



Drugs Education Policy

Ethos

St. Patrick's is a rural school in a close-knit community. Our school is a welcoming place where the teaching is child-centred. We aim to promote the moral, intellectual, personal and social development of our pupils. Our school has a positive attitude towards personal health and we aim to achieve in the school a community dedicated to promoting a healthy lifestyle.

The school's attitude to drug use

The purpose of our drugs education policy is to develop in our children, skills to help them live drug-free in a society where drugs are readily available.

The definition of a drug is – any substance which when taken, has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels, sees or thinks. We include in this – legal drugs (e.g. solvents, tobacco, alcohol) and illegal drugs (e.g. cannabis, LSD, ecstasy, amphetamine, sulphate (speed) and magic mushrooms).

At this stage we need also to distinguish between prescribed and illicit drugs. Prescribed drugs are those that are issued on prescription by a doctor. Illicit drugs are all illegal drugs (e.g. cannabis, LSD and ecstasy) and controlled drugs wrongly used e.g. valium and mogadom.

We the Governors and staff of St. Patrick's Primary School take a serious view of the misuse of all drugs and are aware that we play an important role in the prevention of drug use.

A rationale for including drugs education in the curriculum

We are aware that statistics prove children and young people are responding positively to the messages from non-smoking campaigns and we therefore assume that the same should follow for drugs education. This will not be done in isolation but as part of our ongoing health education programme that contributes to equipping pupils with the skills to manage their lives effectively in making responsible decisions.

We also feel that it is important in our school to adequately prepare our pupils for the transfer to post primary education as children in the 10 to 13year age range are among the most vulnerable. As children are more exposed to the use of drugs at an early age through the media, association with older family and friends, they are more drug literate and so we understand the necessity for drugs education.

Here in St. Patrick's we accept that despite our efforts some pupils may proceed to use drugs but we hope that we will have delivered a positive message and that there will be a strong family and Church influence.

The aim of our policy is to ensure that all members of our staff are taking a consistent approach, therefore delivering the same message and if an incident occurs that everyone will be aware of the appropriate line of action. We also want to ensure that this is a clear statement for parents and visitors. We hope to safeguard good practice for our children and their future.

An overview of Drugs Education

We aim to include our drugs education within our Health Education programme as the skills and approach are similar. The aim of both is to promote a positive, healthy lifestyle to encourage children to make the best decisions for themselves.

Drugs education will be taught within the Programme of Study for Science, English, R.E. and P.E. In St. Patrick's the class teachers will be responsible for delivering the programme. If any teacher feels they need an outside agency this will be considered after reference has been made to our safety checklist.

Depending upon any drug incident happening in our school a member of staff will organise counselling for that child with the help of an appropriate outside agency. We are aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

The teaching methods we will use will be as far as possible child centred beginning with their experience and knowledge.

Aims of Drugs Education Policy

The aims of our policy are as follows:

- To promote positive attitudes towards personal health
- To help pupils acquire decision-making skills
- To help pupils understand the influence they can be on their friends
- To help pupils come to an understanding of the 'rights' or 'wrongs' of certain behaviour
- To build up the self-esteem of the pupils
- To help young people distinguish between useful and harmful drugs and consider their use, abuse, benefits and harm
- To develop the skills of young people to refuse a 'drug' offer
- To encourage a participative approach in which each pupil is actively involved

Monitoring, review and evaluation

The designated teacher (Winnie Henry) will assess and evaluate our programme on an ongoing basis. The teaching staff will be asked for feedback by way of an audit and completion of evaluations. The children will also provide feedback through evaluations on lessons either written or oral. The School Council also assist with evaluation.

Teachers will be kept informed of the drug situation in our area perhaps through talks (by an outside agency) or staff training.

After discussion with the Board of Governors any necessary changes will be implemented.

Procedures for dealing with drugs

Teachers have been provided with the policy and through staff training have been kept up-dated.

Should a substance be found in our school, or a child is suspected of having taken drugs in school we have certain procedures to follow. We understand that in the presence of a witness, the school reserves the right to search all school property e.g. desks but not the child or his/her belongings. The child will be asked voluntarily to turn out his/her pockets.

On finding a substance on the premises – we will take it to the designated teacher or the Principal. The substance will be given to the PSNI for analysis and an investigation carried out. The CCMS will be informed and a report made to the Board of Governors.

Pupil suspected of possessing/ distributing an illegal substance – in this case the pupil will be asked to stay in school but if they refuse a parent/ guardian will be contacted immediately and the PSNI informed. Again a detailed report of the incident will be written, CCMS will be informed and disciplinary measures will be decided. The Board of Governors will be informed and any counselling necessary will be arranged for the pupil.

In the case of a pupil suspected of having taken drugs in school, the necessary steps will be adhered to – with the child perhaps needing hospital treatment, his parents informed, CCMS contacted and necessary disciplinary measures, and counselling decided upon.

In the event of a drug incident occurring in our school we have a procedure for dealing with the press. Mr Scullion will make a written statement answering no questions. Our staff will make no statements. The Principal will make a positive statement that he is satisfied the incident has been dealt with adequately.

We will also take on the role of organising help for the child. This will be in consultation with the parents and it may involve hospitalisation or the need to call in counselling.

Outline of the disciplinary measures

In St. Patrick's we consider possession of drugs or drug taking in school to be a very serious matter and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken on any child found guilty of the offence.

Our school's response to any incident will depend upon the identified needs of those involved. The sanction imposed by our school will take into consideration the seriousness of the incident, the needs of the pupil, other pupils, the school and the community. We are aware that our response will aim to provide pupils with the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Our school will expect parental support and co-operation regarding the standards and aims of this specific drug policy.

The management of solvents in school

As solvent abuse may have fatal consequences we are very much aware of their use in the classroom. These fall into 4 categories.

- 1. Adhesives and glues**
- 2. Aerosols**
- 3. Cleaning and degreasing agents**
- 4. Gas lighters**

We will ensure that all solvents will be stored securely and properly supervised. The teacher will be in charge of distribution and collection. The caretaker and cleaning staff will be aware of their responsibilities in keeping their store locked and ensuring that they are using proper labelling. These particular responsibilities are in the Health and Safety manual (given to caretaker).

Pupils will not be allowed to bring substances into school that could have an adverse effect on them e.g. strong glues, permanent markers and aerosol sprays.

The management of prescribed medicines in school

Prescribed medicines fall into two categories:

- 1. On-going medicine** (e.g. diabetic, epileptic, nut allergy)
- 2. One off medication** (e.g. a course of antibiotics)

Our policy will be to organise an individual care plan for children who need on-going medication. Teachers have the right to refuse to administer any drug and in this case a designated teacher or the Principal may do so. Medical training will be given to any teacher willing to administer medication (e.g. nut allergy, diabetic, epileptic).

If a child suffers a severe attack e.g. asthmatic, an ambulance will be called and parents notified. In the case of one-off drugs, we must be given written details by the parent, the nature of the drug and the amount to be administered.

Any necessary drugs will be stored safely under secretary supervision in the office and will not be accessible to other children.

Parents must give written details of what is to be done in the case of an emergency.

Parents will be made aware in writing of our policy on the administering of medication.

We are also aware that the management of medicines also applies to school trips. We will adhere to the same principles on day trips and overnight trips.

The training of staff and parents in the recognition of drugs and their symptoms

We realise the importance of training our staff and parents in order that they are aware of our present situation. This we hope will be updated on a regular basis and will include our caretaker, classroom assistants, supervisors and Board of Governors. We aim to include parents. We have and will continue to have contact with the Field Officer for Drugs and Alcohol.

Responsibility of the drugs co-ordinator

The Health Education/drug co-ordinator will ensure that a good programme of study is in place. This will be taught in such a way that not only will there be knowledge but the children will develop the skills to make good decisions.

Our designated teacher for drugs education is Mrs W. Henry whose role will be to liaise with the Principal on any drug related incident. The co-ordinator will also liaise as is necessary with outside agencies.

If a drug related incident should occur in our school or neighbourhood, it will be the role of the designated teacher to make any necessary changes to our programme of study.

Responsibilities of the designated teacher for drug incidents

Our staff have been made aware that the first person to contact for a drug incident is the designated teacher.

It is the responsibility of the designated teacher to:

- (a) liaise with other bodies in relation to drug incidents (e.g. PSNI and counselling groups)
- (b) supervise any drug-related incident at school
- (c) receive any substance found in school
- (d) liaise with other staff on drugs matters
- (e) liaise with the Principal on any drug-related incident in school
- (f) use Heartstart training to cope with a pupil under the influence of drugs
- (g) ensure all staff are aware of emergency procedures

Roles and responsibilities

Board of Governors

We realise that the role of the Board of Governors is to ensure that the policy is in place and updated as is necessary. They will nominate and train one member to deal with drugs related incidents (in the foreseeable future).

Principal

It will be the role of the Principal to determine circumstances surrounding an incident. The Principal will liaise with parents/guardians, PSNI, Board of Governors, CCMS and press (if necessary). The Principal will decide any disciplinary measures and the need for counselling for a child involved in a drug related incident.

Teachers

Teachers will be responsible for teaching the programme. They will also be aware of the contents of the policy. In the event of a suspected drugs-related incident the teacher will assess the situation and decide on the necessary action. The teacher will secure first aid and send for other staff. They must make the situation safe and taking care gather up any drugs or evidence whilst passing on relevant information to the designated teacher.

Other staff

All staff will be made aware of the school's procedure in dealing with an incident and who to contact. They will also be provided with relevant information e.g. on the storage and the use of the Epipen.

Communicating policy to parents and other relevant agencies

In our school, parents have been informed of our policy through the prospectus and it is freely available to parents and anyone working in our school.

Staff use of smoking and alcohol

Our school is a smoke-free zone. Teachers are aware of the 'Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace Guidance'.

Resources

Health for Life Book 1

Health for Life Book 2

Health Education – Teacher's Resource Book – Blue Prints

Fit for Life

Health Education – within the curriculum 5-9

The Health Promoting School (2 copies)

Health Education File (leaflets on variety of topics)

Drugs: guidance for schools

All About Me Teacher's Guide

Promoting Health Pack

Answers pack 7-9 year olds

Answers pack 9-11 year olds

Jimmy on the Road to Super Health

Healthy Eating Pack (Health promotion agency)

Smokebusters Teacher's pack

Will Powers Teacher/ pupil book

Drug Education scheme (Key stage 2)

Visitors' Checklist

Before inviting a visitor to the school, the following checklist should be applied; -

- 1. Is the visitor the best choice to make for the particular input being sought?**
- 2. Does the visitor share the school's values?**
- 3. Does the visitor share the school's approach to Drugs Education?**
- 4. What prior experience of teaching Drugs Education does the visitor have?**
- 5. Can the visitor communicate at a level appropriate to the emotional and intellectual development of the pupils?**
- 6. Do you have first-hand knowledge of the type of presentation that the visitor gives?**
- 7. Is the visitor agreeable to work with a whole class at a time?**
- 8. Is there a charge for the visit?**

Having invited the speaker:-

- 1. Make sure that the visitor is made aware of the number, age, ability and background of the children in the class.**
- 2. Decide together on the exact topic for the lesson.**
- 3. Make sure that the visitor is given clear instructions as to the aims, content, level and timing of the lesson.**
- 4. Inform the visitor of any sensitive issues that may need to be avoided during the lesson.**
- 5. Check what resources will be required for the visit.**
- 6. Ensure that a member of staff stays with the class during the visit.**
- 7. Ensure that appropriate follow-up work is carried out so that the visit is not left in a vacuum.**