

## Drugs Education Policy

### Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- clarify the school's/college approach to drugs, for staff, pupils, governors, parents or carers, and to clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities
- give guidance to staff on the school's/college drugs education programme
- safeguard the health and safety of pupils/learners and staff in our schools and college
- enable staff to manage drug-related incidents properly.

### Terminology

The definition of a drug given by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is: A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave.

The term 'drugs' and 'drug education' is used throughout this policy to refer to all drugs:

- all illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971)
- all legal drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, and also volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled)
- all medicines, whether over-the-counter or on prescription (see Health, Safety and Welfare policy).

### Objectives of drugs education

Drugs education should enable pupils/learners to develop their knowledge, attitudes and understanding about drugs, and to appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, relating this to their own and others' actions. Delivered at an appropriate level to meet the individual needs of each child or young person it should:

- build on knowledge and understanding
- provide accurate information, and clear up misunderstandings
- explore attitudes and values, and examine the risks and consequences of actions relating to drugs
- develop pupils'/learners' interpersonal skills, their understanding of rules and laws, and their self-awareness and self-esteem
- ensure that all children and young people are taught about drugs in a consistent manner appropriate to their level of understanding
- follow guidelines that have been agreed by parents, governors and staff.

We regard to drugs education as a whole-school/college issue, we believe that opportunities to teach about the importance of a healthy lifestyle occur naturally throughout the curriculum, but especially in Personal, Social health and economic education (PHSE).

Where appropriate 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. If appropriate in Key Stage 2 pupils will learn that alcohol is the most widely used drug, and that its dangers can be overlooked. Through our behaviour we teach pupils that smoking is a minority habit, by not modelling smoking in their presence. As our young people move into adulthood it is increasingly important to teach them about 'what makes a good friend' in order to ensure we mitigate the risk of our young people being drawn into county lines activity.

We recognise that learning is most effective when it addresses the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills together, and when teaching and learning are participative and active. Wherever possible the information we give is visually reinforced. We use drama and role-play to demonstrate various strategies and scenarios. We recognise that pupils/learners with special educational needs may be more vulnerable, that different communities have different attitudes towards drug abuse, and that some pupils may have drug-abusing parents. Sometimes a class teacher will seek the support of a health professional. We follow the DfES and LA guidelines. We

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aim to promote a healthy lifestyle.

### **Drugs at school/college**

- COSHH guidelines will be clearly displayed and followed solvents and other hazardous chemicals must be stored securely, to prevent inappropriate access, or use by pupils.
- legal drugs (medication) are administered in school/college following the Health Care Policy.

### **Drugs incidents**

This school/college believes that the presence of unauthorised drugs is not acceptable. We want our settings to be safe places for us all to work, and the presence of unauthorised drugs represents a threat to our health and safety. Although very unlikely, an incident involving unauthorised drugs is most likely to involve alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs. The Head of School/College will decide if the police need to be called or whether the setting will manage the incident internally. A full record will be made of any incident. An investigation into the nature and seriousness of any incident, in order to determine an appropriate response.

### **The link to safeguarding**

Children can clearly be adversely affected by both their own, or parental drug and / or alcohol use in many ways and the potential for significant harm as a result should not be underestimated.

Although not all children whose parents abuse drugs and / or alcohol will be adversely affected. However, the following are indicators that harm may be occurring:

- Being left home alone or with inappropriate carers
- Emotional difficulties e.g. crying for no apparent reason, inexplicable feelings of anger
- Self harming / suicidal behaviour
- School problems e.g. truancy, levels of attainment dropping,, difficulty in concentrating
- Offending behaviour
- Neglect and other forms of abuse, high levels of accidents in the home, possibly due to poor parental supervision
- Early use of substances – minimisation of the risks associated with or a very strong dislike of substances
- Attachment issues and behavioural difficulties e.g. bullying
- Feelings of gloom, worthlessness, isolation, shame and hopelessness, poor self-esteem, disempowerment
- Unwillingness to expose family life outside scrutiny, social isolation, not taking friends home
- Tendency to keep secrets
- Developmental delay
- Role reversal and confusion e.g. protecting others, acting as a mediator and / or confidant, taking on an adult role
- Extreme anxiety and fear, fear of hostility, violence
- Family dislocation e.g. moving schools, relationship conflict, domestic abuse
- Presenting as not being used to a routine e.g. irregular attendance at nursery or school.

For dual heritage children, there can be issues around a sense of racial identity that can manifest itself in a rejection of their ethnicity relating to the using parent

For children with disabilities there can be increased risks to their safety and inconsistent approach to the management of the child's medication.

Where there are any concerns about children's welfare due to their own or their parents' or carers' substance misuse, consideration must be given to referral to Children's Social Services.

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## Responsibilities

The Head of School/College will:

- designate key staff to have specific responsibility for drugs education
- ensure that staff and parents are informed about this drugs policy
- ensure that the policy is implemented effectively
- manage any drug-related incidents
- ensure that staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively about drugs, and handle any difficult issues with sensitivity
- liaise with external agencies regarding the drugs education programme
- inform parents/carers about the drugs education policy
- liaise with the LA and health organisations
- monitor the policy and report to governors, when requested.

## The governing body will:

- support the setting in following these guidelines
- support the Head in any case conferences, or in appeals against exclusions, as a result of a drugs related incident.

## School staff discovering illegal drugs in pupils' possession

- will confiscate the drugs and report it to and hand over the drugs to the Head or the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in the absence of the Head.

## The role of parents

The school/college understands the primary role in children's drugs education lies with parents.

We wish to build a positive and supporting relationship with the parents of our pupils/learners, through mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. To promote this objective we will:

- inform parents about the school/college drugs policy
- answer any questions parents may have about any drugs education their child/young person receives in school/college
- take seriously any issue which parents raise with teachers or governors about this policy, or about arrangements for drugs education in the school /college
- inform parents about the best practice with regard to drugs education, so that they can support the key messages being given to pupils/learners at school/college.

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

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