Designated teacher for drugs education: Mr. Deeney



Definition - What is a Drug?

For the purpose of this document and in line with the guidance pack issued to all schools by DENI in 1996 a drug can be defined as:

"any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks."

As well as everyday substances such as tea and coffee, drugs include:

- alcohol and tobacco;
- "over the counter" medicines, such as paracetamol for headaches;
- prescribed drugs, such as antibiotics to treat infections and benzodiazepines (tranquillisers) to control anxiety and treat insomnia;
- volatile substances, such as certain classroom resources and Cleaning agents
- illegal drugs, such as cannabis, LSD, Ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed) and magic mushrooms (processed).

Rationale

Current research indicates that drug use both legal and illegal is rising amongst young people. As part of the school's care and welfare of its pupils, we believe we have a duty to inform and educate children about drug use. Drugs are a reality in children's lives and schools share responsibility with parents and the community to educate pupils about the risks and consequences of drug use and misuse and to encourage them to make healthy, informed choices by increasing knowledge, challenging attitudes and practicing skills.

The drugs education programme in this school aims to enable all our pupils to make healthy informed choices by increasing their knowledge, exploring a range of attitudes about drug use and developing and practising their decision making skills. The programme we follow will be based on guidelines provided by DENI (1996) and will be sensitive to the age and experiences of our pupils. Teaching will be based on an understanding that a variety of approaches should be used in order to meet the needs of our pupils.

This school is committed to the health and safety of everyone here and we will work together with parents and the local community to enable pupils to make healthy, informed choices and discourage the misuse of drugs.

Aims

1. To provide a programme which gives young people opportunities to acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to make informed and responsible decisions about the use of drugs and other substances within the context of a healthy lifestyle.
2. To provide staff with adequate training and support to help them deliver effective drugs education and respond to situations with consistency and sensitivity.
3. To inform parents of the content of the school's Drugs Education Policy and to clarify appropriate procedures in the management of drug-related incidents, agreed by staff and governors, of which all parents and pupils will be made aware.
Parents will receive information about our School's Drug Policy at the initial meeting each September.
4. To have a clear and agreed understanding among everyone in the school community about the implications and possible consequences of drug use/misuse.
5. To establish an environment in which the school is free from the misuse of all drugs.

Outline of Drugs Education Programme

Role of all staff, both teaching and non-teaching:

- Be alert to the possibility of drug misuse as a cause of observed physical or behavioural changes in pupils.
- Be familiar with the school's procedures in the case of drug-related incidents.
- Respect the privacy of any pupil (and his/her family) involved in a drug related incident. However, if a pupil discloses to a member of staff that he/she is taking drugs, staff must make it clear to the pupil that this information must be passed on to the Principal/designated teacher.
- If approached by the media concerning any drug-related incidents, do not give any statement only the Principal should make a statement to the media.

Role of Class Teachers: (in addition to the above)

- Deliver the school's drugs education programme.
- Try to create an atmosphere in the classroom in which pupils can freely contribute to discussion, safe in the knowledge that the comments, ideas and feelings of the group are valued.
- Support pupils in their class if necessary.
- Liase with the designated teacher regarding any aspect of the Drugs Policy, as necessary.

Role of the Caretaker:

- Watch out for drug-taking materials anywhere in the school building or grounds.
- Conduct regular checks of school grounds for drug-taking materials.
- Solvents to be kept in locked cupboard in secure area

Role of the designated teacher:

To have overall responsibility for drugs issues within the school including co-ordination of the planning of curricular provision in compliance with the statutory requirements. Liaison with other staff responsible for pastoral care. Responsibility for co-ordination of the school's procedures for handling instances of suspected drug misuse. Ensure that all staff and parents receive a copy of the policy.

Role of the Principal:

Ensure that members of the Board of Governors are familiar with the Drugs Education Policy.

In the case of drug-related incidents:

- Contact RUC Juvenile Liaison Officer
- Contact parents
- Contact Chairman of the Board of Governors
- Retain written records
- Ensure that WELB/CCIVIS Designated Drugs Officer is contacted
- Ensure that a specialist drugs agency is contacted to support the pupil if required
- Invoke disciplinary measures as appropriate

Training and information for teachers

Staff should be provided with adequate training and support to help them deliver an effective drugs education programme and respond to situations with consistency and sensitivity. All staff should be aware of the procedures to be put in place should a drug-related incident occur.

Procedures

Medicines - the school recommends that parents/guardians provide written details of any medical condition that individual pupils may have including medication they are on. Medicines/tablets must not be brought to school unless accompanied by a letter from a parent/guardian and they will only be administered when it is absolutely necessary.

Tobacco - in the event of a pupil being found with cigarettes on his/her person the cigarettes will be confiscated, the parents/guardians will be informed and action will be taken in line with the school's discipline policy.

Alcohol - no alcohol should be brought into school by pupils or consumed by them on the school premises or while on school trips. In the event of a pupil being found with alcohol on his/her person the alcohol will be confiscated, the pupil's parents/guardians will be informed and action will be taken in line with the school's discipline policy.

Solvents - the school will ensure that potentially harmful substances are stored safely and pupils are supervised carefully in the event of them having to be used in the course of their work. The use of correction fluid and aerosol sprays will be discouraged at all times. Caretaker's materials should be well labelled and locked in a secure cupboard.

Illegal Substances - no illegal substances should be brought to school or used on school premises. Should this happen then the designated teacher will deal with the incident according to the agreed procedures.

Dealing with incidents related to illegal drug

This school believes we should be a drug free community. Illegal substances, such as those defined by DENI (1996) should not be brought into school and the use of or supply of such drugs on the school premises will be regarded with the utmost seriousness.

The designated teacher for drugs education will keep a record of all drugs related incidents. Evidence of drug use by a pupil or possession of a substance will result in automatic suspension pending a full investigation. Each case will be assessed and different levels of sanctions will be used according to the seriousness of the incident and the pupil's involvement.

All staff should be aware of the legal implications of discovering a young person in possession of a controlled drug and how they are expected to deal with such an event. The local Juvenile Liaison Officer should be informed in every case where a pupil is found to have, or is suspected of having, controlled drugs in his/her possession, either on his/her person or in his/her belongings, or where drugs are found on the school premises.

In relation to dealing with drug-related incidents, teachers are advised that

Searches should only be made with the pupil's consent, and in his/her presence and that of another, adult, witness.

If a pupil is to be detained, duress should never be used.

Teachers should never guarantee confidentiality in relation to a disclosure by a pupil, as they have a legal obligation to pass information regarding a criminal activity to the police.

Emergency Procedures

Liaison with Parents/Guardians

- Details of the Drug Education Policy will be published in the school prospectus. A full copy can be obtained from the Principal on request.
- In the event of suspected drug misuse in school, parents/guardians will be contacted by the Principal and/or designated teacher.
- Parents/guardians of pupils who need to take prescribed medication in school must contact the designated teacher who will make arrangements for the pupils involved on an individual basis.

Conclusion

The welfare of Nazareth House Primary School pupils and staff is of paramount concern and we shall work together with everyone involved with the school to ensure the continued education and well being of all our children.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Last updated: September 2001

Action to be taken in the event of a **suspected incident of drug misuse** where the designated teacher for drug issues is not the principal.

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