

# Drugs Policy

## Rationale

We, the principal, staff and Board of Governors of Gaelscoil Aodha Rua take our statutory duty with regards to drugs education and dealing with drugs related incidents very seriously and pledge to deal with all issues and incidents pertaining to drugs in a professional manner.

We recognise that some children may have been exposed at an early age to discussion about drugs and may come to school with a store of knowledge, attitudes and experiences regarding drugs which they have gained from parents, older siblings, the media or from popular music. We also recognise that some children may have little or no knowledge of drugs and will rely on drugs education received at school to help them make informed choices in the future.

We have a duty of care to our pupils; to ensure their health, well-being and welfare and to ensure that they are equipped with the accurate knowledge and skills to enable them to make positive life choices regarding drugs. We also have a statutory duty to protect the children in our care and to protect the unique innocence of childhood, by acting upon any suspicions or disclosures regarding drug usage in the presence of children.

## Statutory Duty

As a school, we have a statutory duty to devise, agree and publish our school policy on drugs, to ensure that drugs education is incorporated into our school curriculum and to act on any suspicion of drug use or in the case of an illegal substance being found on school grounds.

## Guidance Materials

In developing this policy, we have consulted the guidance materials contained in:

DE Circular – Drugs Guidance for Schools (2004/9)

Drugs Education for Schools – Revised Guidance (CCEA)

## External Agencies

We will report the finding of any illegal / suspicious substances on school premises to the PSNI.

We will refer any concerns regarding the welfare of our pupils with regards to drug use to the Gateway Team / Social Services (in line with our Safeguarding & Child Protection policy).

## Aims of Policy

- to outline the school's attitude, policies and procedures with regards to drugs and dealing with incidents of drug misuse / abuse.

- to provide clear guidance for all staff on how they should respond to a drugs related incident.
- to provide age appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about drugs and the effects of drugs on health, lives and families, to guide them in making informed choices regarding drugs.
- to inform parents of the school policy and agreed procedures regarding drugs and to encourage them to work in partnership with the school in educating their children and in moulding their attitudes towards drugs.

### **Links with other Policies**

Safeguarding & Child Protection

Collection

Positive Behaviour

Effective Responses to Bullying

Administration of Medicines

Health & Safety

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Board of Governors**

- Support the Principal in devising a 'Drugs Policy' and ensure it's implementation, ongoing review and publication in school prospectus.
- Agree, in consultation with the Principal, appropriate responses to suspected drug related incidents.

#### **Principal (as Designated Officer for dealing with Drugs)**

- Devise a policy relating to drugs education / responses to drugs related incidents.
- Present the draft policy to the BOG for consultation & ratification.
- Communicate the policy to all staff and parents of the school.
- Arrange staff training and ensure that all staff are aware of their role in implementing the drugs policy.
- Ensure that age appropriate drugs education is incorporated in the WAU & PDMU curriculum.
- Lead an appropriate response to any suspected drugs related incident (in partnership with school safeguarding team).
- Contact the PSNI if a suspicious substance is found on school premises.
- Make a referral to the Gateway Team, if there is reason to believe that a child's welfare / well-being are compromised due to a suspected drug related incident.
- Inform the BOG of any drug related incident and agree appropriate responses.

## **Staff (teaching and non-teaching)**

- Be familiar with school policy and procedures regarding drugs related incidents.
- Be vigilant and aware of drugs related discussions on drugs amongst pupils, that may suggest knowledge / experience beyond what would be expected from children their age.
- Plan for incorporating 'drugs education' into WAU & PDMU Curriculum and guide pupils in making good decisions which will impact their health, lifestyle and families.
- Ensure that sufficient checks are carried out in the school-yard and surrounding grounds before outdoor activities take place.
- Report all concerns, suspicions and disclosures regarding drugs related incidents and any suspicious substances found on school property to the Principal.

## **Confidentiality**

Teachers and other members of school staff should never promise confidentiality to pupils where a disclosure regarding a drugs related issue is made. They should explain to the pupil that the issue must be reported to the Principal, who may need to discuss the issue with other agencies.

Normal standards of confidentiality will apply and all incidents of a drug-related nature and the procedures followed will be kept confidential within the school.

## **Medication as Prescribed by a Doctor**

If a child has a specific medical condition, such as asthma, excema, allergies (including anaphylaxis) etc. the administration of prescribed drugs / medication (inhalers, epipens etc) pertaining to such conditions will not be covered under this policy. Please refer to 'The Administration of Medicines Policy'.

## **Definition of Drugs**

'Drugs' as defined by the **DENI Circular 'Drugs Guidance for Schools' (2004//9)**, includes ***"any substance which, when taken, has the effect of altering the way a person behaves, feels or thinks."***

Although the above definition may include everyday substances, which are not illegal, such as tea, coffee and prescribed medication, for the purposes of this policy, we will be focusing on the use / misuse of the following substances:

- tobacco products – including cigarettes, cigars and electronic smoking devices.
- alcohol
- 'over the counter' medicines such as paracetamol / co-codamol
- Prescribed drugs such as tranquillisers, pain killers, anti-depressants etc.
- Volatile substances such as correcting fluids, thinners, gas lighter fluid, aerosols, glues etc.

- Controlled drugs such as cannabis, LSD, Ecstasy, amphetamine sulphate (speed), magic mushrooms, heroin and cocaine.
- 'psychoactive substances' which were formerly known as 'legal highs' (the term 'legal high' is no longer used as it was easily misinterpreted as meaning 'safe', which is not the case as these substances are not regulated)

### **Smoking – Tobacco based products / E-cigarettes**

Our school is a '**non-smoking**' environment.

As part of the World Around Us & PDMU Curriculum, we will educate pupils on the dangers of smoking and will actively encourage children to make informed choices regarding smoking.

To support us in this educative work, we ask all staff and parents to work in partnership with us by acting as good role models for their own children and for all the pupils of our school.

Staff and Parents can support our 'No Smoking' ethos by following the guidance below:

- We have erected HSE signage, asking parents not to smoke at the school gates. This includes E-cigarettes.
- Staff are not permitted to smoke on the school grounds, or in the presence of pupils (on school trips etc.) under any circumstances.
- Use of E-cigarettes is not permitted in the school building.

If a pupil is found to be in possession of tobacco / smoking related products or if they are found to be smoking, the products will be confiscated and the child's parents contacted.

### **Alcohol**

As part of the World Around Us & PDMU Curriculum, we will educate pupils on the effects of alcohol and on the dangers pertaining to excessive consumption of alcohol. We aim to guide them into making positive lifestyle choices for their future.

In line with our '**Collection Policy**', pupils will not be released to any persons suspected to be under the influence of alcohol.

In line with our '**Safeguarding & Child Protection**' policy, we will make a referral to the Gateway Team if we believe a child / children's safety and well-being are being compromised due to excessive use of alcohol.

If a child is found to be in the possession of alcohol or suspected to have consumed alcohol, the child's parents will be contacted and a subsequent referral will be made to the Gateway Team.

## **Procedures for Managing Drug-Related Incidents**

The principal and staff of Gaelscoil Aodha Rua will follow the procedures as described in Appendix 1-5 of this policy in response to drug related incidents, such as:

1. Finding a suspicious substance on school premises
2. Pupil suspected of possessing / distributing an illegal substance
3. Pupil suspected of being under the influence of drugs at school.
4. Parent suspected of being under the influence of drugs / alcohol when collecting a pupil.
5. Pupils reporting / disclosing incidents of a drug related nature at home / having non age-appropriate knowledge of drugs / drug use.

## **Searching & Detaining Pupils in possession of tobacco products, alcohol or illicit / illegal drugs**

If a staff member has reason to suspect that a pupil is in possession of tobacco products, alcohol or illicit / illegal drugs, they should alert another member of staff who will summons the principal to the scene of the incident. The principal, with a second staff member present as a witness, will ask the child to voluntarily 'turn-out' his or her pockets, school-bag etc. If the child refuses, the child's parents and the PSNI will be called. Only members of the PSNI are permitted to physically search a child.

## **Communication of Drugs Policy**

All parents will be given a copy of this policy and will be invited to comment on the content of the policy.

A copy of the policy will be available on the school website.

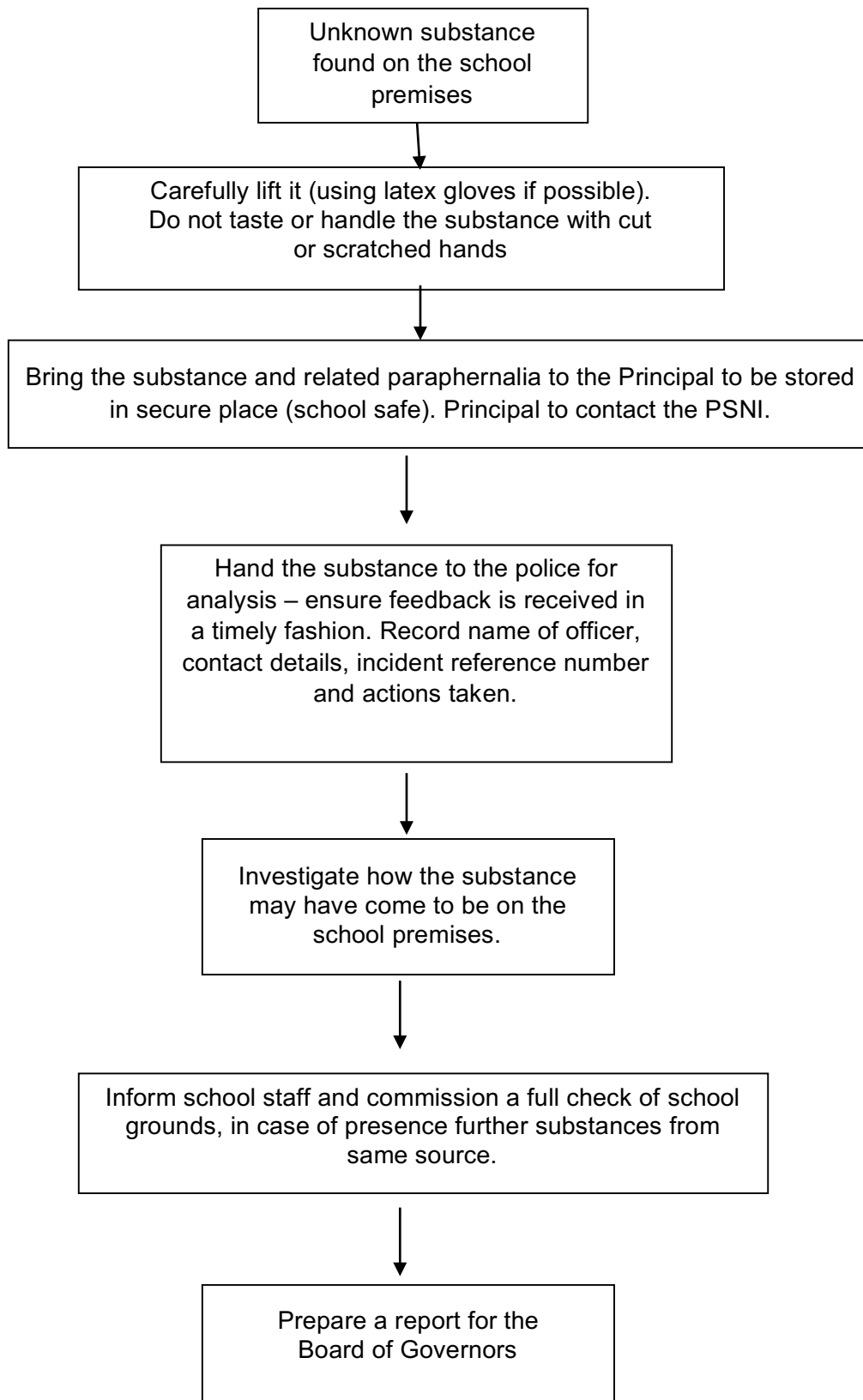
Parents will be advised that they can request a copy of this policy from the school Office if required.

## **Monitoring of the Drugs Policy**

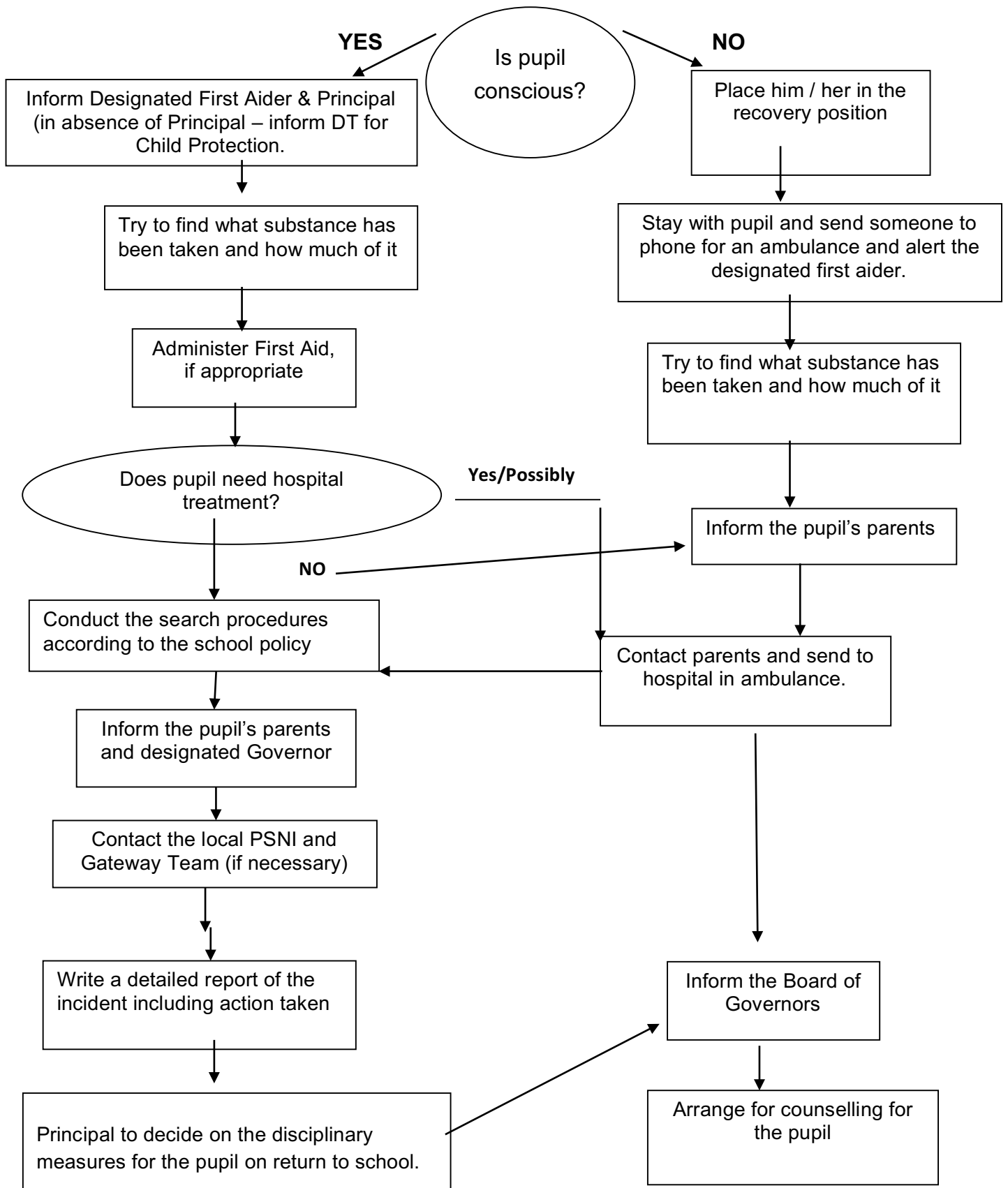
This policy will be reviewed in light of updated statutory guidance or in light of changing circumstances within the school on a bi-annual basis. If amendments are required, these will be agreed and ratified by the BOG.

## APPENDIX 1

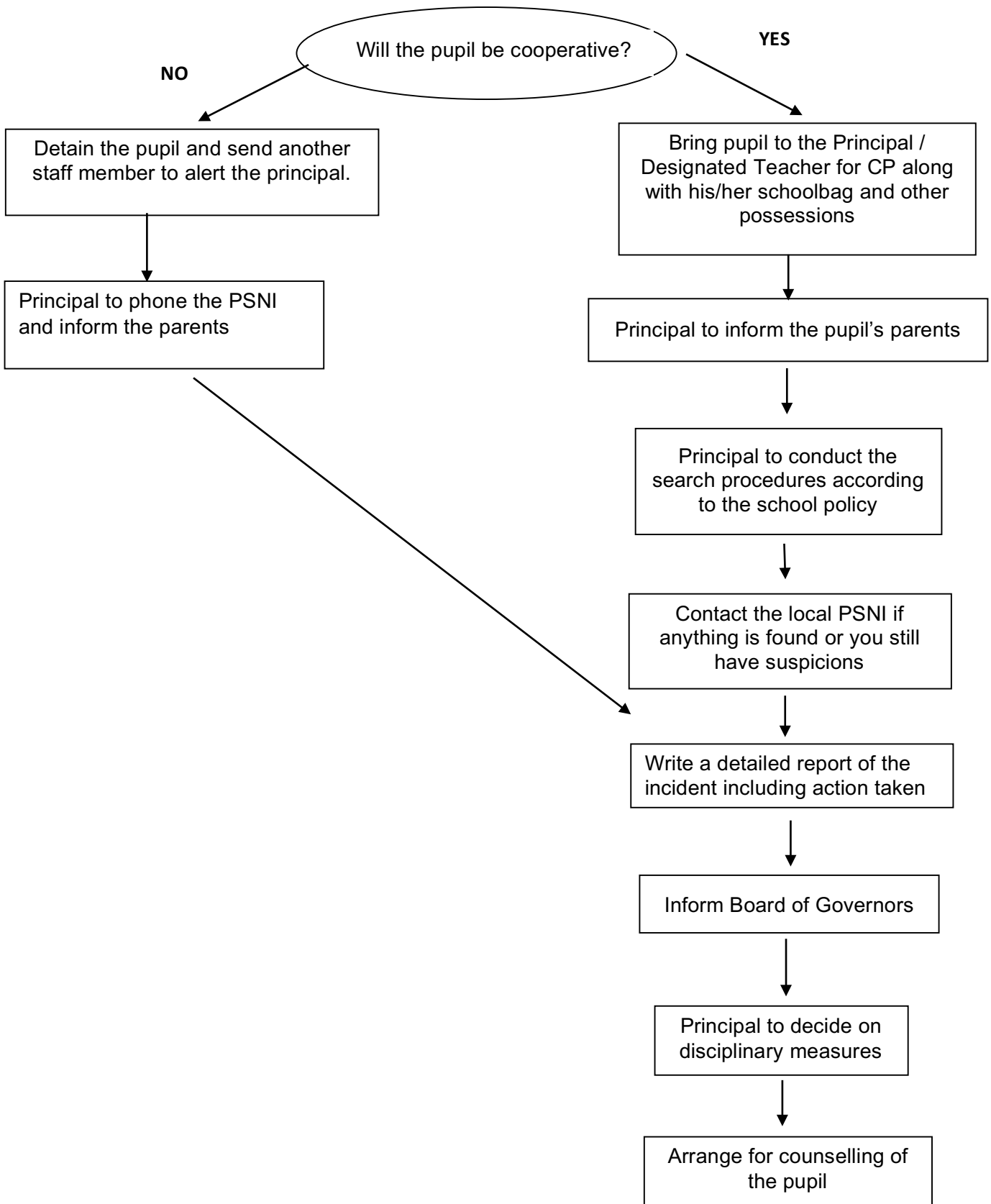
## Finding a substance on the school premises



## APPENDIX 2 Pupil suspected of having taken drugs in school



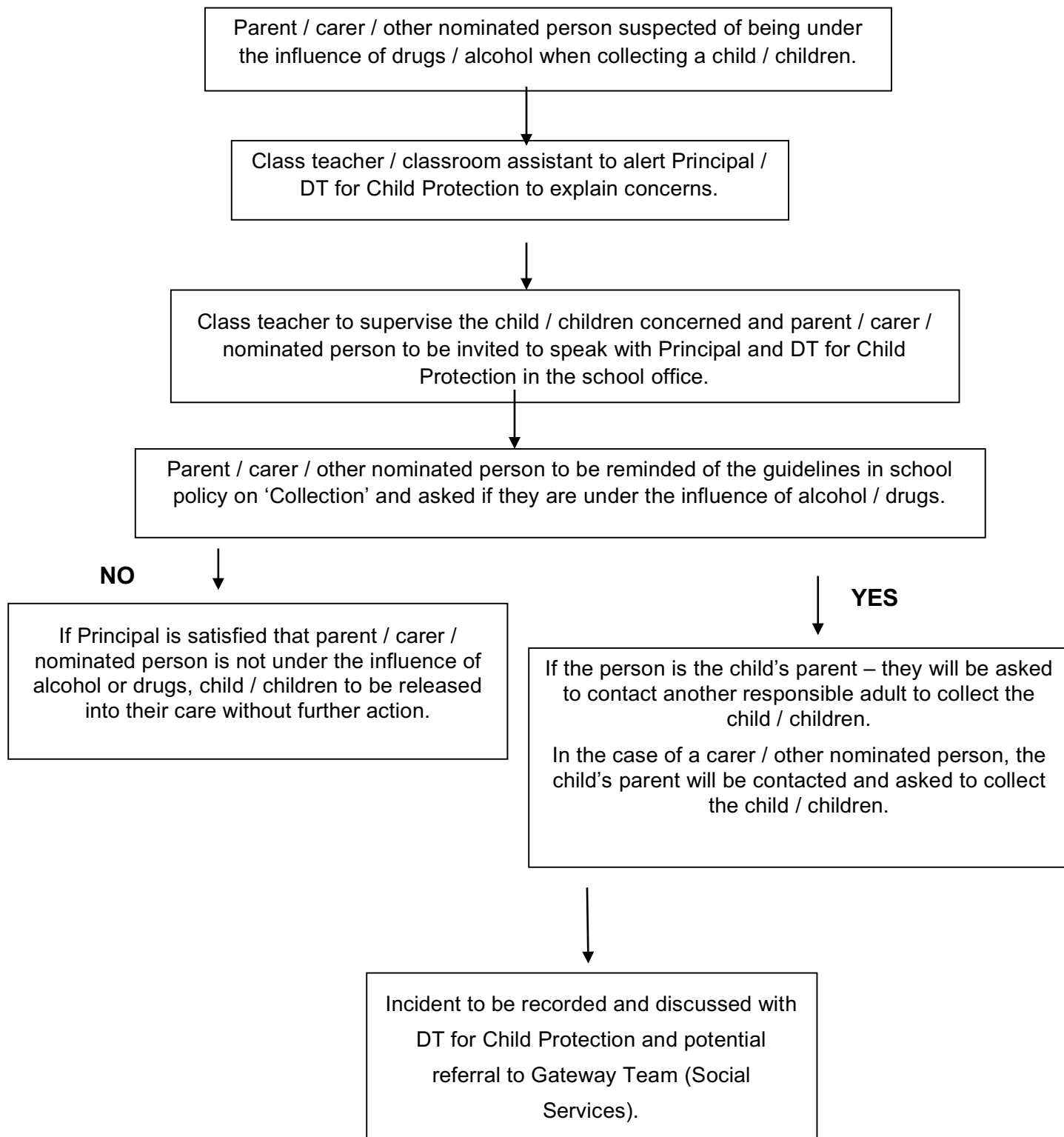
**APPENDIX 3 Pupil suspected of possessing / distributing an illegal substance**





## APPENDIX 4

Parent suspected of being under the influence of drugs / alcohol when collecting a pupil.



## APPENDIX 5

Pupils reporting / disclosing incidents of a drug related nature at home / having non age-appropriate knowledge of drugs / drug use.

