



# **SAINT EITHNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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

**Date of Review: March 2027**

## **Ethos**

Saint Eithne's is a Catholic Maintained Primary School for boys and girls in the 4 - 11+ age group. Through the provision of a caring and effective Catholic education we aim to enable all our children to attain their full potential academically, socially, physically and spiritually.

We shall endeavour to create, maintain and act upon a policy, which considers the pastoral needs of all members of the school community. It is important that every member of the school community is conscious of the needs of others. We hope to foster an attitude of caring and respect in all staff and children.

As part of the school's care and welfare of its children, we believe we have a duty to inform and educate children about drug use. We committed to the health and safety of everyone here and we will work together with parents and the local community to enable children to make healthy, informed choices and discourage the misuse of drugs.

### **Definition – What is a Drug?**

For the purpose of this document and in line with the guidance pack issued to all schools by CCEA in 2015 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.”**

This refers to all drugs whether:

- Illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of drugs Act 1971) such as ecstasy, cannabis, crack/cocaine, heroin and LSD, ketamine, GHB, anabolic steroids and khat
- Drugs that are legal to use but are covered by some legislation such as selling to under 18 year olds including alcohol, tobacco, shisha and volatile substances (solvents)
- Drugs that are legal to use and buy such as poppers
- Over the counter and prescription medicines
- And other drugs such legal highs/Novel Psychoactive Substances that are illegal to sell for human consumption and e-cigarettes that currently have no restrictions (although laws about selling to under 18s and use in public places are to be put in place)

### **Definitions of other key words**

Drug use describes any drug taking. Any drug use can potentially lead to harm, including through intoxication, breach of the law or school rules, or future health problems.

Drug misuse is drug taking which leads to social, psychological, physical or legal problems through intoxication, regular excessive consumption and/or dependence.

## **Rationale**

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 practising skills.

Our drugs education programme 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 CCEA (2015) and DENI circular 2015/23 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 policy is not to be considered in isolation from other curricular and pastoral policies, but reflects an integrated and consistent approach to the overall education and well-being of our pupils.

## **Aims of drug education**

To give pupils information about drugs and help them develop the skills and attitudes to make healthy and safe decisions about drugs, alcohol, tobacco and medicines

To achieve this, our drug education programme will help pupils:

- gain knowledge and understanding about the effects and risks and dangers of drugs and correct myths and misunderstandings
- develop skills to make informed decisions, including communication, self awareness, negotiation, finding information, help and advice, helping others and managing situations involving drugs
- develop skills to manage situations involving drugs including assessing and avoiding risks, assertiveness and refusal skills and helping others
- explore their own and other peoples' attitudes to drugs, drug use and drug users, including challenging stereotypes and dispelling myths and exploring media and social influences

## **Development and Implementation**

### **Outline of Drugs Education Programme**

This is delivered mainly within the School's WAU and PDMU lessons and linking with our health education programme.

**Key Stage 1** focuses on what are safe and unsafe substances, what medicines are, why people take them and how to take them safely, being ill and getting better and what to do if someone persuades you to take something dangerous

**Key Stage 2** focuses on what a drug is, the effects and risks of drugs including tobacco and alcohol, managing peer influences and resisting pressure to take risks and be able to make safe decisions.

Our curriculum ensures that we are covering both the statutory requirement in WAU to teach pupils to recognise the impact of drugs on the way their bodies function and the non-

statutory science guidance to teach how some drugs and other substances can be harmful to the human body and the relationship between diet, exercise, drugs, lifestyle and health.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Pupils**

Be aware of and adhere to school rules in relation to drug use/misuse, including tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescribed medication, volatile substances and controlled drugs.

#### **Parents/Guardians**

- Support the school in the development and implementation of this policy, including the school's procedures for handling incidents of suspected drug misuse and the drug education programme.
- Support your son/daughter if they have become involved with drugs.

#### **All staff, both teaching and non-teaching:**

- To deal with any emergency procedures if necessary.
- To forward any information, substance or paraphernalia received to the designated teacher for drugs who may have to take immediate action.
- To complete a brief factual report of the suspected incident and forward it to the Principal.
- 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.

#### **Teachers delivering the Drug Education programme.**

- Deliver the school's drug 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.
- Liaise with the designated teacher for drugs regarding any aspect of the programme/policy, as necessary.

#### **The Role of the Designated Teacher.**

The duties of the designated teacher should include:

- The responsibility for the co-ordination of the school's procedures for handling suspected drugs-related incidents and the training and induction of these procedures with new and existing staff;
- To act as the contact point, as necessary, for outside agencies that may have to work with the school or with a pupil or pupils concerned;
- To take possession of any substance(s) and associated paraphernalia found in the event of a suspected incident and complete a factual report which is forwarded to the principal;

In the absence of the designated teacher a recognised deputy should be available as deemed appropriate by the school.

### **The Role of the Principal**

- To determine the circumstances of all incidents but it is the responsibility of the PSNI to investigate any criminal offence.
- To make every effort to contact the parents/guardians of those pupils involved in any suspected drugs-related incident;
- To ensure that in any incident involving a controlled drug there is close liaison with the police.
- To confine their responsibilities, after contacting the police, to the welfare of the pupil(s) involved in the incident, the other pupils in the school and the handling, storage and safe disposal of any drugs/drugs-related paraphernalia.
- To inform the Board of Governors, agreeing any appropriate pastoral/disciplinary response;
- To report the incident to the EA/CCMS Designated Drugs Officer.
- To complete, if appropriate, a written report and forwarding a copy to the Board of Governors and the designated officer within the CCMS.

### **The Role of the Board of Governors**

- Fostering and supporting the development and on-going review of the drugs policy and education programme;
- Collaborating with appropriate staff, pupils and parents/guardians;
- Facilitating the consultative process whereby the school community can respond and contribute to the effectiveness and quality of the policy and programme;
- Examining and approving these prior to their implementation in the school;
- They should ensure the policy is made available to parents and that it is reviewed at regular intervals;
- Being fully aware of and adequately trained to deal with suspected drugs-related incidents including alcohol and tobacco and their appropriate disciplinary response;
- It is recommended that there should be a designated governor for drugs who has received specific training in drugs-related issues.

### **Training and information**

All staff will 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. (See Appendix 2)

### **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. The school has a medication policy (available on the website). Inhalers can be used by children but only if the parent/guardian

sign up to an agreement. Parents may come into school if they wish to administer a medicine 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.

**E-Cigarettes/ Vaping** – in the event of a pupil being found with e- cigarettes/ vaping equipment on his/her person the e- cigarettes/ vaping equipment 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 drugs**

This school believes we should be a drug free community. Illegal substances, such as those defined by CCEA (2015) and DENI circular 2015/23 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 drug-related incidents.

### **Responding to Incidents**

#### **Illness/Inappropriate Behaviour**

Where it is considered that a pupil may have taken a substance suspected to be a drug, medical assistance will immediately be sought and the parents and police informed if appropriate.

The principal /designated teacher will take temporary possession (as the law permits) of a substance suspected of being a controlled drug for the purpose of protecting a pupil from harm or committing the offence of possession.

In responding to a drug related event where evidence of drug use by a pupil or possession of a substance it would not be appropriate to prescribe centrally specific sanctions, which should be applied to drug-related incidents.

The Principal will retain responsibility for deciding how to respond to particular incidents, taking account of factors such as the age of the pupil concerned, whether the incident involved one pupil or a group of pupils, evidence of particular peer group pressure and if this is a first offence. We shall make a co-ordinated and measured response to any drug related incident considering the CCEA advice (Appendix 3).

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.

### **Support**

The school will in some cases identify counselling as potentially valuable to a pupil. Parents may also be advised where to find a further support. Normal school support services may be contacted, e.g. The EWO and The CCMS Designated Officer.

A range of support services are available to children and families. These include:

- **N.S.P.C.C** [028 7131 2187](tel:02871312187)
- **Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland** Tel: [0300 555 0114](tel:03005550114)

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. All schools are legally bound to notify the local CSIO (Community and Schools Involvement Officer **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, staff members 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.
- Staff members should never guarantee confidentiality in relation to a disclosure by a pupil.

All members of staff (Teaching & Non-teaching staff) have a legal obligation to pass information regarding a criminal activity to the police. **At all times the needs of individual pupils must be considered and appropriate interventions and support mechanisms put in place.**

The fact that certain behaviour could constitute a violation of the criminal law should not, in itself, be taken as automatically leading to the exclusion of a pupil.

### **Liaison with Parents/Guardians**

- Details of the Drug Education Policy will be available to parents. A full copy can be obtained from the Principal on request.
- In the event of suspected drug misuse in school, the Principal will contact parents/guardians. The designated teacher will be present at any meeting arranged.

- Parents/guardians of pupils who need to take prescribed medication in school must contact the designated teacher. Medication (other than inhalers) is not normally allowed on the premises. (See Medication Policy)

### **Monitoring & Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed on rolling 3 year basis.

### **Appendix 1**

#### **CHECKLIST FOR HANDLING SUSPECTED DRUG RELATED INCIDENTS IN SCHOOLS**

This is a guide on the key procedures to undertake when a drug-related incident occurs in schools.

#### **1. Ensure the safety of the individual pupil involved, of other pupils, yourself and other staff. On finding a situation with a suspected substance:**

- Get help immediately from another adult.
- Assess situation, to see if this is a life-threatening situation or not.

#### **If an emergency: -**

- If necessary contact an ambulance.
- Put person under the influence of the drugs in the recovery position.
- Ensure airways are cleared.
- Remove any other bystanders from the immediate vicinity.

#### **Then in all cases: -**

- Carefully gather up any drugs / paraphernalia / evidence lying around and keep safely.
- Ascertain which substances / drugs have been taken and how much.
- Secure all drugs and paraphernalia and give to the Principal / designated teacher for drugs immediately, and lock them away.
- Contact the parents/guardians as soon as possible.

#### **2. Ensure all incidents are properly investigated and recorded: -**

- Never accuse pupils of drug dealing/possession; these are alleged illicit substances until substantiated by the PSNI.
- Conduct search procedures according to school policy. (**Never search personal belongings without permission.** It is okay to search school property such as lockers, cupboards or desks).
- Ensure all drugs are safely and securely stored or destroyed, making sure that this is witnessed by another adult and recorded.
- Gather details and data from all the eyewitnesses at the scene.
- All statements and phone calls should be recorded, signed and dated.
- Record all information on official incident form and sign and date, or ensure accurate details are given to whoever is writing the form and co-sign.
- Ensure an incident form is filled in and forwarded to the EA/CCMS, as appropriate.
- Ensure that you follow all the procedures in your School's Drugs Policy.

**3. Ensure appropriate individuals and agencies are informed and contacted as needed: -**

- Principal and designated teacher for drugs
- Parents / guardians
- PSNI (CSIO)
- EA
- Chairperson initially and subsequently the Board of Governors
- The Education Welfare Officer
- No media statements - only the Principal should do this
- Other pupils, parents and staff are only told on a need-to-know basis

A pastoral / disciplinary response needs to be made by the school, balancing the need for compassion and the pupil's welfare with the need to send a clear message about illegal actions and behaviour and the impact on the school community.